Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development

Kate C. McLean
Monisha Pasupathi
Editors

Narrative Development in Adolescence

Creating the Storied Self

Springer

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We decided to dedicate this volume to each other, since without one another we really would not have taken the project on in the first place, and we surely would have enjoyed it infinitely less.

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Introduction

Monisha Pasupathi and Kate C. McLean

Where Have You Been, Where Are You Going? Narrative Identity in Adolescence

How can we help youth move from childhood to adulthood in the most effective and positive way possible? This is a question that parents, educators, researchers, and policy makers engage with every day. In this book, we explore the potential power of the stories that youth construct as one route for such movement. Our emphasis is on how those stories serve to build a sense of identity for youth and how the kinds of stories youth tell are informed by their broader contexts – from parents and friends to nationalities and history. Identity development, and in particular narrative identity development, concerns the ways in which adolescents must integrate their past and present and articulate and anticipate their futures (Erikson, 1968). Viewed in this way, identity development is not only unique to adolescence (and emergent adulthood), but also intimately linked to childhood and to adulthood.

The title for this chapter, borrowed from the Joyce Carol Oates story, highlights the precarious position of adolescence in relation to the construction of identity. In this story, the protagonist, poised between childhood and adulthood, navigates a series of encounters with relatively little awareness of either her childhood past or her potential adult futures. Her choices are risky and her future, at the end, looks dark. Many of the chapters in this book examine some of the ways that an examined past and future become newly available to adolescents in the form of narrative and the ways that examination can be risky and also beneficial. The contributors to the volume examine not only how stories play a role in the normative transition from a healthy childhood to a healthy adulthood, but also how stories might hold possibilities for more troubled youth and more problematic contexts. Before we consider what the contributions tell us, however, we need to step back and consider why narrative identity development holds such promise as an approach to positive youth development.

What Does Identity Have to Do with Positive Youth Development?

Developing an identity – a sense of oneself as a unique person with commitments to beliefs and ideologies and a coherent sense of past, present, and future – is a critical task for modern youth. McAdams (1988, 1993) has defined this identity process as an integration of one's past, present, and future to define and unify the self, as well as to provide the self with a sense of purpose. In other words, the task of adolescence is to explore one's past experiences to develop a sense of self that is continuous through time – a temporal coherence that serves to integrate the person (e.g., Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 1988, 1993). Without a sense of continuity over time, it is difficult to care about one's future self, and commitments to the good make little sense. Indeed, from an EriksonIAN (1968) view, it is impossible to manage the major tasks of adulthood – developing intimate bonds with others, caring for future generations, and coming to terms with one's life as lived – without a clear sense of identity.

Identity development research has proceeded for many years without necessarily taking a narrative approach to the problem, and identity researchers have garnered important insights about the process of identity development. First, both as theorized and demonstrated, most theories of identity development emphasize that it occurs in the context of what has gone before, such as earlier experiences and resolutions of childhood tasks such as basic trust (e.g., Meeus, Oosterwegel, & Vollebergh, 2002). So, the process of identity development is smoother for adolescents whose childhood experiences have been healthier.

Once youth begin to construct a sense of identity, most theories of identity development focus on two processes: some sort of exploration or searching to better understand the self and some sort of commitment or integration of the self. Empirically, we know from a variety of sub-areas within the study of identity development that "identity work" is associated with positive developmental outcomes. From an identity status perspective (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Kroger, 2007; Marcia, 1987), the exploration and commitment to identities are associated with more positive relationships, academic achievement, advanced moral reasoning, and higher self-esteem, to name just a few outcomes.

Exploration can come with costs, however, because it allows adolescents to see the complexity and contradictions in their sense of self. As adolescents mature, they have increasingly complex views of the self (e.g., seeing how different characteristics manifest themselves in context-specific ways) and increasing abilities to find coherence in that complexity (e.g., Harter & Monsour, 1992). The dual processes of finding greater complexity and coherence appear to work together in lag-time, in that viewing complexity occurs before the ability to integrate complex views of the self, creating a period of greater conflict or stress in thinking about the self (e.g., Harter & Monsour, 1992; see also Chandler et al., 2003). Similarly, from an identity status perspective, the experience of exploration before commitment (i.e., moratorium) comes with a feeling of anxiety as one is trying to figure out who one is and where one fits (Marcia, 1987).

Exploration and commitment occur within a social context and parents and peers contribute to the process by which adolescents and young adults engage in constructing viable identities. For example, the way parents and adolescents engage in discussions is associated with more or less positive resolutions of identity (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985), and differing social relationships provide different demands and affordances that promote identity complexity and challenge coherence (Harter & Monsour, 1992). Further, identity development is a lifelong process; that is, once constructed, identities are reconstructed, altered, maintained, or discarded in response to changing life circumstances (Kroger, 2007; McAdams, 1993; McLean, 2008). Thus, the identity construction processes of adolescence and emergent adulthood provide a foundation from which people can move forward into adulthood, but are not static, set-in-stone qualities of the person that remain impervious to change.

Identity development researchers have focused a great deal of attention on classifying individuals along the dimensions of exploration, commitment, complexity, and coherence. Similarly, they have examined how contextual factors are linked to those classifications. Attention to the actual process of exploring and committing to identities, or the route by which adolescents navigate complexities and contradictions, has received relatively less attention. That is, how is it, exactly, that youth explore, recognize, and resolve complexity, create coherence, and commitment? Narrative approaches, we believe, offer the best available way to address questions about the process of identity development. Our contributors all take narrative standpoints on identity development, broadly understood.

Why a Narrative Approach to Identity Development?

The simple answer to the above question is that narrative is viewed both as one major process by which identity develops and as a behavior that reflects the current "state" of an individual's identity (Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006; Fivush & Nelson, 2004; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Pasupathi, 2001; see also McAdams, 1993; McAdams, 1996; Pals & McAdams, 2006 for related thinking). In fact, the question of where we are going and where we have been, and how those things are connected, is perhaps best answered via narrative. The idea is that via the process of narrating their experiences, people eventually build a sense of how their past informs the person they are today and how both their past and present point toward an emerging future. That emergent sense of identity can be reflected in two distinctive ways. First, as people engage in narration, they assemble what has been called a life story (McAdams, 1993; McAdams, 1996). A life story is not a full representation of one's life, but a coherent narrative that weaves together experiences that help a person to explain how he or she came to be at this point in time. In addition to the life story itself, the process of narrating stories is also seen as influencing identity more traditionally conceptualized, that is, identity in terms of beliefs, ideological commitments, social roles, and even self-views. Thus, the process of narrating experiences is also one in which identities of all types are explored, committed to, evaluated, discarded, and maintained. Life story researchers pose questions about when the

life story first emerges (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Habermas & de Silveira, 2008; Habermas & Paha, 2001; Negele & Habermas this volume) and about the implications of certain types of life stories versus others (e.g., McAdams, 2006). More broadly, researchers interested in narrative identity development pose questions concerning the elaboration, complexity, and coherence of people's narratives, captured in various ways, and characteristics of the meanings people construct in narrative, including their positivity and negativity.

Regardless of whether researchers are focused on the life story or on a broader conceptualization of identity, people build narrative identities via the interplay of resources available to them internally (e.g., language, cognition, secure attachment) and externally (e.g., audiences for narration, cultural ideas about biographies, narratives, or the self). Further, theorists and researchers suggest that narrative is particularly well-suited for understanding the dynamic interaction of processes within the individual and between the individual and his or her micro- (e.g., family) and macro-environment (e.g., culture), which is how Erikson originally conceptualized identity (see Hammack, 2008). That is, the study of narrative allows for and even requires an understanding of multiple levels of influence for the narrative reconstruction of the personal past.

What We Know: Narrative Identity in Early Childhood and Across Adulthood

Despite the fact that identity construction has long been viewed as a major task for adolescents along with the growing consensus about narrative as a way to examine identity, we know very little about narrative identity in adolescence and much more about narrative identity and related topics in early childhood and across adulthood. This odd gap is connected to differing historical traditions within narrative psychology, and the chapters within this volume draw on precisely those differing traditions.

Following the information processing revolution within cognitive psychology, seminal figures like Bruner (e.g., 1990) began to argue for the use of narrative to capture meaning and to express concern that information processing models would simply prove inadequate for that task. Others within this general arena began looking at narrative in an effort to understand autobiographical remembering, and in particular, the phenomenon of infantile amnesia (e.g., Nelson, 1993). Narratives proved a remarkably useful way to understand the early development of autobiographical memory and the off-set of infantile amnesia, but that same endeavor soon pointed to the importance of remembering and memory narratives for another area of development – the development of self-conceptions.

Autobiographical memory development in early childhood depends in part not only on general neuropsychological maturation (e.g., Bauer, 2006), but also on developing conceptions of self (e.g., Bird & Reese, 2006; Howe & Courage, 1993). Along the way children learn to construct memory narratives in conversations with parents (e.g., Kuebli & Fivush, 1992; Farrant & Reese, 2000; Nelson & Fivush,

2000). Nelson and Fivush (2000) suggested that at age 3 children begin to coherently narrate past events through memory conversations with parents, and it is the process of narration that teaches children both that remembering is valuable and how to narrate the past.

Given theorized connections between self and memory (e.g., Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Pasupathi, 2001), researchers in this area soon began connecting memory narratives from children to indicators of self-development. Those indicators include self-esteem, having a consistent and coherent self-concept, and some aspects of conscience (e.g., Bird & Reese, 2006; Reese, Bird, & Tripp, 2007; Laible, 2004). Much of this work suggested that the elaborative remembering of the past is linked to more positive outcomes in terms of self-development, and more advanced self-development, in turn, supports more elaborative autobiographical remembering. For example, more elaborative reminiscence practices in conversations between parents and children predict positive outcomes, such coping strategies and fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Fivush & Sales, 2006; Sales & Fivush, 2005). Elaborative narration appears particularly important for negative experiences (e.g., Bird & Reese, 2006). Thus, for children between 3 and 8 years of age, aspects of narrative remembering, such as the elaboration of experiences and associated emotional states, are connected to positive self-development. While positive self-development indicators like self-esteem or self-concept coherence are not the same as identity, they may be thought of as developmentally appropriate pre-cursors to identity in adolescence and adulthood.

Other narrative psychologists point to the beginning of narrative in the theories and research of early personality psychologists. Henry Murray's research program on the "Study of Lives" marked an emphasis on the life story as the critical unit for understanding personality and individual development. This tradition emphasizes quite different methods than the autobiographical memory tradition, such as in-depth case studies, and qualitative analyses of extended narrative accounts of life stories. More recently personality psychologists have moved toward quantitative approaches to the study of the life story (e.g., McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001; Pals, 2006), but the emphasis here lies predominantly in understanding identity in terms of the individuals' internal representations and reconstructions of past experiences. Narratives are seen as windows to those internalized representations – or reflections of the internal psychological structure of identity.

This work on adults' narratives has, as with the child work, not only emphasized the elaboration of narratives, but also emphasized whether those narratives are coherent, the extent to which they emphasize positive or negative emotion, and in what sequence, as well as the thematic content of narratives (e.g., Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Fiese et al., 1999; McAdams, 1988; Woike, Gershkovich, Piorkowski, & Polo, 1999). There are two overarching questions, not mutually exclusive, posed by this work. One is descriptive, in the sense of attempting to capture individual differences in the construction of narratives and relate them to other personality-relevant characteristics of the person, such as traits and motives (e.g., McAdams et al., 2004; Woike, 1995). The second is somewhat prescriptive, in

that it attempts to link some ways of constructing narratives to a healthier or more adaptive personality (e.g., McAdams et al., 2001; Pals, 2006). As it happens, these elements of narrative identity, elaboration, meanings, coherence, and thematic content, are related to important aspects of well-being and adjustment. That is, those with more coherent, redemptive, and elaborated life stories are more likely to have higher self-esteem, well-being, and lower depression (McAdams et al., 2001), more positive personality profiles (McAdams et al., 2004), and are more likely to be identity achieved (McLean & Pratt, 2006). A small body of work also supports the idea that listeners are still relevant to narrative identity among adults (Pasupathi, 2001; Pasupathi & Rich, 2005; Pasupathi & Hoyt, 2009; Thorne, 2000), primarily in supporting the construction of elaborate and meaning-laden narratives.

Although not concerned with the development of narrative identity, one final tradition in narrative work, and one primarily focused on adolescents and adults (e.g., Bamberg, 2006; Korobov & Bamberg, 2004), arises from the study of hermeneutics and other literary traditions, which focus on the interpretation and understanding of texts and systems of meaning. Within this tradition, the emphasis is on critical analysis of texts, broadly defined, for their engagement with societal structures and institutions (e.g., Harré, 1983). The focus is typically on qualitative examinations of multiplicity, interpretation processes, and critical reflection, rather than a quantitative perspective emphasizing psychological features. Contributors to the present volume are operating from a more psychological standpoint, drawing on one or both of the personality and cognitive developmental memory traditions described above. Still, the hermeneutic tradition is evident in contributions that examine ways that individuals negotiate with larger institutions and representations of society.

Why We Need to Better Understand Narrative Identity in Adolescence

Existing work on narrative identity offers clear conclusions that we can draw about narrative development in early childhood and narrative identity in adulthood. As suggested by the brief review above, we know that positive stories, negative stories that are explained or redeemed, coherence, and elaboration are all linked to positive aspects of development in both childhood and adulthood. Interestingly, in childhood the research is heavily focused on how parents aid or scaffold their children's narrative development and on indicators of self-development that fall somewhat short of identity. By contrast, in adulthood, the research is focused on internalized representations of narrative, with less of a focus on the contexts of development. Adult work suggests how more fully formed narrative identities relate to personality and adjustment and how identities can shift with new experiences and life stages.

Both of these literatures confirm the critical importance of looking at narrative identity development. They support the idea that narrative identity is consequential for well-being and adjustment in adulthood, for example. They illuminate the early developmental processes by which children acquire the capacity for creating narrative identity (and suggest links to positive developmental outcomes even in

early childhood). However, existing literatures also do not address narrative identity development during the period in which that development emerges. Doing so is important for our understanding of narrative identity development as researchers and is also important for many of the more practical concerns with which we opened this chapter.

From a research standpoint, it is during adolescence when identity begins to be formed, using the precursors from childhood and setting the stage for consolidation in adulthood. Moreover, the contexts for narrative identity development are shifting during adolescence from narration with parents, to narration with peers and romantic partners. The exploration of various identities highlighted by identity theorists is, for narrative identity, co-occurring with a broadening of the audiences with whom youth construct narratives. From an applied standpoint, consider how we help youth make a positive transition to adulthood. Identity theorists propose that a coherent, positive, and authentic sense of identity helps youth make decisions, hold to commitments, and move toward adult life. Narrative identity theorists argue that such a coherent, positive, and authentic sense of identity will be built via constructing narratives about one's life – linking past, present, and future. But as yet, there is relatively little data on adolescent narrative identity – telling us what factors affect the way youth build those desirable identities – coherent, positive, and authentic ones, and how parents, educators, and policy makers can foster the conditions under which those identities are constructed.

The dearth of research on adolescent narrative identity is being rapidly addressed as researchers from the child and adult literatures converge on adolescence and therein lies the rationale for the present volume. Thus, this book represents the emergence of a new field within the world of narrative psychology – adolescent narrative development. Researchers who specialize in adolescence and have turned to narrative work, as well as those who have previously examined narrative identity with adults or younger children are represented in this volume. This volume represents a snapshot of the beginning of this field. As with any emerging specialty area, the methodology is diverse, and indeed, one of the contributions of the present volume involves an array of alternative methods for addressing narrative data. Next, we turn to the contents of the present volume. We first outline the two major questions addressed by most of the contributors and what their chapters suggest about preliminary answers to those questions. We then consider some of the emergent themes that unify the contributions and where they point the field for future work.

The Present Volume

What Develops in Adolescence, and How Is That Development Linked to Other Aspects of Self?

Many of our contributions suggest that narrative identity development across adolescence entails increasingly elaborated narratives. That elaboration is not simply

elaboration of all aspects of narrative. Rather, it coincides with the emergence of qualitatively distinct tools for creating coherence, continuity, and meaning in the life story. For example, for older adolescents and very young adults, our contributors point to two other developments: (1) the capacity to construct narratives in which experiences shaped, molded, or changed one's sense of self (see also McLean, Breen & Fournier., in press; McLean & Breen, 2009); and (2) the capacity to construct narratives in which changing perspectives on an event are represented. In some sense, these developmental changes are synonymous with the emergence of narrative identity itself – they reflect a burgeoning capacity to construct meanings in the context of narrating the past.

In this volume, Reese and her co-authors, Fivush and her co-authors, and Negele and Habermas provide further detail about how these adolescent achievements unfold, how they are situated within the childhood that preceded them, and their implications for positive adjustment. First, not surprisingly, narratives get more complex across adolescence. For example, Negele and Habermas show that over time adolescents report more explicit meaning and explanation about how their autobiographical past connects to the present self. Second, adolescent narratives are predicted by earlier practices of conversational narration with parents. For example, Reese and colleagues show how mother's references to their child's emotions at age 3 predict the child's references to his or her own emotions at 12 years. Finally, these authors also show that examinations of narrative make a simplistic emphasis on positivity problematic. That is, elaboration of negativity appears to play important roles in fostering narrative identity development. Fivush and colleagues elaborate on these issues in the context of family reminiscing and how gender moderates the relation between narrative practices in middle childhood and adolescent adjustment.

Other chapters suggest relationships between narrative and other aspects of functioning from more qualitative work. For example, Weeks and Pasupathi explore the issue of autonomy in relation to parent–child and peer–peer reminiscing and suggest that problematic parent–child narration may be mirrored in peer–peer recall, at least for some individuals, leading to a broader problem in building an autonomous and authentic identity during adolescence. A number of contributions (Breen & McLean; Daiute; Matsuba & colleagues, Spera and Lightfoot; Eagan & Thorne) also suggest from a more qualitative or case-based standpoint that the way adolescents construct narratives about their lives may be related to their adaptation indexed in other ways – cessation of substance abuse, capacity to deal with conflict, academic progress, achieving stable relationship and job situations, and the construction of legitimate and achievable possible selves.

These contributions are exciting because as whole, they suggest that both elaboration in general and specific types of elaboration, or meanings, are showing growth over adolescence and that these identity-relevant features of narratives are connected to other developmental outcomes. Finally, they suggest continuity of narrative identity development during adolescence with early childhood developments. Methodologically, these chapters point to the value of particular features of narrative identity – specific types of meanings, for example – in capturing the developmental emergence of narrative identity.

What Are the Contexts of Adolescent Narrative Identity Development?

Our contributors also share a common focus on the contexts of narrative identity development, examining question of how contextual factors are associated with fostering or inhibiting the construction of coherent, complex, and positive narrative identities. Narrative work focuses on context at a variety of levels. In this volume, several contributors (Eagan & Thorne; Fivush & colleagues; Reese & colleagues; Pratt & colleagues; Weeks & Pasupathi) all highlight the role played by familial contexts in constructing narrative identity. Reese and colleagues show that early childhood reminiscence practices with mothers predicts adolescent's autonomous reports of their own life stories. Fivush and colleagues show the ways in which the entire family works together to construct narratives in middle childhood predicts later adolescent adjustment. Pratt and colleagues look to older generations to show how grandparent's stories become integrated into late adolescent narrative identity. Finally, Weeks and Pasupathi compare the roles of parents and friends in helping (or hindering) the construction of adolescent narrative identity.

Broader contextual factors also matter, and here, contributors to the volume have examined contexts of risk (Breen & McLean; Daiute; Matsuba & colleagues; Spera & Lightfoot; Wainryb & colleagues). While their methodological approaches and samples vary widely, their contributions share a common concern with issues of coherence that are linked to vulnerable samples in risky contexts, which we address in a discussion of important issues facing narrative researchers. Overall, these chapters on risk suggest that vulnerable adolescents' narratives reveal varied and real problems with coherence; they also reveal serious desires for transformation and offer some hope for personal growth that relate to narrated change.

Where Should We Go from Here? Emerging Themes and Issues

In terms of the particular issues relevant to adolescence, the chapters in this volume and emerging data elsewhere suggest that narrative identity is consequential for adolescents' well-being and adjustment. While work remains to be done in elaborating those connections, the potential importance of narrative identity is demonstrated in this volume. Given that importance, it becomes critical to illuminate the ways that we can foster adaptive narrative identity development in youth. The present volume leaves three issues highlighted as critical directions in that endeavor.

First, adolescence is a time when individuals are beginning to negotiate growing independence in the context of maintaining and even deepening relationships with parents (e.g., Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Researchers will need to examine in greater detail how scaffolding and support from others, namely parents, shift as adolescents make strides toward autonomy and how others, namely peers, might play roles in helping to construct narrative identity.

Second, the contributions highlight the variety among adolescents such as age, background, and capacity in terms of the resources they have to wrestle with to

manage the task of identity development, yet that individual variation has not been a focus of the work reported in this volume. Thus, researchers will also need to examine more systematically what kinds of variations between individual adolescents are consequential for narrative identity processes. These may include personality and motivational differences and also the availability of good listeners for the construction of narrative identity.

Third, adolescence brings a uniquely greater awareness of the broader world, including media representations, politics, cultural shifts, and historical events. This raises the third issue for future work, which is to examine how media and the unfolding of historical events, in addition to proximal contexts like families and friends, affect the development of narrative identity. Contributions in this volume point to these issues as relevant and important, but are far from providing a conclusive examination of the cultural and historical shaping of self.

Finally, these chapters highlight the ways in which narrative-process approaches can highlight developmental outcomes outside those of the usual focus for at-risk populations. Spera and Lightfoot emphasize moving from a focus on solely negative outcomes to more complex analyses of adolescent motherhood. Daiute shows that PTSD is not the only avenue for research on children who have experienced war and violence and that broader developmental issues like identity and perspective-taking are also relevant (see also, Wainryb & Pasupathi, in press). Finally, Breen and McLean highlight that to understand desistance from criminal activity, a focus on behavior alone is not enough (see also Maruna, 2001). That is, narrative approaches bring a different lens to traditional studies of at-risk youth that are relevant and useful.

The contributions in this volume also offer important directions for future work on narrative identity broadly, whether in terms of novel methodologies (Matsuba and colleagues) or novel issues (e.g., Eagan & Thorne). Rather than exhaustively reviewing all of those issues and potential directions, here, we focus on one emergent set of issues in the present volume's contributions. That set of issues concerns the variations and complexities inherent in the idea of coherence. Coherence has traditionally been one of the broader concerns in work on narrative identity (e.g., Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Fiese et al., 1999; Fivush, Haden, & Adam, 1995). The included contributions highlight many ways in which coherence can be violated, and these are especially well-illustrated in the at-risk samples, given the prevalence of incoherence in these samples, although normative samples were not immune to coherence problems (Weeks & Pasupathi). One of the emergent "messages" of these contributions involves an outlining of what kinds of coherence can be examined in narratives, and as a result, what violations of coherence may be of interest to explore further.

In part, these chapters demonstrate coherence violations in the relations between aspects of the story itself. The most traditional work on narrative coherence in the broader literature is often focused on this type of coherence as well (e.g., Baerger & McAdams, 1999). For example, both Spera and Lightfoot's and Breen and McLean's contributions show how adolescent mothers contradict themselves within their stories and within the interview or activity setting itself. Wainryb

and colleagues illustrate the way that violent youth offenders failed to create narratives in which actions cohered around psychological states such as emotions, desires, or beliefs. These examples highlight that a good deal of the incoherence relates to a lack of provision of two types of event details –what *actually happened* and the *psychological experience relating happenings to internal states.* For example, Fivush and colleagues highlight the importance of including sufficient factual elaboration in narratives of negative events, while Wainryb and colleagues illustrate that facts alone do not constitute an adequate narrative for coherence. In many of the samples showing coherence issues of this type, the participants either clearly (Breen & McLean; Eagan & Thorne; Matsuba and colleagues; Spera & Lightfoot) or likely (Wainryb and colleagues) had problematic early childhood experiences, in which the scaffolding of narrative development may have been lacking.

One way to think about the importance of coherence between what actually happened and psychological experience is via the concept of personal agency as reflected in narrative identity (see also Hauser, Allen, & Golden, 2006). That is, failing to cohere the facts around the psychological experience of agents making choices and experiencing events creates a lack of agency that is deeply problematic. Wainryb and colleagues discuss the diminished agency and lack of internal mental life in reference to decision-making; that is, those adolescents who do not consider themselves an agent can neither take responsibility for or make meaning of their transgressions; nor can they change their behavior for the better. Spera and Lightfoot give examples of a striking lack of agency in the adolescent mother's discussions of their sexual experiences. Breen and McLean discuss the case of a teenage mother who does not appear to be making agentic decisions about changing her life, which they also connect to her dearth of meaning-making. Matsuba et al. also discuss the risks of a lack of agency for marginalized populations and at-risk youth. Finally, Daiute shows that a lack of agency, as defined by the use of internal state language, is related to one's position vis a vis political conflict. Again, other contributions suggest that the capacity to construct agentic stories in adolescence is likely linked to earlier childhood experiences with responsive listening from important others, as elaborated and responsive listening has been shown to predict more elaborated and independent remembering in children (Cleveland & Reese, 2005), more interpretative, or meaning-laden stories, in a college sample (Pasupathi & Hoyt, 2009), and greater integration of negative experiences within a sense of the self as having grown (Weeks & Pasupathi, in preparation).

A more novel form of incoherence for the narrative identity world is the possibility raised by Eagan and Thorne, in which two audiences interpret the same story in very different ways. One implication of this phenomenon for adolescent narrative identity that we propose is that narrative identity may not only have to do with telling stories, but also with hearing and interpreting other's stories. That is, how do adolescents make sense of each other's stories? Indeed, it is possible and even likely that how one thinks about other's stories is, in part, related to one's own narrative identity. Another implication of this work is a cautionary one – narratives are constructed for particular audiences, and adolescents make assumptions about both

what those audiences wish to hear (Breen & McLean, Eagan & Thorne; Weeks & Pasupathi), and also make choices about what they are willing to tell those audiences (Weeks & Pasupathi). Readers who are not the intended recipient of a narrative may need to account for the intended audience in order to reach adequate interpretations.

But perhaps the most critical issue raised by these chapters is the issue of the reality of one's life and the relationship between those realities and one's stories. That is, what actually happens can be inconsistent with the stories being told. For example, in Weeks and Pasupathi two youth are challenged about the "facts" of their assertions about anger. One youth finds a way to resolve that challenge by contextualizing his assertion. The other simply ignores the challenge and switches topics. One can speculate that the former youth is likely to experience himself as more coherent and authentic, because he attempts to incorporate the perspectives of others and arrive at a sense of identity more grounded in his own past behavior and the beliefs of his friends and family.

This pattern was particularly evident in the chapters on at-risk youth, perhaps, because the facts of their lives are more difficult to acknowledge in their narratives. Thus, the negotiation of reality and fiction may be particularly important for at-risk youth. Specifically, Breen and McLean discuss the transformative stories that one of their informants tells in relation to her continued delinquent behavior elicited via a self-report survey. These chapters raise a critical question for researchers to continue investigating about the relationship between changing behavior or external realities and the creation of one's personal stories. That is, if you tell a story of transformation, have you indeed been transformed?

Overall and across the diversity of studies and samples in this book, these chapters highlight the recent claim of Fivush et al. (2006) (among others, e.g., McLean et al., 2007; Pasupathi, 2001; Thorne, 2000) that narrative is a critical developmental process, in this case for the development of a healthy narrative identity. These chapters are consistent with this process perspective in that some are explicitly and empirically processes approaches in their prospective longitudinal designs and some discuss the processes relevant to the tasks of their studies. The importance of identifying and testing the developmental processes that predict and facilitate healthy development is one of the major tasks of developmental scientists and these contributions offer important and unique perspectives on the process of narrative development in adolescence.

In conclusion, these chapters showcase the shifts from the relatively simple meanings that children construct around their experiences, to the identity-creating, longer-term meanings that have been the focus of adult narrative identity researchers. Moreover, we see shifts in the ways that childhood reminiscing connects to adolescent meaning, identity, and well-being, and we see continuities and important new directions regarding the relevance of contexts. Finally, narratives look promising for identifying vulnerabilities and, more speculatively, for fostering transformation in adolescents whose developmental histories are far from optimal. In some cases, that transformation is critical for collective futures as well as individual adolescent's development.

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Self-Continuity Across Developmental Change in and of Repeated Life Narratives

Alexa Negele and Tilmann Habermas

> *A man who had not seen Herr K. for a long time greeted him with the words: "You haven't changed at all." "Oh!" said Herr K., and turned pale.*
> *(From Bertolt Brecht,* Stories of Herr Keuner*)*

1. So, I was born in Frankfurt, in 1982,
2. and, concerning childhood, you usually don't remember that much,
3. possibly, the stories are all invented, uhm,
4. I think,
5. I'd still know
6. which stories I told last time,
7. but, but I think,
8. today I will tell different stories than last time (LUCAS, time 2, age 24)

LUCAS participated in our longitudinal study of 8-, 12-, 16-, and 20-year olds, who narrated and re-narrated 4 years later their life stories in a free-standing monologue. He initiates his second life narrative at time 2 by referring to his first life narrative at time 1 or at least to the stories he remembers having told then. He also lets us know that this time he will tell different stories about his life, providing a changed version of his life and providing continuity across developmental change. In this chapter we ask both how adolescents reflect on biographical change and continuity in repeated life narratives, and how stable life narratives are across time by comparing them in exploratory analyses of repeated life narratives of eight adolescents and young adults from a 4-year longitudinal study.

Life narratives are manifestations of the subjective representation of one's life course. They interpret a life through explicit statements on the narrator's identity and self-concept as well as by selecting specific personal experiences to be included in the narrative. The narrator answers the questions "Who am I?" and "How have I become the person I am today?" by reconstructing his or her personality

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development from the present point of view. Erikson's (1968) theory implies that the most complex and often most adequate form of conceiving identity from adolescence onward is the life story. Therefore, McAdams (1985) suggested viewing the development of the life story in adolescence as the epitome of adolescent identity development. The form of the life story allows a more flexible integration of past identifications with a variety of present self-chosen identifications and ascribed identities.

To claim to be a credible, responsible person one needs to provide a plausible account that one is the same person now as in the past (Bieri, 1986). Subjectively, a sense of identity requires also a sense of personal continuity. The implicit task in narrating one's life is to convince the listener of an integrated identity or self-concept by constructing continuities and dealing with discontinuities (Linde, 1993). On the other hand individuals are also expected to develop and give a direction to their lives (as expressed by *Herr Keuner*). So, subjectively a sense of identity also requires a sense of giving direction to one's actions and life. Change and discontinuity in life can even be considered to be a precondition for life narratives. Rosenthal (1995) used the example of the life story of a nun living a highly regulated and constant life in a convent to show that a life without discontinuity makes it difficult to construct a life narrative at all. Especially in adolescence, a time of biologically and socially determined change, discontinuities are the central problem of life narratives which need to be integrated to allow a feeling of self-sameness and identity, yet at the same time allow room for change and development.

In this chapter we focus on the ways in which the central task of life narratives, to establish identity in the sense of self-continuity across developmental change, may be accomplished and how these ways are acquired across adolescence. We are interested both in the subjective view on continuity and change as reflected in statements in life narratives and in an external view on how this subjective view, that is, life narratives, changes. While the development of the narrative means to create continuity can be studied cross-sectionally, the continuity and change of life narratives themselves need to be studied longitudinally. We consider the analysis of repeated life narratives across several years as a promising path for tackling this double task. Before turning to exploratory analyses of some repeated narratives, we sketch narrative means to mediate personal change with personal continuity in life narratives, briefly touch upon related developmental aspects, and finally delineate our expectations for the representation of continuity and change in and of life narratives.

Continuity and Change as Represented in Life Narratives

Continuity and change in a life are mediated with each other in life narratives by the means of autobiographical reasoning (Habermas & Bluck, 2000), that is, by arguments which relate the single events of a life with each other and the development of an enduring personality and identity. We propose three major groups of biographical

arguments which serve to bridge change and continuity in life narratives by transcending single events and local contexts and stretching across substantial parts of life. A first group of arguments consists of explicit comparisons of the past with the present. They serve to relate the narrated time to the narrating time, that is, to mark the relevance of what has been for what is by stating a contrast ("today no longer"), continuity ("today still"), or relative continuity from a specific point in time onward ("ever since") (Habermas & Paha, 2001). The latter is an especially efficient means to link change to continuity, because it relates an event to a change which in turn produces long-lasting continuity.

A second group of arguments dealing with continuity and change are statements about personality and biographical facts. They imply a statement about long-term personal continuity or, if a change in personality is stated, about long-term change. In her book on life narratives, Linde (1993) argues that causality is the most important mechanism for bridging discontinuities in time, especially if applied to personality. She describes two specifically biographical explanations linking the temporal with the categorical perspective, that is, events with personality. If personality is used to explain actions or events, local events are assimilated to enduring personality traits, thereby creating continuity. If events are used to explain a change in personality, a major discontinuity (in personality) is bridged by tying it to specific experiences and providing plausible reasons for this change. Pasupathi and colleagues describe two further links between events and personality, the negation of the explanation of an event by personality, namely, dismissing an action or event as deriving from a person's personality ("not like me experience"), and an experience revealing *an aspect of the narrator's personality* he or she had not realized before (Pasupathi & Mansour, 2006; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007). Events may also be made responsible for changes which are expressed in *past–present comparisons ("since then experience")* mentioned above.

Finally, a third group of arguments are statements about subjective perspectives which express the narrator's understanding of continuity and change. Subjective perspectives allow one to recount one's life as a cognitive progression toward deeper levels of understanding. Questioning one's past understanding helps to convince the listener that the narrator is a person seeking truth by reflecting his or her own personality development. If these are enduring subjective perspectives or if their change implies lasting changes in the subjective outlook such as in *learning specific lessons* or gaining a more general *insight* (Bluck & Glück, 2004; Habermas & Paha, 2001; McLean, 2005; McLean & Pratt, 2006; McLean & Thorne, 2003), they contribute to creating continuity in life. Again the most interesting object of subjective perspectives is personality. One may come to a better understanding of one's personality, may evaluate or re-evaluate specific traits, and plan to stay true to or to change specific aspects of one's personality. Also, subjective perspectives are central for self-continuity not only if they are stable. If an understanding or evaluation changes this may still contribute to a sense of continuity if the change is not arbitrary but depicted as guided by the search for the more encompassing truth and the more general good or if the change is motivated by learning from life experiences. In re-narrated life stories these subjective perspectives may be again re-interpreted. Being

someone in search of truth then is what remains stable across all external and internal changes. Re-interpretations may be part of any life narrative. Studying retold life narratives of the same person offers a special occasion for observing the later re-interpretation (time 2) of first re-interpretations (time 1) of an original experience as part of life as lived.

The Development of the Self-Concept and Narrative Development

From a developmental perspective, the interweaving of life events with identity requires the merging of two developmental lines that of the development of the self-concept and of narrative development. Children learn how to narrate an event in the preschool years and optimize this ability throughout the grade school (Peterson & McCabe, 1983). They acquire this ability in cooperative memory talk with adults (Haden, Haine, & Fivush, 1997; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). The self-concept, or, for that matter, also the person concept, develops during childhood taking on various diachronic forms, culminating in early adolescence in a relatively stereotypic view of abstract personality traits. Only in middle adolescence a diachronic self-concept emerges, framing individuals within the context of their life story (Damon & Hart, 1986; Selman, 1980). A diachronic self takes on the form of a life story.

Working with interviews within a cognitive-developmental framework, Chandler and colleagues have studied specifically the development of conceptions of personal continuity, paralleling the development of the self-concept. For example at Level 3, personality change is conceived of as occurring only in the surface manifestations of the underlying traits. Past and present self are considered to be functionally continuous. At Level 4, a developmental conception of continuity frames the past self as a necessary precondition for, and basis of, the present self without requiring any element to remain identical over time. The biographical argument of explaining personality change by reference to an event is an example for this level. At Level 5, self-continuity is understood as existing only in the consistency of retrospective autobiographical interpretation and reconstruction of one's life story (Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003). The biographical argument of establishing personal continuity by reference to the continuity of one's perspective on life, for instance, as being someone in search of understanding and truth, is an example for this level.

The developmental claim that the life story develops only in adolescence (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 1985) has been substantiated first in a small sample of 12 12-, 15-, and 18-year olds (Habermas & Paha, 2001) and then in a sample of a total of 110 8-, 12-, 16-, and 20-year olds. They narrated their entire lives in a free-standing monologue for 15 minutes. In the second study, they told a second life narrative 2 weeks later to a different interviewer. A variety of measures of global coherence in life narratives were applied (Habermas & Paha, 2001; Habermas & de Silveira, 2008; Habermas, Ehlert-Lerche, & de Silveira, in press). With regard to most indicators, among them some of the biographical arguments

introduced above that link continuity and change to identity, the life narratives of the 8-year olds failed to be globally coherent. Most of them rather were collections of interesting stories with little or no explicit connections among each other. The advance of the ability to create globally coherent life narratives during adolescence rests on the social-cognitive and narrative developments outlined above.

Furthermore, adolescence also provides the motivation to create personal continuity in the form of globally coherent life narratives, because it is a time of major changes which are beyond the control of the adolescent, being brought about by sexual maturation and social demands of becoming a responsible member of society. Western societies also provide the cultural form of biography which allows constructing the life story, by offering written biographies, novels, diaries, and public discussions of life stories.

Continuity and Change of Life Narratives

Thus far, we have discussed the development of ways of representing personal continuity and change. In this chapter we will take one step further and explore longitudinally how life narratives themselves remain stable or change over time. The basic methodology we apply is to segment the life narratives into single stories and to compare which events are narrated again and which are not.

Similarly, Schiff (2005) analyzed two life narratives in the form of two interviews of a single Holocaust survivor 13 years apart. He employed a method of structural interpretation which he termed "narrative mapping" based on Labov and Waletzky (1967). Schiff aimed at visualizing the consistency between the two interviews, framing them as sequences of narratives. Furthermore, he studied the individual episodes that were repeated concentrating on their evaluations. His method of segmenting the narratives is different from ours, yet the method of comparing segments is similar to ours.

We ask five questions. First, we ask how stable life narratives are across different age ranges in terms of how many events are selected again to be included in the life narratives and how many are selected for the first time. Second, we will compare the repeatedly narrated memories expecting different kinds of re-narrations. We anticipate both a condensation of the narrative and an increase in distance and interpretation of the memories, as observed by Josselson (2000) in early childhood memories retold across 22 years. A third question will ask for possible reasons why some events which were narrated at time 1 are only mentioned or are narrated with a different focus at time 2, a phenomenon we term *hidden re-narrations*. A fourth question we pursue is why memories which could have been told at time 1 are told for the first time 4 years later at time 2. We consider that re-interpretations and re-evaluations of events may attribute new and increased personal meaning to them, motivating narrators to include them in their life narrative for the first time. A final fifth question regards which memories are added at time 2 from the new period of life from between time 1 and time 2.

Exploring Eight Adolescents' Life Narratives

In this chapter we study biographical continuity and change as represented in life narratives and as reflected in the continuity and change of life narratives across 4 years. For exploratory purposes we present eight subjects equally divided by sex and age, who told their life narratives twice, 4 years apart, for 15–20 minutes. One male and one female participant each was aged 8, 12, 16, and 20 years, respectively, at the time of the first life narrative and 4 years older at the time of the second narration. The material is taken from a larger study.

The Study

In the first wave of data collection, a total of 110 8-, 12-, 16-, and 20-year olds narrated their lives (Habermas & de Silveira, 2008). The youngest were chosen from among the better students from three classes of an elementary school in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, since in Germany at age 10 children are sent to three different school tracks, Gymnasium being the best of the three, leading to university access. The 12- and 16-year olds were sampled from three classes of a typical Frankfurt secondary school, Gymnasium, comparable in the mixed social composition of its students to the elementary school. The oldest age group was sampled from former students of the same Gymnasium. All participants spoke German fluently. Each narrator received a small honorarium. Four years later we asked them to narrate their lives again. Participants were approached by mail. Overall, 90.9% of the original sample re-narrated their lives at time 2.

At time 1, most participants told their lives twice, 2 weeks apart, to two different female interviewers. Four years later participants re-narrated their life story, again to a different female interviewer. The interviewers did not have any knowledge of the participants' earlier life narratives. This was made explicit in the interview situations in order to avoid participants taking recourse or relating to an earlier narrative or remembered interview situations. For the purposes of this chapter, we only consider the first of the two life narratives recounted at time 1, comparing it with the life narrative recounted 4 years later at time 2.

Prior to recounting their life story for about 15 minutes, participants wrote their seven most important specific memories on index cards and ordered them in chronological order on the table in front of them. They were instructed to include these seven memories in their life narratives. The life narrative instruction said:

> I'd like you to tell me a story about your whole life. Please think about all the events which have happened in your life since you were born. For example, you can tell me about the most important events in your life and the biggest changes. You can tell me things which someone like me who doesn't know you might like to know about you. You can also tell me how what you have experienced is still important to you today and how it has influenced what kind of person you are today. I am interested in your coherent life story. [. . .].

Interviewers did not intervene in the narration but encouraged participants to continue whenever necessary. Life narratives were tape recorded and transcribed

verbatim. The text was divided into propositions by two trained coders (96% inter-rater agreement on the basis of 20 life narratives) following a manual by Habermas, Hachenberg and Stauffenberg (2003). Then the life stories were segmented into thematic sections of at least four propositions by trained coders ($\kappa = 0.82$ on the basis of 16 life narratives) following a manual by Diel, Elian, and Weber (2007). Whereas propositions are the adequate level for coding linguistic elements, segments allow more content-based ratings and codings. Here, we use segments as the basic unit of analysis.

In exemplary analyses of the two life narratives of eight adolescents we will illustrate continuity and change of life narratives after 4 years and how continuity and change are represented in them and explore the five questions outlined above by using re-narrated segments as illustrations. The excerpts have been translated from German by the first author. The propositions are numbered starting with 1, which is not identical with the beginning of the life narrative from which the excerpt is taken.

In our exploratory sample of eight participants the number of segments tended to increase only moderately both with age and retelling (see Fig. 1.1). Segments were compared between tellings to identify four kinds of relationships between the life narratives at time 1 and time 2. (1) Segments were judged to be retold by one (or sometimes two) segment in the second life narrative if they had the same content as

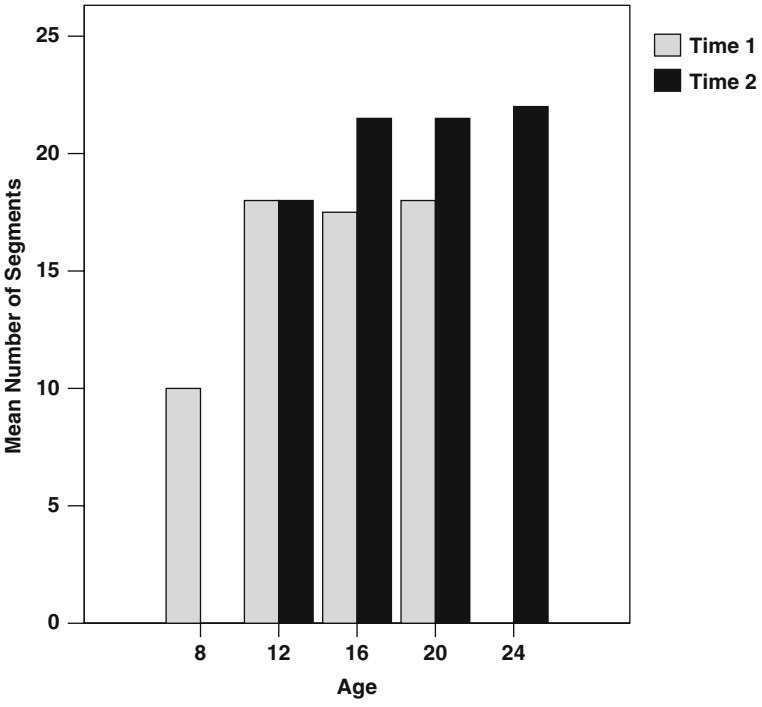

Fig. 1.1 Mean number of segments in 16 life narratives by age and measurement time

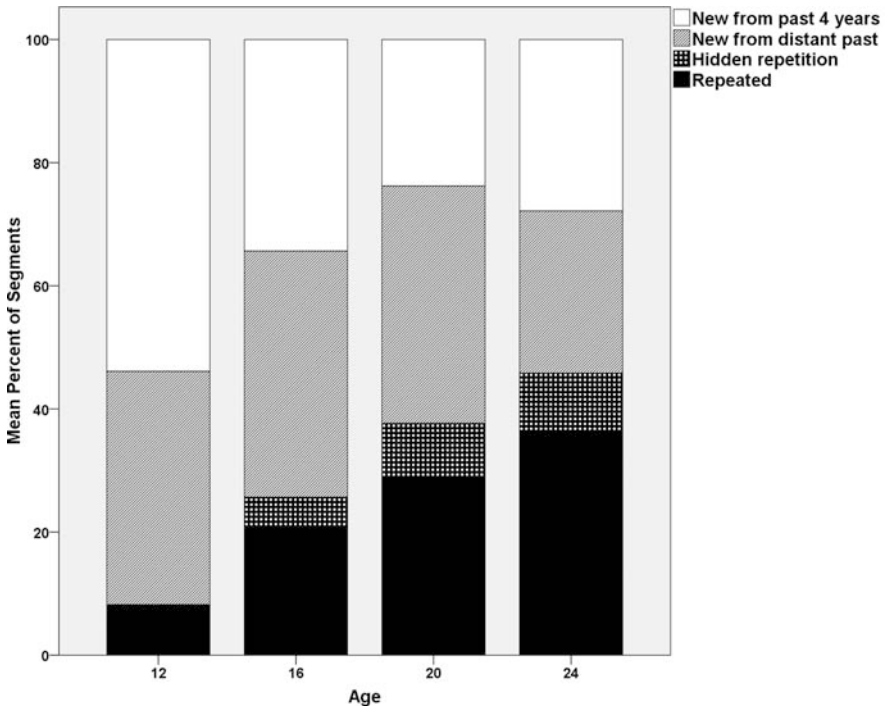

Fig. 1.2 Mean percent of repeated and new segments in eight re-narrated life narratives

their focus. (2) Segments were judged to be hidden re-narrations if the original focus was only mentioned as a side aspect or if a different aspect of the same experience was chosen to be narrated at time 2. (3) Segments with new content were divided into those which could have been told in the first narrative (4) and those concerning new events which had only taken place in the 4 years following time 1. Figure 1.2 shows these four kinds of continuity and change between tellings by age.

Stability of Selected Life Events Across Tellings

The basic stability of life narratives may be counted in terms of how many episodes are narrated again and how many are new. Recently, McAdams and colleagues (2006) studied the stability of written accounts of 10 separately elicited, specific key memories such as peak and nadir experiences from 87 Freshmen (aged 18–19) and Senior College students (aged 20–23) and again after 3 months and after 3 years. Thus while we elicited entire, uninterrupted life narratives, McAdams collected ten different, separate memories which were not integrated into a single narrative of the whole life. Although McAdams asks for memories in a way that makes it highly probable that these memories are prominent in the life story, he asks only for specific sections of the life story, not for the whole story with all its connecting links.

McAdams and colleagues (2006) studied the stability of various aspects of the ten memory narratives, with length, complexity, and evaluative tone being most stable across 3 years (correlations of 0.6 and more), while motivational themes of agency, community, and personal growth were less stable. Stability in terms of how many events were selected for being re-narrated was relatively low. After 3 months, a mean of 2.3 episodes out of 10 were narrated again. After 3 years, only a mean of 1.7 out of 10 memories remained identical to the ones told at time 1.

As we believe that a relatively stable life story schema (Bluck & Habermas, 2000) is used to construct life narratives, we expect entire life narratives to be somewhat more stable than single memories provided in reply to specific criteria in terms of the events selected, because entire life narratives are more directly derived from the life story schema than single memories are. Therefore, we expect our oldest group which is comparable in age to that of McAdams (2006) to select more than 17% identical memories when re-narrating their entire lives. In addition, as we believe that the ability to construct globally coherent life narratives, which emerges around age 12 (Habermas & de Silveira, 2008), helps to construct a stable life story schema, we expect life narratives to become more stable starting from age 12.

Stability of life narratives in terms of whether the same episodes and topics are narrated again is evidenced by the proportion of repeated and hiddenly repeated segments (see Fig. 1.2). In the oldest group, over a third of the segments are re-narrated, clearly surpassing the percentage of single memories re-narrated by McAdams' et al. (2006) students. This proportion increases most drastically between ages 12 and 16. While 12-year olds tend to narrate almost entirely new life narratives when compared to 4 years earlier (at age 8), 16-year olds appear to build on a stock of old memories which already make up about a quarter of the segments.

Segments Re-narrated After 4 Years

Comparing narrations of the same event after 4 years, we find that re-narrations differ in two ways from the original narrative. They are both more condensed and distanced and they focus more on meaning making. The older the narrator, the more he or she explicitly states continuity or change in life, especially in subjective perspectives. From age 20 onward we observe re-evaluations and re-interpretations. We have the impression that both age and temporal distance support the use of a more distanced and condensed narrative style, giving space to processes of personality integration. We arranged the following illustrating excerpts according to the participants' age.

Eight-year-old ANNA in her first life narrative (time 1) speaks about her parents' separation that she badly regrets and tells us about her father's new family.

1. I really, really regret
2. that my parents are separated
3. and that my father married another woman
4. unfortunately there is nothing I can do about it
5. and I already have a step brother (ANNA, time 1, age 8)

Four years later ANNA provides us with this biographical information in a much more condensed way in a single proposition (line 3) and immediately turns back to what this move meant to her, yet in a far more positive tone than before.

1. I actually can't remember so much from my childhood
2. but I do remember
3. that when I was three or four years old
4. we moved away from my father and uhm
5. then I of course uhm met a lot of new friends (ANNA, time 2, age 12)

Younger narrators, especially the 12- and 16-year olds, appear to report more details and particulars to show who they are. The recent experience dominates the narrative and is narrated in detail without, however, evaluating its meaning for one's life and personality development. MARTHA at age 12 (time 1) tells us about her first bad mark in school. She narrates this experience at such length (86 propositions) that we cannot present the excerpt here. At time 2 this memorable event takes on the meaning of a turning point in her school career and scholastic self-concept.

1. I also was a very good student
2. and actually I was always pretty assiduous in school
3. and then some day in sixth grade I wrote a D in English
4. this, so, this was really horrible
5. I really found this, so wow, ah
6. because no one could believe this happened to me
7. "oh, MARTHA, the grade grabber got a D, ha, so spectacular, everything super"
8. and then, I just didn't want to realize it
9. all the time I said
10. "no, no, the teacher must be wrong
11. it's gotta be a B"
12. and since then, since the D I then haven't been so excellent any longer
13. although it was a blooper
14. but I then realized
15. "oh yeah, so sometimes, A's are not so normal any more
16. it also happens
17. that I get a mark worse than that" (MARTHA, time 2, age 16)

MARTHA tells us that she first denied the significance of this "not like me"-experience (lines 5–7), looking for reasons other than her being responsible (lines 8–11). Only in retrospect could she acknowledge the change (line 12) and, integrating this specific experience, formulate a changed, quite specific scholastic self-concept (lines 14–17) unlike the reference to broader changes in perspective earlier.

SARAH elaborates the biographical meaning of her parents' separation already in her first narration at age 16 and provides many details, taking up two segments, about what steps her parents took and about what impact the separation had on

her personality and appearance (lines 6–11) as well as on her everyday living and emotional well-being (lines 20–24).

Segment 1

1. uhm and when I was in third grade
2. I think
3. my parents separated
4. that was very, that wasn't nice for me
5. and uhm I think
6. I also changed during that time
7. I stopped spending my time with a lot of old friends
8. I got very fa(h)t and uhm have uhm yeah
9. I then actually had a best friend
10. with whom I was always together
11. but not any longer my old circle of friends

Segment 2

12. so from fifth grade onwards I realized
13. that my parents, they were not really quarrelling with each other
14. so we celebrated Christmas together
15. we spent our holidays together
16. but they just didn't live together any longer
17. my mother moved to another part of town
18. my father stayed in this part of town
19. and I used to switch apartments every day
20. so it was pretty stressful for me
21. I never knew
22. where to go
23. and I often sat crying in the streets
24. and people picked me up and brought me home
25. so when I was in sixth grade
26. my parents moved uhm together again (SARAH, time 1, age 16)

At time 2, SARAH's narrative of her parents' separation has changed. Whereas earlier at time 1 she had narrated the separation within a linear chronological order in her life, at age 20 she lets us know that she had almost forgotten to include this significant experience in her life narrative by fading the segment in and out with a corresponding marker (lines 1 and 2, line 15). She expresses continuity by again speaking about how this experience influenced her life and personality (lines 4–7). In addition, she also takes the perspective of her parents (lines 8–12). Three factors, advanced age, temporal distance to the event, and resolution of the problem, may have contributed to her more condensed, distanced, and positively toned narration.

1. uhm what I now maybe have uhm completely forgotten
2. and comes to my mind just now
3. uhm my parents lived separated for three years

4. this has certainly also influenced me
5. that was in third grade
6. so it was at the time
7. when the problems with my friends in elementary school began
8. my parents had organized everything very well for me
9. so they weren't totally cross with each other
10. they had just drifted apart
11. and I think yeah
12. they made it as comfortable as possible for me
13. when I was in fifth or sixth grade
14. they then also moved together again
15. but this just comes to my mind (SARAH, time 2, age 20)

Besides a condensed style, we often find an added emphasis on meaning and significance in re-narrated segments, evidenced by the use of some of the biographical arguments relating to continuity and change described in the introduction. SARAH, for example, speaks about her relationship with and separation from her first boyfriend in both life narratives. At age 16 she describes their relationship in detail. She also lets us know what kind of concept she has about being an adult (lines 11–21) and how she first thought that she had already lived up to this conception, yet failed (line 22), and the young couple separated.

Segment 1

1. and when I then returned from holidays
2. uhm, uhm when I was fifteen, fifteen and a half, so one and a half years ago
3. then, I then met Boris
4. he was my first real boy-friend
5. we were together for one year and two months
6. and it was also a very nice time
7. we ha' uhm, yeah we did lots of things together
8. also the circle of friends is the same, was the same always and things like that uhm, it was just, it was
9. it sounds stupid
10. if I say this
11. but it was such a very much adult-like relationship
12. looking at it, we just had
13. it didn't matter
14. it was not like jealousy or things like that
15. but we just trusted each other
16. and we also didn't have to see each other every day
17. and it wasn't a problem
18. if I hung out with some guys
19. whom I had just met
20. 'cause I just knew
21. I could trust him and he could trust me and

Segment 2
22. but then it also broke up
23. 'cause I was, I just am not that adult-like
24. and we were together one year and two month
25. and I, then, after a while, everything irritated me
26. what he did
27. and I was just annoyed
28. and I think
29. I needed like a change or so
30. cause now I really enjoy it
31. not having a boy-friend (SARAH, time 1, age 16)

SARAH's present–past comparison in line 23 concerns a re-interpretation of herself as less adult-like than she had considered herself to be. This revision of the view of her own personality development was motivated by the experience of the break-up. So, already in the first life narrative she re-interprets her experience, though still at a relatively concrete and detailed level, giving the impression that she still seeks for a more suitable explanation (line 23, lines 25–29). The second present–past comparison (line 30) focuses on the change in her life, which she evaluates positively. At time 2 SARAH does not only re-narrate this experience in a condensed manner, but she also re-evaluates her past interpretation (line 10).

1. then I met my now ex boy-friend
2. it was a wonderful time
3. it was very carefree
4. we had, yeah, if I look back now
5. we only talked very little in the relationship
6. it was, we had a lot of fun together
7. and it was also uhm wonderful
8. but it was more yeah we had, if we happened to discuss political issues
9. we weren't really on the uhm same wavelength
10. but that's what I say now about the relationship (SARAH, time 2, age 20)

SARAH explicitly formulates her looking back on her life (line 4) and explicitly tells us in the present–past comparison (line 10) that the interpretation of the relationship as relatively superficial (line 9) was possible only from her present perspective. She links the past to the present by retrospectively re-evaluating her experience, having reached a deeper understanding and insight of who she is (line 9).

An emphasis on meaning can also be observed in SIMON's re-narration at time 2. In both life narratives he tells us about the importance sports had had for him as a means of coping with his sense of inferiority. At time 1, 16-year-old SIMON still cautiously (lines 7, 8, and 11) presents himself as taking up the challenge posed to his self-esteem by his small body size, thus meeting the idealized self-concept of being a courageous person (lines 9 and 12).

1. I am already, so I am 16 years old
2. and actually I am pretty small for a 16-year-old
3. or I look young uhm look younger
4. and it was pretty important for me
5. that I learnt how to cope with it
6. so I also always do a lot of sports
7. and this also actually gave
8. don't know
9. gave me new courage or so
10. 'cause I was able to
11. how should I say
12. to prove to myself or so (laughs)
13. that despite of my physical problems I can really make it, yeah (laughs) (SIMON, time 1, age 16)

At time 2 SIMON again highlights the continuing relevance of doing sports during adolescence in order to cope with his physical problems, stressing self-continuity in action and meaning. Yet, at age 20 he adds a socio-emotional aspect to the story that although he did have good friends, they could not absorb his feelings of inferiority. At time 2 he has a more self-confident concept of himself and succeeds better in convincing the listener of having met his ideal of being a courageous person (lines 1–3). Also, there are no more statements of uncertainty (compare to time 1, lines 7, 8, and 11).

1. and I was able to cope with it somehow by doing sports and things like that
2. 'cause I somehow was able to prove to myself
3. that I am somehow strong
4. and what do I know
5. and yes uhm yeah during that time I indeed had very good friends
6. and a few of them are still very good friends of mine
7. but during that time, I really was very unhappy sometimes and yeah like this (SIMON, time 2, age 20)

With age, representations of continuity and change increasingly abound in life narratives. Especially formulating changed perspectives and relating these changes in understanding oneself to specific experiences can successfully bridge discontinuities to sustain a sense of personal identity through time. In repeated segments, detailed narrations seem to give way to meaning making.

Shift of Focus and Perspective in Hidden Re-narrations

A similar trend can be inferred from the observation that from age 12 onward, topics are increasingly re-narrated with a shift of perspective and focus (see Fig. 1.2). In

what we have termed hidden re-narrations the narrator selects a different aspect of the same episode or topic he or she had already talked about in the first life narrative. The new aspect or focus may better capture the impact of the narrated experience on the self or it may at least better represent the current meaning of the experience.

After 4 years 12-year-old ANNA again takes up her style of creating friendships, yet she tells us about different friends from different periods of time at time 1 and time 2.

1. okay, where shall I start [. . .]
2. where I really changed for the first time was
3. when I first met Julia, my friend, and got to know her (ANNA, time 1, age 8)

ANNA at age 8 concentrates on the perceived impact friendships have on her personality (line 2). At time 2 ANNA tells us in detail about what her actual friends mean to her, revealing a similar representation of the impact they have on her personality development (lines 9–10). She integrates the importance of her friends into her concept of adolescent personality development, differentiating childhood and adolescence (lines 12–16) and providing insight into the challenge and excitement of adolescent personality development (line 10).

1. and then I came to fifth grade after the summer holidays
2. and there I met the best friends I ever had
3. Laura and Sarah
4. and they always help me
5. when I have problems
6. or when there are conflicts or things like that
7. and I also help them
8. we always support each other, pour our hearts out [. . .]
9. and by meeting the two of them my whole life actually changed completely
10. ‘cause I changed
11. Laura, for instance, represents more my childhood
12. she is more playful
13. and Sarah is more teen
14. and so I feel part of both of them
15. and this feels so complete (ANNA, time 2, age 12)

Similarly, MARTHA speaks about her first language difficulties when coming to Germany as a child in both life narratives, but changes the focus from Croatian to German and shifts the perspective from her mother’s to her own. At time 1 when she is 12 years old, she concentrates on her mother’s point of view (lines 1 and 9) and her mother’s language.

1. it was very important for our mother
2. that we uhm can still speak our language
3. do not forget our language

4. and that we uhm always spoke Croatian with her
5. but then it got a problem
6. when we went to school
7. then we had to tell her everything in German and so
8. and this bothered our mother (MARTHA, time 1, age 12)

At age 16 MARTHA tells an affecting episode that represents her perception of coming to Germany when being a child and not speaking the language.

1. so once I remember
2. I absolutely wanted to tell a girl something, a really great story
3. I can't remember
4. and I told it to her in my language
5. and they didn't understand me
6. then I started to cry
7. 'cause I found it so terrible
8. that she didn't understand me
9. she was German (MARTHA, time 2, age 16)

At time 1 MARTHA reports her mother's perspective in a distanced manner. Taking up the topic of language learning 4 years later demonstrates the continuity of a central theme of her first narrative. Yet it is depicted differently. The shifts from the mother's to her own perspective and from Croatian to German represent changes in how a continuing life theme is represented. Not only does the perspective change, the theme is also articulated by a different aspect that better represents self-integration processes.

LENA provides us with another remarkable example that stands for continuity in life and at the same time represents a changed subjective perspective on the experience, illustrating an advance in self-integration. In her first life narrative, at age 20, she tells us about a good friend from childhood who repeatedly appears in her dreams (lines 2 and 11), but she cannot make out the reason for this.

1. and uhm it just happens quite often
2. that I dream of a really good friend from the village
3. where I used to live
4. when I was a child
5. and uhm I don't know, my mother
6. so, it's poss-, maybe it now has to do with the fact
7. that my mother will go to that village next week
8. because her friend celebrates her birthday there
9. and she asked me
10. if I wanted to join her
11. and, unfortunately, it's not possible
12. because I have to study for an examination
13. but, yeah, it's still bothering me (LENA, time 1, age 20)

Four years later LENA again speaks about her friend, but now she integrates him more into her life narrative, using him to illustrate her personality development.

1. uhm, yeah, and in the time in the village I had a friend, Anthony
2. it was my first, yeah, intensive friendship with another child
3. because before we had moved so many times
4. that I hadn't been able to develop friendships
5. and uhm, we, in a certain way, yeah, complemented each other
6. he was relatively feminine
7. and I was relatively masculine
8. so we met somewhere in the middle
9. and uhm, this has influenced me until today
10. that I, for example, I can generally get along better with men than with women
11. uhm, that my ways of arguing are actually manlike
12. that I, uhm, speak out very clearly (LENA, time 2, age 24)

In this later version, LENA tells us how this friendship matched and influenced her personality. In a present–past comparison (lines 9–12) she points out the lasting effect of this experience.

Hidden re-narrations are marks of self-continuity by showing that a theme or event remains significant for the self as does ANNA's style of creating friendships, the language theme in MARTHA's life narratives, or LENA's close childhood friend. Simultaneously, the shift in focus, perspective, and emphasis also reflects a change in just how the event or theme is related differently to the self and integrated differently into the life story.

New Segments from the Old Life – Hindsight or Reflections in Retrospect

After 4 years, there is a relatively constant percentage of segments which deal with events that had happened before the first narrative was told, but had not been included at time 1 (see Fig. 1.2). Among the two older age groups, these new contents from earlier times are often introduced from a re-evaluative and re-interpretative perspective which sheds new light on these memories. They reflect a sense of a deeper understanding of one's development (cf. Habermas & de Silveira, 2008). In her second life narrative, at age 20, SARAH looks back onto her adolescent development.

1. it's that, yeah, my parents' education strongly influenced me during my first years of life
2. and that they also later on they gave me very much room
3. then, of course, I saw things differently than I do now

4. so there were of course restrictions
5. when I had to come home in the evenings
6. that was always a little bit of a problem, too
7. I had uhm like after puberty actually a lot of older friends
8. I still have them
9. so uhm they are partly up to thirty or over thirty years old
10. but huh at that time I was fifteen, sixteen
11. and they were twenty already
12. and then of course I wasn't able to go out that long
13. and that was difficult for me
14. but anyway uhm I've had relatively much room to do
15. what I wanted to do (SARAH, time 2, age 20)

SARAH does not only review her life by telling us about biographical influences during adolescence. Next to a past–present comparison expressing continuity (line 8), she also re-evaluates her perception of her parents' education by formulating a contrasting past–present comparison (line 3).

In his second life narrative LUCAS also reflects on his life and gives us the impression that he has gained a deeper understanding or insight into his own biography by referring to a period of time after school which he had spent abroad in the house of a friend of his family. At time 2 when he is 24 years old, he adopts a new perspective on the freedom his family had granted him during middle and late adolescence (lines 5 and 11), which he can appreciate for the first time. This he formulates as a deeper insight that positively changed his own family conception (lines 4 and 5).

1. what was actually unique
2. was that I actually, there [abroad] I was, was able to always do what I wanted to do
3. I was actually pretty free
4. but I then realized
5. that other families are not necessarily better (laughs) than one's own family
6. and that the woman I stayed with
7. she was nice, sure
8. and I was pretty free in contrast to when being with my family
9. but though I was able to do what I wanted to do in this country
10. as long as I stayed with her
11. I somehow felt more restricted in my decisions than I did at home (LUCAS, time 2, age 24)

We do not find these kinds of reflections which lead to a re-interpretation of past situations before age 20. They appear to mark the transition to young adulthood.

Segments That Are Not Re-narrated and New Segments: Age-Specific Themes in Life Narratives

Adolescent and adult life narratives normatively close with recent experiences and events the narrator currently deals with as well as with an outlook on the future. This pattern has not yet been acquired by the 8-year olds who end their life narratives with a chance collection of interesting events mostly from the present (Habermas et al., in press). These current events especially in the life narratives of the younger participants tend not to be re-narrated after 4 years, apparently because they have lost relevance over time. Across age groups, the dropping of recent segments and adding of memories from the past 4 years appear to reflect changes in age-specific concerns and themes between the two tellings; 12-year olds tell us about their birth, kindergarten, and school, about their friends and family, and especially about single memorable events, yet everything they tell is colored by the theme of puberty and developmental change. Also they start linking single events and experiences with each other, the past with the present (cf. Habermas & de Silveira, 2008); 16-year olds talk about their peer group, first love relations, sexuality, and school. They speak less about their family, and if they do, they tell us about their struggle for autonomy; 20-year olds start telling us more about their self-concept. Most of them have just finished school and reason about their occupational decision-making, about their partnerships, goals, and ideals, about separating from their parents, and living alone for the first time. They start looking back on their lives and respond to the part of the instruction that asks them to tell us how they have become the person they are today. The life narratives of the 24-year olds also reflect the tentativeness and uncertainty of decisions taken allowing deeper retrospective insights. Some even include counterfactual considerations about roads not taken. Accordingly themes that have not acquired personal meaning and are not prevalent due to their age specificity are left out and replaced by current topics.

Conclusion

In this chapter on biographical continuity and change in and of repeated life narratives we first presented a systematic view on how personal continuity and change are constructed in life narratives. Then we explored how these constructions are used and how life narratives change with time by analyzing two life narratives each, 4 years apart, from eight adolescents and young adults. By examining continuity and change of life narratives we illustrated how (re)considerations of one's development are represented in life narratives. We looked at how stable life narratives are and compared re-narrated segments longitudinally. After 4 years, there appears to be a condensation of re-narrations and a focusing on subjective perspectives that represent continuity and change as well as self-integration and personality development. The narrators concentrate on the meaning of memories and integrate them

into their self-concept. The older the narrator, the clearer he or she includes reasons for telling the specific memory in his or her life narrative, answering the question "How have I become the person I am today?". Studying hidden re-narrations, re-interpretations, and re-evaluations appears to be a promising path for uncovering the representation of self-continuity across change in life narratives in terms of a narratively constructed continuity which bridges the discontinuities inflicted on and chosen by the narrator in his or her life as lived.

The life narrative is structured not only by the events which are selected for inclusion in the narrative, but also by elements of autobiographical reasoning, that is, narrative links that reveal the narrator's subjective sense of continuity. We further observed that young adults begin to explicitly look back on their lives, re-evaluating former interpretations or evaluations in the sense of gaining a deeper understanding of how they became the person they are today. The longer temporal distance to the narrated events may also make it easier to shed new light on them. Of course, a life narrative also includes recent experiences, which serve to express current age-specific themes that replace older topics.

We will test the impressions gained in this exploratory analysis with the entire sample of life narratives. We are interested especially in further systematizing the categories of hidden re-narrations and re-interpretations in order to examine age-related and developmental as well as identity-related aspects in terms of narrative means to create continuity in one's life story. In future analyses we will also include the re-narrations after only 2 weeks, which will allow us to differentiate effects of retelling from effects of greater temporal distance, having a longer life to integrate, and having had more time to gain new insights.

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Emerging Identities: Narrative and Self from Early Childhood to Early Adolescence

Elaine Reese, Chen Yan, Fiona Jack, and Harlene Hayne

You know when you were younger how everything seems so like happy and stuff? (Uh huh) You kind of wake up.
(11-year old telling a researcher about a life-changing event)

This chapter is about when and how we begin to draw meaning from important events in our lives. Although children may indeed "wake up" to a new level of self-reflection in adolescence, we will argue that these newfound realizations are built upon experiences and capacities that have been developing from early childhood. We will also propose that the ability to draw meaning from life events is present much earlier in development than previously assumed, at the very latest by early adolescence, and possibly even earlier.

Our approach to self-understanding is grounded in narrative. A primary way that we learn about ourselves is through the stories that we tell to others about ourselves and through the stories that we hear about ourselves from others (McAdams, 1993, 2006; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Singer, 1995). Eventually, these stories about self coalesce into a life story. We define a life story as a dynamic collection of self-defining memories that are in narrative form and that can be organized with respect to major lifetime periods (see Conway, Singer, & Tagini, 2004). Thus, a definitive life story does not exist for any individual. Rather, we reorganize the chapters in our stories throughout our lives, and we select different events to include in those chapters depending upon our audience and our current perspectives (Linde, 1993; McAdams et al., 2006).

At what point in development is it possible to "have" (and to tell) a life story? If we adopt a dynamic view, we never really "get" a life story; instead, we are always in the process of revision. Although Habermas and Bluck (2000) originally argued that true life stories are not possible before mid-adolescence, at around age 15, there has actually been a dearth of research on life stories in preadolescent samples. Although there have been prior attempts to elicit life stories from preadolescents,

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children failed to respond to the researcher's prompts or they narrated individual or generalized events, not a story of their whole life (e.g., Engel, 1999).

Habermas and de Silveira (in press) recently overcame some of the obstacles in prior research and successfully elicited life stories from children as young as 8. In the largest and most systematic study of life story development to date, they asked over 100 German 8–20-year olds to tell the story of their whole life to a researcher after first writing down 7 important life events. Using this structured procedure, even the 8-year olds were able to tell a life story. Furthermore, Habermas and de Silveira also found that the life story developed in several important ways from middle childhood to early adulthood. First, and perhaps not surprisingly, the length of participants' life stories increased in a linear fashion with age, so all content analyses were conducted on the proportion of different elements that participants of different ages included in their life stories. One of the most striking qualitative changes with development occurred in the participants' inclusion in their life stories of causal connections between distant past events and their current personality. Only 20% of the 8-year olds ever made these connections in their life stories, but over 75% of the 12- to 20-year olds made these connections, which seem vital in drawing meaning from life events for self. Another critical development in the life story was the inclusion of "biographical arguments." Biographical arguments comprise insights about life events and attributing one's behavior to characteristics such as one's youth or prior experiences. There was a dramatic development in the appearance of these biographical arguments in the life story between 12 and 16 years. Other aspects of the life story continued to develop even beyond age 16, including causal connections to distant life events, statements of formative experiences, and complex cognitive reasoning. Finally, overall coherence of the life story developed in a linear pattern from 8 to 20 years.

Habermas and de Silveira's (in press) data provide important new evidence about the development of the life story from middle childhood to adulthood. Clearly, the life story is developing in both quantitative and qualitative ways across these ages. Instead of conceiving of the life story as present at mid-adolescence, and absent before that age (Habermas & Bluck, 2000), we agree that Habermas and de Silveira's new developmental approach is a more productive way of understanding the life story. In fact, we propose that the developmental precursors to the life story have been emerging from early childhood, when parents and children create narratives together about children's early experiences (c.f. Baddeley & Singer, 2007). The most illuminating approach will be to track the development of these seeds of the life story as they grow into its fullest form.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: First, we review likely precursors of the life story that arise from parent–child interactions in early childhood, and we present new longitudinal evidence linking young adolescents' narratives about early memories to mother–child reminiscing in early childhood. Second, we present a new method of assessing the life story in 8–12-year olds. This new method, which we call the Emerging Life Story Interview (ELSI), is adapted from McAdams' Life Story Interview (1995) and is aimed at exploring how children and adolescents begin to organize their life stories and draw meaning from life events. We then present new evidence that emerging life story abilities are related to the self-concept in early

adolescence. In research with adults, coherence and level of insight in life stories are linked to identity formation (McLean & Pratt, 2006), personality traits (Blagov & Singer, 2004; McAdams et al., 2004), and well-being (Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Bauer, McAdams, & Sakaeda, 2005). Drawing upon our knowledge of the development of personal narratives and self from early childhood, we hypothesize that these links between the life story and self-concept may already be present in early adolescence.

The Development of Personal Narratives from Early Childhood

Personal narratives begin almost as soon as children begin to talk, in the second year of life, when they reference personally experienced past events (Fenson et al., 1993; Reese, 1999). These early references to the past usually consist of one- or two-word utterances. For instance, one 18-month old said "Hand. Door." while showing his uncle his finger that he had pinched in a door 6 days earlier (Reese, 1999, p. 233). Children's early talk about the past is already emotional and evaluative (Miller & Sperry, 1988) and in this sense it already contains the seeds of meaning making or what Fivush (2001) called a "subjective perspective." Children do get more competent at telling a coherent story about a past event such that by age 3.5, they can narrate a simple story about a single event from the past to a naïve listener. Their past-event narratives continue to get more sophisticated, and more interesting, into middle childhood and early adolescence (Fivush, Haden, & Adam, 1995; Peterson & McCabe, 1983; see Reese et al., 2009 for a review).

Parents, and especially primary caregiver mothers, provide critical support for children's personal narratives and their ability to draw meaning from those events over the early childhood period. Mothers who structure conversations about the past in a highly elaborative and evaluative fashion help their children to tell richer and more evaluative narratives about the past (see Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006 for a review). These past-event discussions are not just about what happened, but about the meaning of the event for both participants. For instance, mothers who provided their 3-year-old children with more evaluative information about past events, such as emotional states (you were *sad*) and subjective judgments (you looked *pretty*), had children who went on to include more evaluative information in their personal narratives to a researcher by age 5 (Haden, Haine, & Fivush, 1997).

Just as McAdams (1996) predicted in his initial hypotheses about the origins of the life story, these qualitative differences in the evaluative aspect of early childhood reminiscing are grounded in the attachment relationship between child and mother (Fivush & Vasudeva, 2002; Newcombe & Reese, 2004; Reese & Farrant, 2003; for reviews see Reese, Newcombe, & Bird, 2006; Laible, 2004). Children who are securely attached to their mothers experience an early reminiscing environment that is more evaluative, although not necessarily richer in orienting devices to the *where*, *when*, and *who* of the past (Newcombe & Reese, 2004). Most critically, only securely attached children internalize their mothers' evaluative style of reminiscing by the end of the early childhood period. In Newcombe and Reese's

longitudinal analysis from ages 1.5–4 years, there were no reciprocal links across time in the evaluative reminiscing of insecurely attached children and their mothers. In these dyads, the child's level of evaluative reminiscing was not a function of the mother's level of evaluation. The contrast in the amount and quality of evaluative talk in dyads with securely attached and insecurely attached children is evident in the following examples. The first excerpt is from a conversation between a mother and her securely attached child about a bird dying in the backyard. Evaluative comments are italicized.

M: Do you remember what happened last, a couple of days ago, when you were playing in the sandpit?
C: No.
M: Do you remember what happened to the bird?
C: What? Yes, it (unintelligible) it died.
M: It died, didn't it? Well, how did it die?
C: Because it hurt itself.
M: How did it hurt itself?
C: It flew past it.
M: It flew past it.
C: You, and it hit it. [break in conversation] . . ..
M: How did it hurt itself?
C: Because it, um, it, it hit meself on the nose.
M: Yeah. It flew into the window, didn't it? And it got hurt. And then what did we do?
C: What?
C: Bury it.
M: We buried it.
C: *I li-, I don't like burying things*.
M: *No, it was a bit sad, wasn't it?*
C: *I don't care if it's sad, because I hate birds.*
M: *You were a bit upset, weren't you?*
C: *No, I wasn't.*
M: *But then you decided you weren't upset. Cos it was a bit much*.
C: *No, I was only sad upset because I didn't want to um, put my red flower in the little place*.
M: *Yeah.*
C: *Yes.*
M: *It was nice that you gave him a flower though*.

The mother first takes the child through the whole event and then highlights its emotional aspects. The child and mother at first disagree about the emotions the child experienced during the event, but by the end the mother accepts the child's interpretation that she was primarily upset about putting a flower on the bird's grave, not about the bird's death. In contrast, the following excerpt from a mother and her

insecurely attached child is almost curiously devoid of emotion, although the event (watching a bull being slaughtered) is potentially upsetting for the child.

M: Tell me, tell me about the tractor the other day. What did Daddy use the tractor for at, at the Galloway's? [1] Can you remember that?
C: Mum!
M: Why did Daddy take the tractor up to Galloway's?
C: No.
M: Can you remember why?
C: No.
M: What had he, what had, what had Paul Galloway done?
C: No.
. . .. [off topic talk]
M: What did yo-, what did Daddy do with Paul? With the tractor?
C: He, he putted the big, big bulls on the thing.
M: And what did Paul do with them?
C: He was cutting the guts out.
M: He was cutting the guts out was he?
C: Yes.
M: Yeah. Can you remember that?
C: Yes.
M: And did, what did they do with it?
C: Um, I don't know.
M: Where, what did Daddy do with it?
M: He took a tractor down, and what did he do with the big bull?
C: They, he put, he hooked them up on the thing.
M: What thing?
C: On the, um, trees.
M: Yeah. [break in conversation]. . .Yeah, what took, and, and, and what did, and what did Daddy use?
C: I don't know.
M: And what did Galloway use? Galloway used a big, big? (pause). What did he use? What did he use to get the guts out?
C: I don't know!
M: Did he use a fork?
C: Yes. No.
M: What did he use?
C: I don't know!
M: Did he use a spoon?
C: No.
M: You didn't see him use a big? (pause) Knife. You didn't see him use a big knife? Ohh.

[1] All names in conversational excerpts are pseudonyms.

The mother in this excerpt goes into great detail about the tool used to remove the bull's guts, complete with a disturbing dinnertime analogy, but she does not explore any emotional or evaluative aspects of the event with the child. Reese (2008) found that mothers who were less elaborative and confirming in their reminiscing style with their children were also less coherent in the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). Coherence in the AAI is a marker of parents' insecure orientation with respect to their own early childhood experiences. Parents who were more secure and coherent with respect to their own early childhood instead talked more openly and elaboratively with their children about the child's early experiences.

Mothers can, however, be trained to reminisce in more elaborative and evaluative ways with their preschoolers, and their children go on to provide richer narratives of their lives with others (Peterson, Jesso, & McCabe, 1999). Reese and Newcombe (2007) trained one group of mothers to adopt a more elaborative reminiscing style with their toddlers. Although parents were not specifically trained to become more evaluative in their reminiscing, they generalized the training such that by the time their children were preschoolers, the trained mothers were also more evaluative in their reminiscing in comparison to a group of untrained mothers. At age 2.5, after 1 year of intervention, children of the trained mothers included more memory information in their conversations with mothers about the past compared to children of untrained mothers. At age 3.5, children of trained mothers told richer and more accurate stories of the past to a researcher compared to children of untrained mothers, but only if the children had started the study with more advanced levels of self-awareness. Thus, maternal talk about the past can enhance children's personal narratives, but these effects may depend upon the social-cognitive levels of the child. Children who have a firmer sense of self may be better able to incorporate their mothers' talk into their own personal narratives. Thus, self-concept, life-event narratives, and the child's early narrative environment are all linked from early childhood (see McLean et al., 2007; Reese, 2002).

By the beginning of the school years, children have developed a style of discussing personal narratives about individual events (Haden et al., 1997; Reese, Haden & Fivush, 1993). At this age in many cultures, children are telling personal narratives using a classic high-point structure, in which a series of complicating actions build to a high point, which is evaluated and then resolved. For instance, Peterson and McCabe (1983) noted that over half of the 9-year olds in their sample adopted a high-point structure in their personal narratives, although even higher levels of structure for individual narratives are achieved in adolescence (O'Kearney, Speyer, & Kenardy, 2007). Much less is known about how children's personal narratives continue to be socialized by adults during the school years, but it is likely that narrative socialization continues to take place at home and at school. Teachers prefer personal narratives to be succinct and to have a point that is readily apparent to the audience (Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981). Individual differences in parents' styles of discussing past events also continue to exist into middle childhood and adolescence (Fivush, Bohanek, Robertson, & Duke, 2004; Weeks & Pasupathi, this volume). Some families jointly collaborate in their family storytelling by building upon each other's contributions. In contrast, other families' stories are more one-sided, either

from a parent's or an adolescent's perspective, or are even disharmonious, with a parent or an adolescent disagreeing about the other's perspective on the event.

We do not know at present whether the parents who were elaborative and evaluative with their children during the preschool years become collaborative in their style of discussing past events during middle childhood, although we predict that this would be the case. We are aware of only one study to date that has followed children's reminiscing over the transition from early childhood to adolescence. Jack, MacDonald, Reese, and Hayne (in press) demonstrated that adolescents had earlier first memories if their mothers had reminisced with them in a more elaborative way in early childhood. However, the empirical link between mothers' subjective perspective toward the past during early childhood and adolescents' later subjective perspective on their lives has not been established.

Personal Narratives and Self-Concept in Childhood

In narrative theories of identity, a subjective perspective on events is an essential part of the self-concept. Clarifying one's perspective on an event is a means of establishing a self. Accordingly, autobiographical memory theorists contend that personal narratives are linked to self-understanding throughout development (Bird & Reese, 2008; Nelson & Fivush, 2004).

By as early as the preschool years, children appear to possess a psychological and multidimensional view of the self. Eder (1990) designed the Children's Self View Questionnaire (CSVQ) to assess children's psychological selves using an engaging puppet task with minimal verbal demands. Even 3.5-year olds were able to provide consistent reports over short periods of such psychological dimensions as their achievement orientation, risk-taking, need for social closeness, etc. Most important for the present argument, children's psychological selves are linked to discussions of past events with their mothers by the preschool years. Preschool children with a more organized self-concept on the CSVQ experience conversations about past events with their mothers that are more emotional in general and specifically in which negative emotions are explained in greater depth (Bird & Reese, 2006; Welch-Ross, Fasig, & Farrar, 1999). The reason for this link is not yet clear, but one possibility is that children who experience richer conversations about past events, especially about the meaning of the past, are better able to draw upon specific personally relevant memories when building up a generalized concept of self. Take, for example, a mother who emphasizes the child's bravery when discussing past scary experiences. If enough scary experiences are discussed in this way, the child will eventually build up a concept of self as brave and self-reliant. Of course, the converse could also be true. A child who has a concept of self as brave might be more likely to notice and emphasize his or her bravery in new experiences. Thus, the direction of influence between personal memories and self-concept almost certainly goes both ways, but it is primarily the way events are interpreted, not the objective facts of the event, that is most important for self. For instance, although adults' overall elaborations about a past event are critical for children's memory for the facts of

the event (e.g., McGuigan & Salmon, 2004), it is instead the emotional content of parents' reminiscing that is important for the child's self-concept. In-depth discussions of the emotional aspects of negative events appear to be particularly important for children's self-understanding (Bird & Reese, 2006; Marin, Bohanek, & Fivush, 2008; McLean et al., 2007).

Discussions of the past are not only simply linked to the organization of the child's self-concept, but also to children's well-being, as measured via their self-esteem. Mothers who emphasize positive aspects of past events, whether the events themselves were negative or positive, have children with higher self-esteem at ages 5 and 6 (Reese, Bird, & Tripp, 2007). This link between a focus on positive emotions in family storytelling and children's self-esteem was also evident in a sample of preadolescent children (Marin et al., 2008).

In sum, personal narratives and self-concept are linked in complex ways from early childhood. The ability to tell a personal narrative initially depends both upon the child's growing self-awareness and their reminiscing environment. In the preschool years, and continuing into the school years, personal narratives and self-concept continue to be linked through parent–child reminiscing and especially via the exploration of the emotional aspects of events.

At least two significant gaps remain in this body of research, however. First, although theorists posit that the early reminiscing environment is critical for adolescents' and adults' narrative identities, research has not yet established a direct link between mother–child reminiscing in early childhood and adolescents' personal narratives. Jack et al. (in press) showed that mothers who were relatively more elaborative with their children in early childhood had adolescents with *earlier* first memories, but did not conduct a narrative analysis of adolescents' early memories. In our first study, we analyzed the subjective perspective of these same adolescents' narratives of their childhood memories and specifically the emotional content of those narratives, in relation to the emotional content of mother–child conversations about the past during early childhood.

A second gap in this body of research is the link between children's life stories (not simply single-event narratives) and their well-being. A small number of studies focus on the link between narratives of single events in childhood and adolescence and the self-concept (e.g., Marin et al., 2008; McLean & Breen, 2009; Reese et al., 2007), but to date, researchers of the life story in childhood and adolescence have not included well-being measures. Thus, studies of the life story and well-being in adolescence are needed to bridge the gap between research on personal narratives and self-concept in childhood and research on narrative identity and well-being in adulthood.

Study 1: A Subjective Perspective in Adolescence as a Function of Mother–Child Reminiscing in Early Childhood

To address the first gap in this literature, we explored the origins of adolescents' subjective perspective in early mother–child reminiscing with the same sample of mothers and adolescents from Jack et al. (in press). We predicted that adolescents

who adopted a more subjective perspective by including more emotions in their narratives of early memories would have mothers who had discussed more emotions during reminiscing in early childhood. We were specifically interested in mothers' focus on young children's negative emotions because it is these exchanges that are theorized to be most important for the child's growing self-concept (Bird & Reese, 2006). Positive emotions do not need to be resolved, but negative emotions need to be explored in more depth for young children to make sense of them.

The participants in this study were originally recruited to take part in a longitudinal study of young children's emerging autobiographical memory skills (MacDonald, 1997). In this study, 20 mother–child dyads were visited at home on 5 occasions when the children were 24–40 months of age. At each time-point, mothers were asked to discuss a number of past events that they had recently experienced with their children. The researcher asked the mothers to talk to their children as they normally would when discussing things that have happened in the past. These conversations were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Only the conversations recorded at the 40-month time-point are included in the analyses reported here.

Approximately 10 years later, when these children were 12–13 years old, they were invited to participate in a follow-up study on autobiographical memory development. Seventeen adolescent participants visited the university with a parent to take part in an individual interview about their memories for events that happened at different times in their lives. For each participant, a personal timeline was constructed on colored poster board, featuring several photographs of the participant at different ages (see Tustin & Hayne, 2009, for details about the timeline procedure). The researcher began each interview by explaining to the participant that he or she would be asked to describe some memories for past events. The researcher reviewed the sequence of the timeline with the participant, explaining that the timeline started at the participant's birth and stopped at the participant's present age, and represented his or her whole life so far. The timeline activity was performed to reinforce the notion of a linear time sequence and to provide an external cue for thinking about memories from different epochs of the participant's life.

During the interview, the researcher asked the participant to recall and describe events that happened at various ages. Specifically, each participant was asked to nominate and describe in detail one event that had happened within the last month or so and one event from each of ages 10, 5, 3, and before 3 years of age. The participant also recalled and described parent-nominated events from each of these target ages. During the interview, the researcher also asked the participant to describe his or her earliest memory.

In these event discussions, the researcher first gave the participant the opportunity for free recall by providing general prompts (e.g., "Tell me about [the event]," followed by "Can you remember anything else about [the event]") until the participant had reported all that he or she could remember. The researcher then asked four specific questions about the memory: "Who else was there?," "Where were you?," "What did you do?," and "How did you feel?" The questions were followed by another opportunity for free recall, e.g., "Is there anything else that you can

remember now that you would like to tell me about [the event]?" until the participant could recall no more. These interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Codes were totalled across free and prompted recall.

One of the adolescents who visited for the follow-up memory study was not visited at the 40-month time-point of the original longitudinal study, so the analyses reported here include the 16 participants who participated at both the 40-month and adolescent time-points. Mothers and children discussed different numbers of events at 40 months, as did adolescents at the follow-up interview, so all codes were computed as averages per event for each participant. We coded for subjective perspective (Fivush, 2001) by noting the number of maternal and adolescent references to the child's emotions (You were *sad*) and the valence of each emotion as positive or negative. Bird and Reese (2006) found that references to others' emotions, and evaluative references (It was a *fun* time), were not as critical for children's self-understanding as were references to the child's emotions. Reliability between two independent coders on 25% of the mother–child transcripts at 40 months and 25% of the adolescent transcripts was $\kappa = 0.77$ and $\kappa = 0.82$, respectively. One of the coders coded the remaining transcripts.

We then conducted Pearson correlations between mothers' references to children's emotions and adolescents' references to their own emotions, both positive and negative. Our prediction was that mothers' references to the child's past negative emotions would provide the strongest link to adolescents' later subjective perspective on their memories, but we also analyzed mothers' and adolescents' total references to children's emotions (see Table 2.1 for bivariate correlations). Mothers' total references to children's emotions during past-event conversations at 40 months of age marginally predicted adolescents' references to their own emotions ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.10$) and significantly predicted adolescents' references to positive emotions ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.05$). In particular, mothers' early references to children's negative

Table 2.1 Bivariate correlations among mother, child, and adolescent references to children's and adolescents' positive and negative emotions

		Children's references to their own emotions at 40 months			Adolescents' references to their own emotions at 12–13 years		
		Total emotions	Positive emotions	Negative emotions	Total emotions	Positive emotions	Negative emotions
Mothers' references to children's emotions at 40 months	Total emotions	0.52**	0.44*	0.52**	0.45*	0.55**	0.24
	Positive emotions	0.36	0.28	0.39	−0.05	−0.09	0.01
	Negative emotions	0.43*	0.37	0.42	0.61**	0.77***	0.31

*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

emotions best predicted adolescents' references to their own emotions ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.05$), especially their own positive emotions ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$) at the follow-up memory interview.

Children's references to their own emotions at 40 months, however, were not significantly correlated with their emotion references as adolescents (*r*s ranged from −0.10 to 0.39, n.s.). Even when controlling for children's own emotion references at the 40-month time-point, mothers' early references to children's negative emotions still predicted the adolescents' references to their own emotions ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.05$), especially their positive emotions ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, mothers' earlier references to the child's emotions were directly linked to adolescents' emotion references 10 years later.

In line with our predictions and with past research and theory (Bird & Reese, 2006), it was mothers' focus on the child's negative emotions during early childhood that best predicted a richer subjective perspective in adolescence. Given that our specific focus on emotion words was a relatively restricted measure of subjective perspective, the strength of the observed correlations is noteworthy. We did not anticipate, however, that mothers' references to children's negative emotions would be such a strong predictor of adolescents' *positive* emotions. It appears that discussing negative emotions in early childhood may actually lead to a more positive portrayal of life events later on. If it is the case that mothers help children resolve negative emotions in early childhood, and not simply highlight these negative emotions, then it is possible that these early conversations about negative emotions are helping children to find the good in the bad: the proverbial silver lining. Taylor and Armor (1996) theorized that the ability to find meaning in negative experiences is part of a larger human tendency toward positive illusions about past experiences, the future, and the self. These optimistic tendencies in turn bolster a sense of self-efficacy, which is theorized to lead to active coping with life events. In line with this theory, the positive resolution of negative experiences is linked to greater well-being in adults (King & Miner, 2000; McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001). However, in our first study, we did not have an independent measure of the adolescents' self-concept or well-being, so these links between the early narrative environment, coping, and well-being in adolescence are only hypothetical at present. We turn now to new data on the concurrent link between personal narratives and adolescents' developing self-concepts.

As we mentioned previously, a limitation of the work on personal narratives and self-concept in childhood and adolescence is that, to date, only single personal memories have been assessed. According to Habermas and Bluck (2000), it is the way that multiple events are organized into a life story that reflects and shapes our sense of who we are. We must be able to connect apparently disparate events in order to draw some greater meaning from those events for our identities. Habermas and colleagues have explored the development of the ability to integrate multiple life events into a coherent life story (Habermas & de Silveira, in press; Habermas & Paha, 2001), but existing research is only beginning to explore the link between life story coherence and self-concept in adolescent samples (e.g., McLean & Breen, 2009). In the following, we attempt to address this gap in the literature by (1) proposing a

method of assessing organization and meaning making in the emerging life story in early adolescence; and (2) exploring the links between the emerging life story and adolescents' well-being, specifically their sense of self-worth.

Study 2: The Emerging Life Story and Well-Being in Early Adolescence

Our aim was to develop a new method of assessing the emerging life story that could be used with 8–12-year olds. Habermas and de Silveira (in press) successfully elicited life stories from children as young as 8 years, but their objective was to obtain a story of the whole life and not to specifically probe the organization of those stories into lifetime periods. With help from William Friedman, and drawing upon McAdam's (1993) Life Story Interview, we designed the Emerging Life Story Interview (ELSI). The ELSI has two parts. The first part assesses the child's or adolescent's ability to organize life events into lifetime periods. Conway et al. (2004) proposed that the long-term self consists of both autobiographical and conceptual components. The individual's ability to organize life events into lifetime periods is evidence of the conceptual component of the long-term self. In contrast, the individual's ability to substantiate each lifetime period with examples of general and specific events is evidence of the autobiographical component of the long-term self and of the integration of these different levels of autobiographical knowledge. The second part of the ELSI assesses the child's or adolescent's ability to draw meaning from life events, which we and other theorists believe is the primary motivation for telling life stories (Fivush, 2001; McLean et al., 2007). We modeled this part of the task after McAdam's (1993) turning point narratives and Singer's (1995) self-defining memories. The entire interview took around 20–25 minutes with our current cross-sectional sample of 62 8–12-year-old New Zealand children. Here we present the results only from the 24 adolescents in the sample (the 12-year olds).

After a brief warm-up chat with the adolescent in a family laboratory, the researcher says:

> I'd like to get to know you better and to hear about some of the important things that have happened to you. The first thing we're going to do is that I'm going to ask you to think about your life as if it were a story in a book. If you wanted to tell your life like a story in a book, what would the chapters be? Think about how your life would be divided into different chapters. Let's start with your life right now. What would be the chapter that you're in now? What are some of the things that would be in that chapter?

Participants are then prompted to go as far backward in time as they wish to name all the chapters in their lives and to relate a few events from each chapter, although researchers do not prompt for full recall of these individual events. Then participants are encouraged to go forward in time from their first chapter to make sure that they have touched upon all the important periods in their lives. Throughout the task, the researcher interacts with the child in an interested and natural way by confirming

children's responses and asking for more detail as appropriate, similar to McAdam's (1995) procedure. Our preliminary scoring of the chapter task consists of counting the number of chapters containing at least one specific memory. Specific memories are rated higher than general memories in our scheme because they are evidence of a more sophisticated integration of the conceptual and autobiographical components of the long-term self (Conway et al., 2004; Han, Leichtman & Wang, 1998). Thus, if participants nominated six chapters but supported their chapters with only general memories, they would receive a score of zero. They would receive a score of 6 if each nominated chapter was supported by at least one specific memory from that period. Our developmental prediction is that children who are able to structure their lives in a more detailed way are building the framework of an organized life story that will emerge fully in adolescence. We also hypothesize that a more organized life story will allow children and adolescents to extract meaning from life events more easily.

The chapter task also serves as a warm-up for the second part of the ELSI, which is a discussion of life-changing events. Our piloting suggested that the younger children in our sample might not understand or respond to a prompt about self-defining memories. Thus we framed our question in terms of "life-changing events," but the task itself is drawn from Singer and Moffitt's (1991–1992) and McLean and Thorne's (2003) self-defining memory procedure. At the end of the chapter task, the interviewer prompts children, "Now try to think of one particular thing that happened in an earlier chapter that changed your life. It should be something that happened to you that's still really important to you now." When participants decide upon an event, the interviewer asks them questions about who was there, how they felt, how others felt, and most importantly, "How did this event change your life?" Participants are asked to provide two life-changing events. We scored these life-changing events for the highest level of insight achieved across both memories using McLean and Pratt's (2006) scheme. Level of insight on a 4-point scale ranged from no meaning achieved (0); lesson learned (1); vague meaning (2); to insight (3) (see Table 2.2, for examples). Participants also completed the global self-worth scale from Harter's (1982) Self-Perception Profile, and at the end of the study, the researcher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, III-B (Dunn & Dunn, 1997) to measure differences in adolescents' verbal abilities.

So far 24 young New Zealand adolescents ($M = 12.5$ years, SD = 0.43; 14 girls) have participated as part of a larger study of time concepts and autobiographical memory, conducted in collaboration with William Friedman. The sample is primarily composed of European New Zealanders (91%). The study took place in a family room in a university laboratory with the adolescent's parent in an adjoining room but out of earshot. The primary researcher who interviewed the adolescents was female. Chapter tasks and life-changing events were recorded on digital voice recorders and the life-changing events were transcribed for coding. Reliability between two independent coders on 25% of the transcripts for the chapter task was 92% for the number of chapters with specific memories. Reliability between two independent coders on 25% of the transcripts for the life-changing event task was $\kappa = 0.75$ for level of insight.

Table 2.2 Examples of life-changing events and levels of insight in early adolescence

Level of insight	Example
No meaning (0)	Life-changing event: Starting a new sport *I went through all the different grades, and then I got selected for Metro. And then I got into Metro, and [sic: it] started taking up a lot more of my time.*
Lesson learned (1)	Life-changing event: Telling a lie and getting in trouble *It taught me never tell, tell lies, especially coz you'll get caught out.*
Vague insight (2)	Life-changing event: Parents' divorce *I just think I do things differently, and that just changed you like if your parents were still together. You might, it'll just be a different sort of like, like you wouldn't have two homes, if you get bored at one, you just go to the other one and things. It's changed when I do things and how I do things.*
Insight (3)	Life-changing event: Getting bullied *I used to be really good at like maths and things, and then when I got bullied, it all stopped. And I wasn't good at like things. I was always had probably that bullying in my head that really meanness of it. And umm so I think if I didn't get bullied back then I'd probably be smarter than I am now.*

Adolescents nominated an average of six chapters in the chapter task, with a range from 3 to 10. On average, 2.88 of each adolescent's chapters contained a specific memory, with a range of 0–9. On their life-changing events, participants achieved an average level of insight of 1.43 for their highest score across the two memories. Average global self-worth was 20 with a range from 15 to 24. The average standardized PPVT score was 107, so verbal ability was slightly above average.

We conducted correlations among the ELSI scores (organization of the life story in the chapter portion and insight into the life-changing events) and adolescents' self-esteem and verbal ability (see Table 2.3). Our first prediction was that adolescents with a more organized life story would have a stronger sense of self-worth. We also predicted that adolescents who achieved higher levels of meaning making in the life-changing event narratives would have higher levels of self worth, although the literature is mixed on this point. One study with preadolescents found that

Table 2.3 Correlations among young adolescents' life story organization, insight, self-esteem, and verbal ability ($N = 24$)

	Insight	Self-esteem	Verbal ability
Organization	−0.17	0.41*	0.01
Insight		−0.31	0.02
Self-esteem			−0.04

*$p < 0\ .05$

greater levels of meaning-making when writing about stressful events were actually associated with lower levels of well-being (Fivush, Marin, Crawford, Reynolds, & Brewin, 2007). As King (2001) pointed out, understanding does not always lead to happiness. Insights can be painful, causing regret and self-doubt instead of well-being.

Indeed, our prediction of a positive link between the life story and well-being was borne out only for the organization of the life story. Adolescents who nominated a greater number of chapters containing at least one specific memory reported higher self-esteem, but level of insight into the life-changing events was not significantly correlated with self-esteem. Contrary to predictions, adolescents' organization of the life story on the chapter task was not correlated with their level of insight achieved. Verbal ability was not correlated with any measure.

Thus, the organization of the life story, but not the level of insight, was concurrently linked to well-being in early adolescence. Adolescents with a more organized life story reported higher levels of self-esteem. This relationship was not a function of adolescents' verbal skill. There are several possible reasons we did not find a link between level of insight and higher self-worth. First, in line with Fivush et al. (2007), it is possible that insight and well-being only become positively linked later in adolescence, when the ability to draw meaning from events and apply it to one's self-concept is more sophisticated. It is also possible that there are gender differences in this relation. In research with a larger sample of older adolescents (McLean & Breen, 2009), the relationship between meaning and self-esteem was moderated by gender. We were not able to assess gender differences with our small sample, but as we enlarge our sample, we will explore possible gender differences in accounting for this absence of a correlation between insight and self-worth. In future work with this sample, we will also explore the role of the family's storytelling style in the link between the organization of life stories and well-being. We expect that adolescents who have a more organized and evaluative life story also experience more collaborative and evaluative storytelling in the home.

These results are important in several ways. To our knowledge, this is the first evidence that the structure of the emerging life story is connected to well-being in a young adolescent sample. Similar to findings with adults (Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Bauer et al., 2005), young adolescents who have a more organized and detailed life story experience higher levels of self-worth. We cannot at present interpret the direction of this effect. The organization of the life story may be instrumental in self-esteem, or high self-esteem may enable adolescents to tell more organized life stories. We are currently conducting the ELSI with two samples of young adolescents that we have followed from age 1.5 years (see Reese, 2002; Reese & Newcombe, 2007) and for whom we have previously collected information on their early reminiscing environment and their self-understanding. In line with McLean et al.'s (2007) model, we predict that the link between the life story and adolescents' self-understanding is most likely bidirectional and will be mediated by their early reminiscing environment. Adolescents who experienced a richer and more evaluative reminiscing environment in early childhood are expected to

have more organized and detailed life stories, to be better able to draw meaning from life events and to have a stronger sense of self-worth. It is also possible that there are gender differences in the relations between narrative identity and well-being (McLean & Breen, 2009; McLean, Breen, & Fournier, in press), perhaps as a function of differences in the early reminiscing environments for boys and girls.

Our results are also important from a methodological point of view. Taken together with Habermas and colleagues' work with 8–12-year olds, we conclude that it is possible to elicit a life story prior to mid-adolescence (Habermas & Paha, 2001; Habermas & de Silveira, in press). We will continue to analyze our data with the younger children in the project to ascertain whether this task works equally well in middle childhood as it does in early adolescence. We believe that the ELSI is a particularly promising tool for capturing the emerging life story in younger samples. At around 20–25 minutes on average, the ELSI is much easier and quicker to conduct than a standard life story assessment. Habermas and de Silveira (in press) estimated that their life story measure took only 15 minutes, but that estimate did not include the time for participants to nominate and write down seven important life events prior to the life story narrative. The ELSI has face validity and was readily understood and engaged in by children and young adolescents, in contrast to more traditional methods that are not easily understood by children, are more effortful, or involve writing, which is still difficult or unappealing for a number of participants in this age range. Moreover, the ELSI is fairly easily scored and coded. The children's responses to the chapter portion can be noted on a form during the interview and then checked later against the recording, so that only the life-changing event portion needs to be fully transcribed for coding. Other significant life events, such as high points and low points, could be added to the protocol as desired (Baerger & McAdams, 1999). The entire interview would still take under half an hour.

We plan to extend our use of the ELSI in several ways in future research. First, we will document developmental changes in the emerging life story over the 8–12-year period with the full sample. We expect to find few changes in the overall number of chapters produced with age, but we expect large developmental changes in the number of chapters that are supported by specific memories. We argue that the ability to nominate a specific memory for a chapter is evidence of children's ability to see the bigger picture of their lives and to substantiate that big picture with a specific example from that life period. We will also explore deeper ways of scoring the chapter task. For instance, we could examine the way in which children and adolescents organized their stories at different ages. Did they organize their lives according to true lifetime periods (schools, places lived) or simply by chronological age, regardless of life themes? One 8-year-old pilot participant started a new chapter for every even-numbered year of his life (When I was Born; When I was Two; When I was Four, etc.). At the end of the interview, he noted, "I just went up in twos. I can't think of anything from when I was 7 or 3 or 5." In contrast, the young adolescents in our sample typically organized their lives in more conventional ways, such as by the schools they had attended or places they had lived.

Implications

Our work on the emerging life story is still developing, so it is too soon to draw firm conclusions. However, we believe that eventually our findings will have implications for theories of identity and self-concept development. If the life story indeed emerges from the stories that parents and children tell in early childhood and if these stories simultaneously shape children's self-concept, then perhaps the struggle to form an identity in late adolescence is not as discontinuous a development as some theorists have proposed (e.g., Erikson, 1968; McAdams, 2006). The challenge in future research with longitudinal samples will be to find ways to capture both continuity and change in the self-concept over time (Bird & Reese, 2008). One advantage of adopting a narrative approach to the study of self-development is that personal narratives are present from very early in childhood, and thus the way that the self is portrayed through narrative can be examined using similar methods across a wide span of ages. Measuring continuity in the self-concept over time with more traditional measures is difficult because different methods are used with participants of different ages, thus overestimating qualitative change and underestimating quantitative changes with age. Narratives provide us with a way of understanding the self, as well as a way of potentially shaping the self-concept. McAdams (2006) claimed that life narratives access the most unique aspects of personality in adults.

On a practical note for teachers who are seeking methods of eliciting the life story as a way of exploring the autobiographical genre with their younger students, it appears that structured methods are more successful than simply asking children to tell the story of their life. A number of these structured methods are now available, including Habermas and de Silveira's (in press) method of having participants write down seven important memories prior to narrating the life story and Jack et al.'s (in press) method of creating a timeline with photos from different ages prior to eliciting event narratives. Methods such as the ELSI that encourage young adolescents to organize those events with respect to lifetime periods, and to highlight some life events over others, could be particularly useful for guiding young writers and storytellers in Gricean principles of meaning and conciseness in the life story.

We end with the caveat that these conclusions and recommendations may not necessarily be appropriate for non-European adolescents. Research on the life stories of non-European adolescents is scant. In one of the few existing studies, Chandler and Proulx (2008) reported a positive link between self-continuity and well-being in First Nations Canadian adolescents. First Nations youth who were at lower risk of suicide emphasized continuities between their past and present selves, whereas 80% of actively suicidal youth could see little continuity in their past and present selves; by extension, they could not conceive of a future self. These results seem consistent with the positive link between life story coherence and well-being found in adult samples (Baerger & McAdams, 1999) and in our second study here. However, when compared to non-Aboriginal youth, First Nations adolescents on the whole had different concepts of continuity between their past and present selves. Whereas European Canadians adopted an "essentialist" stance in which they were essentially the same person over time, First Nations adolescents endorsed a more

"relational" position in which true change was possible, but common themes or threads could be identified across different instantiations of the self. Thus, although coherence in the life story may be linked to well-being across cultures and across developmental periods, the form that coherence takes in the life story may differ in important ways across ages and cultures.

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Patterns of Family Narrative Co-construction in Relation to Adolescent Identity and Well-Being

Robyn Fivush, Jennifer G. Bohanek, and Kelly Marin

Father: And we had to go up at Christmas time for Grandpa's funeral, didn't we?
Adolescent: mmmhmm
Father: mmmhmm, and, what do you remember about that?
Adolescent: It was very sad and. . .
Father: (simultaneous with adolescent) . . .It was sad. . .
Adolescent: . . .scary
Father: Especially that it was right at Christmas time and Grandma had just passed away about a year before that, which made it really hard for everyone. And I had to get out of work early and Mom had to get out of work and you had to get out of school and we all had to go up to Michigan and it was sad cause it was around the holidays
Mother: Yeah, I thought it was especially sad for, um Grandpa, you- your Father.
Father: Mmmhmm
Mother: You know having to deal with that
Father: Yeah, it was sad for me cause it was my last grandparent too
Mother: Yeah
Father: How did it effect you Rachel?
Adolescent: I thought it was sad even though I didn't spend a whole lot of time with Grandpa, our Great Grandpa, but it was still sad you know a member of the family had passed away
Father: mmmhmmm

In this excerpt, a family with a 12-year-old adolescent co-narrates a shared sad experience, the death of the adolescent's great-grandfather. As this example points to, family narratives are a window into how families construct a shared sense of history, understand and validate each others' emotions and create a sense of who they are as a family, and as individuals, in the present.

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Many theorists have argued that narratives are the way in which we make sense of our experiences and our selves (Bruner, 1987, Chafe, 1990; Fivush, 2008; McAdams, 2003; Ricoeur, 1991), and this is, at core, a social process, in which meaning emerges from the telling and sharing of the stories of our lives with others (Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 1996; McLean, 2005; Pasupathi, 2006). Narratives move beyond simple descriptions of what occurred, to include information about causal explanatory frameworks, about how and why the event happened as it did, and about reflective interpretation that evaluates the event from a personal perspective that provides a subjective stance on what occurred (Fivush & Haden, 2005; Fivush, 2001; Labov, 1982; Linde, 1993; Peterson & McCabe, 1982). Essentially, personal narratives provide the fabric of our self-understanding, weaving together our experiences with our evaluations to produce a story of our life in relation to others.

Recent research has begun to examine the emergence of the life narrative in adolescence, a time when cognitive and socioemotional skills mature, allowing children to begin to reflect on their own and others' perspectives, values, and goals and to question previously accepted interpretations and meanings (Erikson, 1959/1980; Kroger, 2000). With the developing ability to construct more complex and temporally extended sequences (Friedman, 2000, 2004), linking individual events into larger life motifs (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 1992), and to provide more nuanced and reflective interpretation of self and other (Harter, 1999; Collins, Gleason, & Sesma, 1997), adolescents begin to construct the story of a life that defines who they are and who they want to be (see Habermas & Bluck, 2000, for a full theoretical discussion).

Narratives and Identity

Narratives are both the process by which identity is created and a reflection of that identity. More specifically, the ways in which individuals make sense of their experiences, as expressed in the structure and content of their personal narratives, provide the foundation for understanding of self, and this emerging understanding of self is reciprocally expressed in personal narratives. For example, McLean and Pratt (2006) have shown that adolescents who engage in less meaning-making in their personal narratives show higher levels of diffusion and foreclosure on identity measures, and, critically, adolescent meaning-making in narratives predicts subsequent generativity. Similarly, Pasupathi, Mansour, and Brubaker (2007) have shown that the way in which self-event connections are created within narratives helps to create a stable sense of self over time. Thus self and narrative evolve in an ongoing dialectic (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007).

Moreover, personal narratives and identity are co-created in social interaction; through sharing the stories of our lives with others, these stories come to take on new meanings, new interpretations, and new evaluations (Fivush, 2008; McLean, 2005; Pasupathi, 2006). We argue from a sociocultural perspective on narrative and identity, stemming from Vygotsky's (1978) developmental theories, that personal narratives are embedded in the sociocultural world in which individuals create meaning through daily social interactions that provide the structure and the value

of specific activities (Gauvain, 2001; Rogoff, 1990). In terms of autobiographical memory, telling and sharing one's personal past is a culturally mediated activity that is more or less valued by particular cultures and particular members within a culture (see Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008, Fivush & Haden, 2003, for an overview). In Western culture, to have and tell one's autobiography is highly valued (McAdams, 2003; Pillemer, 1998) and is incorporated into the everyday activities in which children and adults are expected to engage. Through participating in adult-structured reminiscing, children learn the forms and functions of personal narratives (Fivush & Nelson, 2004; Nelson & Fivush, 2004).

In this chapter, we present research on the Family Narratives Project, in which we examine the ways in which families reminisce together and how this process is related to children's developing sense of self and well-being as they undergo transition into adolescence. We focus on family co-narration of a negative event, a time that was stressful for the family because stressful events are critically related to well-being. Stressful events create a problem to be solved as well as arousing aversive affect which must be regulated. There is growing evidence that the ability to create more coherent and emotionally integrated narratives of stressful events is related to better physical and psychological well-being (Pennebaker, 1997). For example, using an expressive writing paradigm, in which adults are asked to write about the stressful events of their lives for 10–20 minutes per day for several days, those adults who are able to create more coherent explanatory narratives subsequently show better outcome (see Frattaroli, 2006, for a meta-analysis).

However, children and young adolescents are still in the process of developing the cognitive and socioemotional skills needed to create coherent narratives (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). For them, narrating stressful events may raise anxiety without the concomitant skills to regulate the affect or cognitively restructure the event (Fivush, Marin, Crawford, Reynolds, & Brewin, 2007). Thus adolescents may still be relying on more cognitively and emotionally competent adults to help them structure their narratives in ways that allow processing. In fact, in examining mother–child co-constructed narratives about highly stressful events, Sales (Fivush & Sales, 2006; Sales & Fivush, 2005) found that mothers who were more emotionally expressive and explanatory had children with better coping skills and fewer behavior problems. Thus we were particularly interested in examining how families as a whole co-narrated the stressful events of their lives and how the structure and content of these narratives might be related to adolescent well-being.

Based on a family system's perspective (e.g., Kreppner, 2002), in which it is assumed that the dynamics of family interaction is a complex process in which each family member influences, complements, and contrasts with each other, we chose to study the family co-constructing narratives of their past. To foreshadow, we first present research examining the family as the unit of analysis, describing the process of narrative co-construction and the emotional content of family narratives in relation to child well-being. We then turn to an analysis of how mothers and fathers differentially scaffold these co-narrations within the family, and argue that reminiscing is a gendered activity (Fivush, 1998; Fivush & Buckner, 2003), with mothers and fathers having differential effects on child outcome. Throughout, we

argue that narratives and self are dialectically co-constructed. It is in the process of sharing the stories of our lives with others that we create a personal past, and this evolving life story is reflected in and emerges from everyday co-constructed reminiscing. Individuals who are better able to create elaborated, coherent narratives of their lives have higher levels of self and emotional understanding. Because this research is informed by earlier research examining the emergence of autobiographical narratives during the preschool years in parent–child dyadic reminiscing, we first briefly describe this research and the theoretical framework to place the family narrative research in perspective.

Early Parent–Child Reminiscing

Beginning in the first days of life, parents are already telling their infants the stories of their lives, well before infants are able to understand or participate in this activity (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Scwagler, & Rimmer, 1995). The telling of these stories signals that this is a valued activity, one that brings this new life into this family and this culture, and sets the expectations that this new life will have stories of her own to tell (Fivush, 2008; Pratt & Fiese, 2004). Children are encouraged to participate in telling the stories of their lives virtually as soon as they begin to talk (Eisenberg, 1985, Hudson, 1990). Even quite young children are guided to tell daddy what they did during the day, to tell grandma where the new toy came from, and to tell sister what happened at daycare. These early promptings to share one's life are embedded in cultural values in which it is expected and encouraged to share the stories of one's day and one's life with others as a ways of connecting with others and creating emotional bonds.

Importantly, children are encouraged not just to tell what happened, but to reflect on thoughts and emotions about the event. It is not simply that one went to the park, but that one had fun on the swings; it is not just that one's friend moved away, but that one is sad and upset about it. Events are interpreted and evaluated, and it is in this process that they come to have meaning for the self (Fivush & Baker-Ward, 2005; Fivush & Haden, 2005; Fivush & Nelson, 2006). As children begin to participate, even minimally, in parent–child reminiscing about the shared past, the ways in which parents scaffold, or guide these reminiscing conversations, influence children's developing autobiographical memory skills. Highly elaborative mothers, who talk frequently and in rich embellished detail about the past, provide a coherent narrative structure for their children, helping them to move beyond the simple reporting of an event to creating a narrative replete with interpretation and evaluation. Children of mothers who are more highly elaborative in their reminiscing style come to tell more detailed and more coherent narratives of their own experience by the end of the preschool years (see Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006, Nelson & Fivush, 2004, Reese, 2002, for overviews).

Critically, given the theoretical relations posited between narratives and self and well-being, mothers with a highly elaborative reminiscing style also facilitate the development of self-understanding and emotional understanding. By the end of

the preschool years, children of more highly elaborative mothers have a more differentiated and a more coherent sense of self (Bird & Reese, 2006; Welch-Ross, 1997, 2001), a more advanced theory of mind (Reese & Cleveland, 2006; Welch-Ross, 1997), a more sophisticated understanding of their own and others emotions, and show higher levels of emotional well-being (Laible, 2004a, 2004b, 2006) than children of less elaborative mothers.

Research on maternal reminiscing style has thus demonstrated that autobiographical narratives emerge in social interactions and that the form of these interactions is critical. Children of mothers who engage in highly elaborative and evaluative reminiscing come to have richer memories of their own past and more advanced understanding of self and emotions. Reminiscing and elaborating on emotional aspects of the past may be particularly critical in this process (Fivush, 2007). By the time children approach adolescence, and turn to the developmental tasks involved in constructing an adult identity (Erikson, 1959/1980; Harter, 1999), they have a long developmental and familial history of shared reminiscing.

The Family Narratives Project

In the Family Narratives Project, we examine how families continue to reminisce about the shared past as their children grow older and how this might be related to children's developing understanding of self and emotional well-being as children undergo transition into an adult identity. We studied 40 middle class racially and ethnically diverse two-parent dual-earner families, each with at least 1 preadolescent child between the ages of 9 and 12. Most families had other children as well. Only 3 families had 1 child, whereas 17 families had 2 children, 13 families had 3 children, 5 families had 4 children, 1 family had 5 children, and 1 family had 6 children. Of the 40 families, 29 self-identified as Caucasian, 5 as African American, 1 as Asian, and 5 as interracial. Finally 30 families were considered traditional, 8 families were blended, and 2 families were extended with grandparents living in the household.

Families were visited in their homes when the entire family was present and asked to tell multiple stories together, and family dinnertime conversations were also recorded. Here we focus on family narratives of shared stressful experiences (but see Bohanek et al., in press; Fivush, Bohanek, Robertson, & Duke, 2004; Fivush et al., 2008, for discussion of other aspects of these data). Families sat together in a comfortable place of their choosing, usually the living room, with a tape recorder placed between them. The research assistant left the room, or sat in a corner, and the family selected the events to talk about; no time limits were imposed. About 30% of the families discussed the death of a family member or friend, 22% discussed illness or injury, 20% discussed the death of a pet, 20% discussed accidents or disasters, and 7% discussed a family conflict, a move to a new city, or mishaps during a vacation.

At the end of the visit, we asked the target child to complete measures of self-esteem (the Rosenberg self-esteem inventory, Rosenberg, 1965) and mothers were

asked to complete the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach, 1991) as a measure of their child's internalizing behaviors (e.g., anxiety, depression, withdrawal) and externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggression, acting out, substance abuse). Two years later, we again visited the families in their homes, although only 24 of the original families were able to participate. At this visit, children were asked to complete The Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) from which we derived measures of self-concept and self-competencies. We focus here on social competence and academic competence because these are rated as the most important competencies by preadolescents and early adolescents (Evangelista, 2001).

We examined the family narratives in several ways to address different questions of interest. We first examined the family as a unit. Stemming from family systems theory (Kreppner, 2002), we reasoned that most spontaneous family narrative interactions are complex co-constructions with multiple family members participating and the ways in which any one family member engages in this task will be a function of the other family members. Thus, examining the family as the unit of analysis allowed us to explore how the family as a system co-constructs the past together. We examined both the process of narrative interaction, that is, how the family co-constructs the narrative together, and the content of narratives, focusing specifically on the emotional content. As already discussed, narratives are a critical mechanism for processing difficult emotions by providing a framework for understanding and regulating aversive affect. Research on early mother–preschool child reminiscing has demonstrated that highly elaborative reminiscing about emotional events is related to children's developing emotional understanding and regulation (see Fivush, 2007, for a review), and thus we expected that expression and explanations of emotion within family narratives would be related to higher levels of self-understanding and well-being.

We then examined how mothers and fathers differentially contributed to family reminiscing. Research on individual narratives has found that, beginning in childhood and continuing through adulthood, females tell longer, more detailed, more emotional, and more relationally oriented narratives than do males (see Fivush & Buckner, 2003, for a review). These gender differences in personal narratives are related to gender differences in self-concept, with females being more relationally and emotionally oriented and males being more autonomously and agentically oriented (Gilligan, 1982), and underscore the evolving relation between personal narratives and self-understanding. Because females and males differ in their autobiographical narratives, we would assume that mothers and fathers would differ in how they reminisce with their children. Although there has been limited research on differences between maternal and paternal reminiscing, there is some suggestion that mothers are more elaborative and more emotional overall than are fathers when reminiscing with their preschool children (Fivush, Brotman, Buckner, & Goodman, 2000; Kuebli & Fivush, 1992); we wanted to examine possible parental gender differences with older children as well. In addition, previous research has found relations between maternal reminiscing and emotional well-being; thus, we wanted to expand this research to also assess fathers' role in child outcome.

The Family as a Unit

Family Reminiscing Style

In order to explore the process of family narrative interaction, as well as to be able to directly compare these findings to previous research on parent–child dyadic reminiscing style, we coded the narratives using the standard coding scheme for reminiscing style (Fivush & Fromhoff, 1988; Reese, Haden, & Fivush, 1993), coding each utterance as an elaboration, defined as the inclusion of any new information, an evaluation, defined as confirming, validating, or (rarely) negating anothers' contributions, or a repetition, defined as repeating what one said. Elaborations and evaluations, which tend to be highly correlated with each other (Bauer & Burch, 2004; Fivush & Vesudeva, 2002), are the hallmarks of an elaborative style. Evaluations serve the function of keeping the child engaged in the conversations, as well as validating and thus valuing the child's contributions to the co-constructed narrative. Elaborations, at least for preschoolers, are the critical variable for predicting children's developing autobiographical memory skills (Farrant & Reese, 2000) and also seem to be the variable most related to emotional outcome (Laible, 2004a, 2004b, 2006). Thus a highly elaborative and evaluative reminiscing style is one that both helps the child to create a more detailed, coherent narrative of the past event as well as imparts the positive value of sharing the past with others.

We also divided the narratives into sections focused on the facts of what happened versus the emotional aspects of the event, in an effort to examine the role that elaborative reminiscing plays in child outcome in more detail. Facts were defined as the objectively observable aspects of an event, such as who was there (e.g., "Did Dick go with us?"), what activities were engaged in (e.g., "And then we had to drive all the way to Minnesota for the funeral."), and descriptions of objects and events (e.g., "And it was really quiet in the room."). In contrast, emotional aspects of the events focused on emotional states and reactions (e.g., "I was really sad when Grandpa died") as well as the ensuing discussion of that emotional state or reaction (e.g., "Yes, you cried and cried," or "It was hard on all of us."). Whereas emotional aspects of the narratives virtually always began with mention of an emotional state or reaction, the additional utterances coded as emotions may or may not have included a specific emotion word, but had to extend the conversation about emotion. It should be noted that discussion of other internal states, such as cognitions (e.g., "I thought it was strange" or "I don't remember the trip."), was actually rare in these transcripts, or else incorporated emotional language (e.g., "I thought it was so sad," "I guess I was really upset by all that."), and so was not examined separately.

We divided the narratives between facts and emotions because research with preschoolers has established that mothers who reminisce in more elaborative ways about stressful events have children with higher levels of emotional understanding and regulation (Laible, 2004a, 2004b, Laible & Thompson, 2000). But it is unclear from this research whether elaborating on emotion per se is helpful, perhaps by helping children understand and regulate aversive affect, or if elaborating on the facts of what happened, helping children to construct a more elaborated narrative

of the event in general, is helpful. On one hand, elaborating on emotion may help children better understand and regulate aversive affect (Denham, 1998; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996), but if reminiscing about emotion simply ruminates on the emotional experiences, it is likely not to be helpful (Fivush & Buckner, 2000; Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987). In terms of the factual content, in expressive writing studies, in which adults are asked to write about stressful events for 10–20 minutes a day for several days, adults who construct more explanatory and causally connected narratives of stressful past experiences subsequently show higher levels of physical and psychological well-being (Frattaroli, 2006; Pennebaker, 1997; Smyth, 1998). The focus of this research has been on the use of specific causal and explanatory words, such as "because," "therefore," that convey a sense of coherence and explanation to why things happened as they did, as well as more cognitive insight words, such as "realize" and "understand." Although we did not code for cognitive states, as discussed earlier, we reasoned that families that elaborate on the facts of what happened may be creating a more detailed and perhaps more temporally and causally coherent account of the past event.

Thus we examined family reminiscing style for factual and emotional aspects of the event separately as it relates to adolescent emotional well-being (McWilliams, 2007). We summed across family members and analyzed the number of elaborations, evaluations, and repetitions that families provided about the factual and emotional aspects of events in a repeated measures analysis of variance. Main effects and interactions of type of utterance (elaborations, evaluations, and repetitions) as well as type of content (factual versus emotions) were followed-up with *t*-tests on each utterance type by content. Not surprisingly, families elaborate and evaluate more about the factual aspects of negative events than the emotional aspects (see Table 3.1 for means and standard deviations). There is simply more factual information to include about past experiences than emotional information. More interesting, families that elaborated and repeated more when reminiscing about the emotional aspects of negative events had preadolescents with concurrently higher levels of internalizing ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.10$ for elaborations and $r = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$ for

Table 3.1 Means (and standard deviations) for reminiscing style and emotional content variables for the family, mothers and fathers

	Family	Mothers	Fathers
Reminiscing variables: factual info			
Elaborations	181.35(145.61)	59.93(44.96)	44.35(33.29)
Evaluations	67.25(48.09)	19.20(19.52)	16.08(14.40)
Repetitions	10.05(9.80)	3.30(3.38)	2.05(2.26)
Reminiscing variables: emotional info			
Elaborations	62.68(35.54)	26.90(18.54)	18.38(20.43)
Evaluations	14.10(10.08)	5.13(4.80)	3.85(5.18)
Repetitions	3.55(3.50)	1.30(2.07)	0.98(1.53)
Emotional content			
Expressions	10.28(7.69)	4.08(3.54)	2.82(3.45)
Explanations	4.33(4.39)	1.33(2.15)	0.95(1.75)

repetitions) and externalizing behaviors ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.10$ for repetitions), whereas families that elaborated and evaluated about the factual aspects of negative events had preadolescents with lower levels of internalizing behaviors ($r = -0.29$, $p < 0.10$ for evaluations) and externalizing behaviors ($r = -0.30$, $p < 0.05$ for elaborations, $r = -0.25$, $p < 0.10$ for repetitions, and $r = -0.24$, $p < 0.10$ for evaluations). Thus, it seems that co-constructing a more factually oriented elaborated and evaluative narrative that helps delineate the who, what, where, and when of a stressful event might be beneficial for children, but focusing on emotions may be detrimental, especially if that focus is repetitive.

Family Reminiscing About Emotion

In order to examine relations between reminiscing about emotions and adolescent well-being in more detail, as well as longitudinally, we did a more fine-grained coding of just the emotional content of these narratives (Marin, Bohanek, & Fivush, 2008). We coded all emotional utterances as either an expression of emotion or an explanation of emotion, as displayed in Table 3.1. For example, stating that one was sad would be an expression but stating that one was sad because Grandma died would be an explanation. We also coded whether families referred to specific emotions (e.g., "We were sad.") or general affective terms (e.g., "That was hard on us."). Families that expressed and explained more specific negative emotion (but not general affective terms) when reminiscing about negative events had adolescents who, 2 years later, showed higher self-esteem ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.12$ for expressions and $r = 0.33$, $p < 0.12$ for explanations) and higher levels of social competence ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.05$ for expressions and $r = 0.41$, $p < 0.05$ for explanations) and academic competence ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$ for expressions and $r = 0.36$, $p < 0.10$ for explanations.

Together, these two sets of analyses suggest that families that create highly elaborative narratives about the factual aspects of shared negative experiences have adolescents with higher levels of self-understanding and well-being, but simply elaborating and repeating on emotions seem to be detrimental, perhaps because this leads to a more ruminative emotional style (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987). However, integrating specific emotions into an explanatory framework is beneficial for adolescents. Thus, families that co-construct narratives of stressful experiences that provide elaborative detail of what happened and explanation of specific negative emotions seem to help their adolescents understand and regulate aversive emotional experiences, and thus these adolescents show higher levels of well-being.

By co-constructing more elaborative narratives, families may be helping their adolescents to create more detailed and possibly more coherent narratives of these stressful events. Although we could not code for overall coherence in these co-constructed narratives due to their length and complexity, we would argue that through elaboration, families are constructing richer and more detailed narratives that help the adolescents to place the event in larger life contexts and explanatory frameworks. This may be similar to what is found in the expressive writing literature, in which individuals who are able to provide more temporal, causal, and

explanatory words subsequently show better outcome. The use of temporal, causal, and explanatory words suggests a more elaborated description of who, what, where, and when, similar to what we see in elaborated family narratives.

It is also intriguing that it is the use of specific negative-emotion words that is related to adolescent well-being and not the use of more general or vague emotion terms. Previous research has not addressed emotion specificity, but our results suggest that families who discuss specific emotion may be modeling a more nuanced and differentiated understanding of emotion than families that discuss more general emotional states. It may be that families that are able to focus on specific emotional states and reactions, and provide a framework for understanding and regulating these specific emotions, are helping their adolescents to learn specific emotional coping and regulation skills. Discussing more general or vague emotional states and reactions may be a way of distancing from emotion that ultimately would not be helpful in coping and regulation.

Family Reminiscing as a Gendered Activity

Whereas examining the family as a unit allowed us to explore the dynamic co-construction of shared events, we were also interested in how mothers and fathers might differentially contribute to these co-narrations as well as to adolescent well-being. As mentioned earlier, gender differences in personal narratives emerge in childhood and are maintained throughout adulthood, with females telling longer, more detailed, more emotional, and more relationally oriented narratives than males (Bauer, Stennes, & Haight, 2003; Buckner, 2000; Friedman & Pines, 1991; MacDonald, Uesiliana, & Hayne, 2000; Shaw & Edwards, 1997), and there is some suggestion that, when comparing mother–child and father–child dyadic reminiscing, mothers are more elaborative and more emotional than fathers (Bohanek et al., in press; Fivush et al., 2000). Examining the ways in which mothers and fathers individually reminisce within the family as a whole allowed us to gain a better perspective on the role that mothers and fathers play within the family in creating shared narratives of the past. Thus we examined both reminiscing style, in terms of elaborations, evaluations, and repetitions, and emotional content, in terms of expressions and explanations, for mothers and fathers separately. Note that this set of analyses differs from previous research on parent–child gender differences in reminiscing because in previous research mothers and fathers were compared across independent narrative conversations with their children, whereas in these analyses, the whole family was reminiscing together, and the differential contributions of mothers and fathers to these family narratives were examined.

Parental Reminiscing Style

We coded all maternal and paternal utterances as elaborations, evaluations, and repetitions for both the factual and emotional aspects of events (Fivush, Marin,

McWilliams & Bohanek, 2009). Repeated measures analyses of variance were conducted examining the number of elaborations, evaluations, and repetitions that mothers and fathers provided for the factual and the emotional aspects of the narratives. Main effects and interactions of parental gender, type of utterance, and content of narrative were followed-up with comparisons of mothers and fathers on each utterance type by content. As shown in Table 3.1, mothers were more elaborative than fathers, but mothers and fathers were equally evaluative. That mothers are more elaborative confirms previous findings examining parent–child dyadic reminiscing with preschoolers and suggests that mothers are playing more of a role in helping to construct the shared past, although it must be noted that fathers are involved in creating a validating narrative interaction. High levels of maternal elaborations further suggest that mothers are playing the role of "kin keepers" in the family, creating and maintaining the family stories and family history in order to preserve a family identity over time (Sherman, 1990; Wamboldt & Reiss, 1989).

Intriguingly, higher levels of maternal elaborations and evaluations about the facts of the negative events were concurrently related to lower levels of adolescent internalizing ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.10$ for elaborations) and externalizing behaviors ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.10$ for evaluations), but maternal reminiscing about the emotional aspects of negative events was not related to adolescent well-being. Fathers, in contrast, who elaborated and evaluated more about the emotional aspects of negative events had adolescents with higher levels of internalizing ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.10$ for elaborations) and externalizing behaviors ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.05$ for evaluations). These patterns suggest that the beneficial effects we saw for family reminiscing on adolescent well-being are being carried by maternal reminiscing; mothers who help their adolescents to create more coherent, detailed narratives of who, where, what, and when about stressful events are beneficial for adolescents. However, the finding that fathers who elaborate and evaluate on the emotional aspects of events was related to lower well-being was puzzling. Note that because we examined mothers and fathers within the same narrative conversations, this cannot be explained by differences in what these narratives were about; both mothers and fathers were contributing to the same co-constructed family narratives on the same topic. However, mothers and fathers could be contributing different kinds of information and in different ways to the ongoing co-constructed narrative. Therefore we turned to a closer examination of what mothers and fathers might be contributing to the emotional content, as well as examining these relations longitudinally.

Parental Emotional Content

For those parts of the narratives that focused on emotion, we counted all expressions and explanations for mothers and fathers separately (Bohanek, Marin, & Fivush, 2008). We conducted repeated measures analyses of variance on parent gender, type of utterance, and type of content, and main effects and interactions were followed-up

with analyses examining parental gender by each utterance type by type of content. As shown in Table 3.1, mothers expressed and explained more emotion than did fathers. Again this confirms previous findings that females generally tell more emotionally laden personal narratives than do males, as well as extending previous findings that mothers reminisce more about emotions with their preschoolers than do fathers (Kuebli & Fivush, 1992). Most intriguing, longitudinal relations between parental narrative style and adolescent well-being were clearly related to gender. (Note that because we only had 12 girls and 12 boys at the 2-year follow-up, we focused on the effect sizes of the correlations [see Kline, 2004; Vacha-Haase, Nilsson, Reetz, Lance, & Thompson, 2000; Vacha-Haase & Thompson, 2004, for discussions of this issue]. Because of the exploratory nature of the data and the small sample size, both small effect sizes ($r \geq 0.31$) as well as moderate effect sizes ($r \geq 0.55$) are considered meaningful.)

Mothers who were more emotionally expressive and explanatory when reminiscing about negative events had daughters with higher self-esteem ($r = 0.33$ for expressions) and sons with higher self-esteem ($r = 0.62$ for explanations) and lower internalizing behaviors ($r = -0.35$ for explanations). Similarly, fathers who were more expressive and explanatory when reminiscing about negative experiences had sons with higher self-esteem ($r = 0.64$ for expressions) and fewer internalizing behaviors ($r = -0.49$ for explanations). In contrast, fathers who were more emotionally expressive when reminiscing about negative events had daughters with higher levels of internalizing ($r = 0.44$ for expressions) and externalizing behaviors ($r = 0.38$ for expressions).

One issue in this type of research, of course, is causal influence. As we discussed in our introductory remarks, we frame this research dialectically, arguing that narratives and identity are reciprocal. Similarly, we argue that by examining the family as a whole, we are examining the ways in which individual family members mutually and reciprocally influence each other in the co-construction of the narrative. This, of course, raises the question of whether parents are facilitating identity and well-being in their adolescents or if adolescent identity and well-being are soliciting parental style. We argue that this, too, is a dynamic system that is reciprocally interactive. Thus it may be that daughters who, for whatever reasons, may be having more difficulties with identity issues and emotional regulation solicit more emotional expressions and explanation from their fathers. We do not rule out this possibility, but argue that the direction of effect is likely stronger from parent to child than from child to parent for two reasons. First, longitudinal research on parental reminiscing style in relation to child narrative skills and emotional well-being in early childhood has shown that the direction of influence is substantially greater from parent to child than from child to parent (see Fivush et al., 2007, for a review and discussion). Second, many of our correlations are longitudinal, suggesting relations between earlier measures of parental narrative co-construction and later measures of adolescent well-being. Still, it is important to recognize that children are active agents in their own socialization and that theoretical and empirical models that posit more dynamic reciprocal influences are needed.

Summary of Family Narratives

Overall, the patterns suggest that reminiscing is a gendered activity (see Bohanek et al., 2008, for a full discussion); mothers elaborate more than do fathers and mothers express and explain more emotions than do fathers. That mothers do the majority of the emotion talk in the context of family narratives is not surprising. Mothers generally do the majority of "emotion work" in the household (Hochschild, 1979), and family narratives are a critical context for creating emotional meaning and a shared history (Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006). Similarly, mothers are responsible for being the "family historian," for keeping track of family events and milestones, and to place these events in an ongoing narrative of family life (McDaniel, 1999; Sherman, 1990; Wamboldt & Reiss, 1989). Thus, doing more of the elaborations and emotion work within family narratives may be part of the larger gender role that mothers adopt in terms of creating a sense of emotional integration and stability for the family.

Moreover, family narratives are related to adolescent well-being, and this, too, is gendered. Mothers who elaborate on the facts of what happened have adolescents with higher levels of well-being. And, although simply elaborating on emotion is related to lower well-being, perhaps because this facilitates a ruminative style, mothers who express and explain more emotion associated with stressful events have adolescents with higher levels of well-being. Thus, mothers who help their adolescents create more detailed and therefore possibly more coherent narratives of the who, what, where, and when of stressful events, and who help their adolescents to understand the emotional causes and consequences of stressful events, have adolescents, both daughters and sons, with higher levels of well-being.

Father's role, however, appears to be linked to gender of child. Fathers who express and explain emotions have sons with higher levels of well-being but daughters with lower levels of well-being. Few studies have examined the father–child relationship, particularly in relation to children's self-esteem and emotional and behavioral adjustment, but there is some evidence that the father-child relationship is much different than the mother–child relationship (Parke, 2004), especially during the adolescent period. Children tend to have a closer and warmer relationship with their mothers than they do with their fathers (LeCroy, 1988; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). The father–adolescent relationship, and *especially* the father–daughter relationship, is strained. Adolescent girls report more of a distant relationship with their fathers than do adolescent boys (Hill, 1988); sons report being much closer to fathers than daughters do during adolescence (Steinberg & Silk, 2002).

Moreover, children may recognize that their mother and father each have different strengths, which may lead them to turn to a particular parent for help with certain types of problems. Specifically, both sons and daughters report going to their mothers for more emotional and relational issues, whereas they turn to fathers for information and material support (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Related to this, fathers tend to foster autonomy in their adolescents through discussions of achievements and successes (Fiese et al., 1995). Although family narratives may serve many different goals, in this study, we specifically asked families to discuss highly emotional

experiences together, and therefore, in this context, family narratives may serve a more relational or affiliative goal, that of bonding the family together through hard times. In this context, then, it is possible that maternal scaffolding of highly emotional narratives of family relationships may be related to children developing a more emotionally coherent sense of family and self. In contrast, the father's expression and explanation of emotion in this context may be antithetical to his usual role in the family as fostering independence and problem-solving (see Finley & Schwartz, 2006, for recent empirical support on this issue).

This interpretation may help explain the gender differences in relations between paternal reminiscing and adolescent outcome. Because negative events create problems that need to be resolved, it is possible that fathers may take on a more problem-focused approach in these narratives. Thus one reason we may see consistency in maternal reminiscing and outcome in both daughters and sons is because in reminiscing, mothers are playing their acknowledged role in the family, both as the family historian and as the one who provides emotional scaffolding and support. Fathers, on the other hand, may play very different roles for sons and daughters especially during early adolescence when gendered identity becomes critically linked to romantic partners. For sons, who are striving for autonomy, paternal focus on emotional explanation may provide a healthy model for coping with aversive affect. Daughters, in contrast, may be looking to their fathers to provide strength and protection, and a focus on emotion may undermine daughter's perceptions of their fathers as strong and unflappable. Obviously, this argument is speculative and clearly tied to developmental stage. Arguing from developmental theory, we would propose that it is only in this transition into an adult gendered identity that daughters may have problems with emotionally expressive fathers. Indeed, we might even argue that, long-term, emotionally expressive fathers may play a positive role as their daughters consolidate a more nuanced and mature gendered identity. The need for additional research is obvious.

Conclusions and Implications

Family reminiscing is a frequent and critical part of family life and has implications for adolescents developing sense of self and well-being. By focusing on the family as a whole, examining the process and content of family narrative interactions, we have demonstrated that families that are able to create coherent, elaborated narratives of stressful family events, and that express and explain specific negative emotions, have adolescents who display higher levels of self-esteem and emotional well-being. However, our research has also highlighted the gendered nature of reminiscing. During family narrative interactions, mothers play a larger role than fathers in scaffolding and supporting more elaborative and emotionally expressive and explanatory family narratives, and mothers who are more elaborative and emotionally expressive and explanatory have adolescents with higher levels of self-esteem and emotional well-being. Fathers' role in family narrative interaction is more complex; elaborative, emotionally expressive, and explanatory reminiscing is beneficial

for sons, but detrimental for daughters. While the interpretations we present in this chapter are clearly speculative, our results point to the critical role of family narratives in adolescent development, and the ways in which family reminiscing is a gendered activity.

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Autonomy, Identity, and Narrative Construction with Parents and Friends

Trisha L. Weeks and Monisha Pasupathi

Choosing Classes

Daughter: Okay, ah, I have to think of something we can talk about, because it has to be one of my experiences.
Mother: Just talk about whatever you talked about with Hesper.
Daughter: Okay, um, when I was registering for school, for high school, I was happy, mostly, because I get to choose my classes. But, it's kind of bad, because (laugh) the 28 classes that I wanted, I didn't get. And, uh, -
Mother: Why do say that was happy?
Daughter: Why I was happy? Because, well, because it's high school
Mother: ((Well, it's -))
Daughter: ((and I get to)) take some of the classes that I wanted, instead of them just making ((something up)).
Mother: ((So, it's)) exciting.
Daughter: Exciting, pretty much, I guess.
Mother: Happy, or exciting?
Daughter: Exciting, both. No. I can't make up my mind. I'll just say both. Yeah.
Mother: So, how did you finally decide which classes you wanted to take?
Daughter: Hmmm, well, I want to take women's choir, because, like, (inaudible) I think was first taking it. I think she changed from guitar to women's choir. And it's fun to have classes with your friends. And I like to sing, and you already know that because I sing in the car, with the radio. And, um, clothing, I wanted to take that, because I remember when I was little and Rochelle was taking that class, and she sewed me those pajamas, the purple ones, and I liked them a lot. And, I think that I told myself that I wanted to do sewing because she sewed me those pajamas and stuff. I just thought it was fun, so I decided to take clothing.
Mother: Well, you were always making doll clothes anyway.

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Daughter: Oh, doll clothes. I thought you said "dull." I'm like, mean. (laugh)
Mother: Doll. Yeah, whatever. (laugh) But you did, you used to all the time. Who was it you'd play with, and you'd always get out the fabric and sew doll clothes?
Daughter: With my dolls. Oh, -
Mother: No, there's usually somebody else that would sew too.
Daughter: Courtney?
Mother: Was it Courtney?
Daughter: I think so.
Mother: Oh, okay.
Daughter: Well, I always made Courtney sew, she didn't want to, but I wanted to. (laugh)
Mother: Well, they're your friends. (laugh) Okay, so what else did you get? What other classes did you sign up for?....

Recently, while testing the feasibility of a laboratory procedure for studying adolescent conversational storytelling, we recorded a series of adolescent conversations in our laboratory.[1] Adolescents were asked to choose recent events like an important decision, a recent self-contradictory experience, or a recent self-typical experience. They discussed the experiences with both their friend and their parent, and the order of these conversations was counterbalanced. Although the data set was not large, conversations were saturated with issues of autonomy, identity, and general adolescent concerns and comparisons of conversations were illuminating. Naturally, the data we present are limited and our discussion here focuses on issues the data raise for further exploration.

In the above exchange about choosing classes, the daughter explains in detail what classes she chose and why. Her mother does not question her choices, and further, is supportive, warm, and attentive throughout the conversation. Her warmth is also reserved - she does not engage with excessive enthusiasm but allows the excitement to belong to her daughter. In addition, she helps her daughter explore the reasons behind her decisions, making observations about her likes, dislikes, and previous behavior. In so doing, the mother gives her daughter a vote of confidence. She is supporting the girl's autonomy in the content of the conversation by supporting her choices, and she also supports autonomy on a process level by her interest in and facilitation of her daughter's voice. Note that identity issues are also woven into this conversation, as the mother reminds the daughter that she was "always making doll clothes anyway." The mother contributes to the daughter's understanding of who she is by bringing her enduring preferences to light in ways that complement and extend the daughter's exploration of her identity via her interests. For her part, the daughter seems to accept and enjoy these contributions. The daughter's identity, like her voice, is warmly supported and encouraged by her mother.

[1]Michael Richardson collected these data as part of another research project. We gratefully acknowledge his thoughtful research design, recruitment of participants, and careful data collection efforts.

This relatively mundane, everyday conversation is an illustration of some accepted wisdom about identity and autonomy development during adolescence. In this chapter, we first discuss that accepted wisdom, namely, that adolescents' conversations with parents and peers are a nexus for the achievement of identity exploration and autonomy, and that warm, supportive responses from parents and peers foster identity exploration and support adolescent autonomy. We begin by looking at theories about the connected developmental concerns of identity and autonomy in adolescence. We then examine current research, which suggests that identity and autonomy are constructed in everyday conversations with family and friends.

Then, we consider some more complicated aspects of autonomy and identity in these conversations. One set of complications has to do with negotiations between adolescents and their audiences around issues of voice, silence, connection, and independence (Fivush, 2002, 2004). We illustrate these complications with other examples from parent-adolescent conversations recorded in our laboratory - conversations that are recognizable, but less idealized in their form. A second set of complications has to do with how autonomy and identity are played out in the context of conversations with friends - about the same topics discussed with parents - and in a final section of the paper, we consider adolescent-friend conversations. We conclude by discussing the implications of these complications involving voice, silence, independence, connection, and context on constructed identities and on development.

Processes of Identity and Autonomy Formation Are Linked in Adolescence

Autonomy and identity are diffuse concepts, not interchangeable, but not completely independent of each other. A summary of nearly 50 years of work on adolescent autonomy notes that the concept includes notions of separation, individuality, and a sense of agency, including self-control and self-choice or freedom from coercion. It also includes a sense of self-governance and the ability to assume responsibility for one's self and one's actions (Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2003). However, autonomy is not agency at the expense of connectedness. The development of autonomy occurs in the context of important social relationships. In fact, Grotevant and Cooper define individuation or autonomy as including both connectedness and individuality - responsiveness to others while still being able to assert the self (1986; Grotevant, Cooper, & Condon, 1983). In contrast to autonomy, identity involves a sense of personal continuity and coherence, establishing role and value commitments, and constructing a sense of self-understanding or self-concept (Erikson & Erikson, 1997; Harter, 1988; Kroger, 2003). Like autonomy, identity is also developed in the context of social relationships and important identities need social validation in order to be viable (Harter, 1998; Mead, 1934; Swann, 1983, 2000).

The twin goals of autonomy and identity are not independent concerns during adolescence. Certainly, the negotiation of each impinges on the other. In his seminal

work on development, Erik Erikson identified adolescence as the time period during which the individual's main developmental task is to negotiate the conflict between identity and role confusion (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). In other words, normally developing adolescents are busily engaged in figuring out who they are and this necessitates becoming a person independent of, or autonomous from parents. Other researchers have taken up Erikson's notions and extended them. Marcia (1966) identified four ways to resolve the identity conflict in adolescents. He categorized some individuals as having achieved a state of identity achievement or a fully formed identity. Others, who seem to blindly adopt parental ideals, were identified as being in a state of foreclosure. For those who were struggling with their identities, concerned individuals were termed to be in a state of moratorium, while those struggling but unconcerned were in a state of identity diffusion (Marcia, 1966). Thus, a fully formed identity was conceived of as a state of differentiation from parents. While identity is certainly not synonymous with autonomy, Marcia's work clearly links the processes of identity development with ideals of autonomous self-exploration. That is, contexts which permit the adolescent to explore identity in an autonomous way should facilitate healthy identity development.

The idea that becoming autonomous and forming an identity are intertwined has received a fair degree of empirical support. For example, Grotevant and Cooper have studied the processes of individuation during adolescence in the context of families and have linked it to identity formation. As previously noted, they define individuation as a concept that includes both connectedness and individuality in relationships. Connectedness is seen in an individual's responsiveness to others' views and sensitivity to others' ideas, while individuality is manifest in the individual's ability to be separate and to assert the self. In family interaction tasks, individuation (the presence of both connectedness and independence) was linked to identity exploration and role-taking ability (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Grotevant et al., 1983). Families whose interactions were characterized by the expression of difference and by mutual engagement had adolescents whose identities were more mature. Likewise, Reis and Youniss (2004) argue that adolescent identity development is best conceptualized as a series of possible trajectories rather than stages or states. They sampled high school students both during their sophomore and senior years and discovered that while one group of teenagers had markers of identity development that suggested stable, developed identities, others fluctuated with time. Although several different trajectories emerged, one group in particular seemed to lose ground developmentally during those years. Poor communication with mothers and conflict and avoidance with friends were more prominent among this group and linked to losses in identity development (Reis & Youniss, 2004).

Interpersonal interactions are an important nexus for the development of self and for the experiencing of autonomy - defined in terms of separation and connection. Next, we look at how issues of autonomy and identity have been examined in the context of conversing about autobiographical experiences or personal storytelling. This is a context involving communication, but communication around critical material for the construction of identity, and, as we shall see, material where the individual must take into account others' perspectives in exploring identity

implications. Moreover, it is a context in which a particular feature of autonomy can also be examined - one revolving around the way children and adolescents construct the personal past with important others.

Identity and Autonomy in Conversational Storytelling

Conversational storytelling has been studied at various phases of childhood (Edwards & Middleton, 1988; Fivush, Bohanek, Robertson, & Duke, 2004; Nelson & Fivush, 2004) and adulthood (Dickinson & Givon, 1995; Dixon & Gould, 1996; Pasupathi, Alderman, & Shaw, 2007). Earlier work in this arena was primarily focused on the impact of joint storytelling on memory performance (see Weldon & Bellinger, 1997). Often, this interest in using conversations to enhance memory capacity and performance was linked to developmental or gerontological concerns - to the idea of socializing how to remember the personal past or the idea of compensating for later life deficits in memory capacity. As we review next, however, researchers have begun to link conversational remembering to identity and autonomy, as well.

Identity and Conversational Remembering

Researchers interested in both ends of the lifespan began to point out the great importance of memory in general, and conversational remembering in particular, for self and identity building (Bluck, 2003; Bluck & Alea, in press; Fivush, 2004; Fivush et al., 2004; Pasupathi, Weeks, & Rice, 2006; Reese, Bird, & Tripp, 2007; Reese & Fivush, 1993). The child developmental research in this area suggests that in telling stories about the personal past, children learn to represent themselves as agents with their own unique subjective experiences (Reese, Newcombe & Bird, 2006; Wang, 2004; Fivush & Nelson, 2004). Parents and others aid in this process by encouraging the elaboration of culturally relevant features of memory (Wang & Conway, 2004). That basic sense of agency shifts through development, moving from a wanting and feeling agent in early childhood to a thinking, wanting, and feeling agent, and eventually to an agent that has a reflexive grasp on his or her own continuities in time. So, the preschooler can use remembering to reflect on wants and feelings, while the adolescent engaged in remembering is likely to be constructing a set of self and identity conceptions (Habermas & de Silveira, 2008). McLean and Pratt (2006) recently documented empirical evidence for this in a prospective, longitudinal study of adolescents and young adults. Adolescents who constructed personal insights into narrating important memories had more advanced identity development. Middle-aged and older adults continue to construct more enduring features of themselves in memories, including themes around which their life stories are organized (Bauer & McAdams, 2004; Bluck and Gluck, 2005; Pasupathi & Mansour, 2006; Singer & Salovey, 1993). Storytelling about the past is thus a primary site for the construction of identity in relation to lived experience.

But storytelling does not take place in a vacuum. People build stories with the important others in their lives and that is true across the lifespan. Those others, in turn, influence both the content and the style with which we tell our experiences. For example, the emergence of autobiographical remembering is tightly linked to parent-child reminiscing practices (e.g., Bauer, 2006; Edwards & Middleton, 1986; Fivush & Nelson, 2004). Preschool-aged children whose mothers employed an elaborative narrative style in reminiscing with their children had better recall of events than children whose mothers employed a less elaborative style. In a similar vein, listener's responses have been linked to conversational remembering in adults (see Pasupathi, 2001; Pasupathi et al., 2007; Pasupathi & Rich, 2005). Work from the Pasupathi laboratory suggests that the responses (or lack of response) from conversation partners influence the elaboration of conversational remembering and is especially important for aspects of remembering that communicate the experiencer's unique, subjective perspective (Pasupathi & Hoyt, 2009).

It is not only the elaboration of memories that is affected by joint reminiscing. Engaging in joint remembering also affects views of the self. For example, elaborative autobiographical remembering is reciprocally interrelated to the sophistication of self-conceptions in childhood (Bird & Reese, 2006), and as noted, such elaborative remembering is linked to mother-child joint reminiscence. Other evidence for the impact of the larger social context comes from dinner conversations in a longitudinal study with preteens. Fivush and colleagues have identified three styles of family communication commonly used when families in their sample were asked to discuss an event together. A collaborative style is characterized by warm, free interaction, where each family member contributes to the narrative of the event and diverse perspectives are integrated into the final narrative. In a parallel style, family members each contribute, but there is parallel narration, involving turn taking, rather than an integration of perspectives. In the imposed perspective, one family member controls the interaction, often ignoring or invalidating the contributions of others. The study showed that children whose families were more likely to practice the collaborative style subsequently had higher self-esteem (Bohanek, Marin, & Fivush, 2006). The implication is that children's sense of self is linked to the way their families discuss the past. In young adults, friends' listening responsiveness also affects both remembering and related self-conceptions and emotions (Pasupathi et al., 2007; Pasupathi & Rich, 2005; Thoman, Sansone, & Pasupathi, 2007). Thus, both families and friends provide important contexts for the development of the self. However, as we will illustrate with the data from our laboratory, the ways in which individuals construct themselves across these contexts are different.

Autonomy and Conversational Storytelling

Thus far, we have focused primarily on self/identity in conversational narration, but conversational narration clearly involves issues of autonomy, as well. For example, in the study of dinnertime conversations (Bohanek et al., 2006), one way to interpret the family reminiscing patterns associated with higher self-esteem is in

terms of elaboration, but another lens through which that style can be viewed is an autonomy-supportive one. That is, families whose joint reminiscing is characterized by free-idea exchanges are families who support the autonomous voices of their respective members. In fact, Cleveland and her colleagues have been exploring the relation of autonomy support to mothers' elaborative remembering style with samples of young children and their mothers. Their findings suggest that elaborative reminiscing involves both support for the memory task - help with information seeking and the provision of cues for recall - and support for the child's own interests, in the form of following the child's lead (Cleveland & Reese, 2005; Cleveland, Reese, & Grolnick, 2007). High autonomy support is linked to a parental prioritizing of the child's unique perspective and with the child's engagement in other memory tasks (Cleveland et al., 2007), but support for the memory task, or structure, is required to enhance overall memory performance (Cleveland & Reese, 2005; Cleveland et al., 2007).

As noted earlier, autonomy development broadly entails the increasing capabilities of adolescents to make and take responsibility for their own choices and decisions while remaining responsive to others (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). Within the context of joint storytelling, though, autonomy can also be conceptualized as voice, in Fivush' model of voice and silence, to which we turn next.

Fivush's Model of Voice and Silence

In Fivush's (2002) model, voice and silence are two ends of a single continuum, which is crossed (orthogonally) with another continuum, self vs. other. These two axes cross (see Fig. 4.1) forming four quadrants. The voice-silence continuum refers to the extent to which a person is able to express or voice his perspective. When one has voice, one's experience is validated and one's perspective is accepted. Silencing, on the other hand, is not to be heard. One is silenced when one's story cannot be told. The self vs. other continuum in the model is orthogonal to the voice vs. silence continuum, as one can silence the self or be silenced by another. Likewise, the self

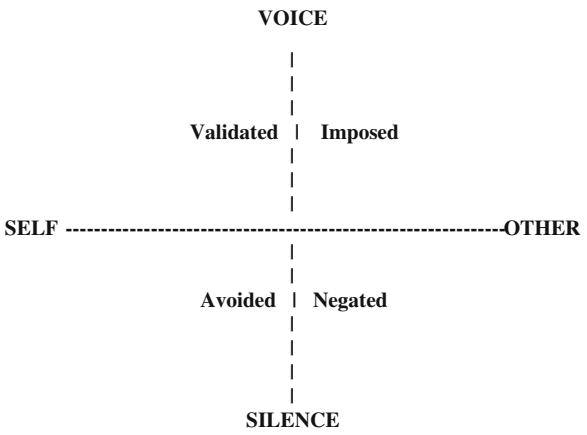

Fig. 4.1 Fivush's model of voice and silence, self and other. Fivush (2002)

can have voice or give voice to another. In this way, all four quadrants of the model can be activated in conversation (Fivush, 2002).

Fivush's concept of voice comes from a feminist perspective, concerned with power. She notes that the concept of voice often reflects power differentials, in that whoever has voice has the power to be heard and the power to reify a particular version of events. In this sense, voice is like autonomy, in that voice allows the adolescent to take ownership of his or her choices and their consequences and to express how those choices are related to his or her identity (Fivush, 2002).

In what follows, we examine a series of conversations between adolescents with their mothers to illustrate some important complexities in the voice-silence model. We then consider how voice and silence around autobiographical experience may be distributed across different relational contexts, by examining adolescents' conversations with friends about the same events previously discussed with parents.

At first blush, it would appear that autonomy and voice map onto each other directly. Certainly, taking voice is a means of self-assertion. It is a way to present one's perspective, and if necessary, defend one's position. Thus, the upper quadrant of Fivush's model, self and voice is a pathway to autonomy. In fact, we opened with a conversation between a 13-year-old girl and her mother, discussing the daughter's choice of school classes. As already noted, that conversation looked like a classic example of a warm, supportive, positive parent-child interaction that is likely to lead to positive outcomes for the adolescent. The topic of the conversation - class choices - is both autonomy and identity linked and is also within the realm of what Nucci (1981) and other domain theorists (e.g., Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Turiel, 1998) have called the "personal." The personal refers to a class of situations in which most people endorse individuals making their own choices.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, not all the parent-adolescent conversations in our small corpus showed this pattern of support and warmth combined with smooth, uncontested pathways toward autonomy and identity. Next, we consider some further examples. Although the mother in the following exchange is also actively listening to her son, she takes voice from him, in an effort at correction. He begins with the interpretation of this experience as amusing, derived from a prior conversation with a friend to which we return later. His mother, however, rejects this interpretation of the event and asserts her own interpretation (as immature and wrong).

The Artist

Son: Well, in commercial art I, I changed a teacher's picture. Yeah, a teacher's picture.
Mother: You got it done?
Son: Yeah.
Mother: Was it hard?
Son: No.
....
Mother: Oh.

Son: But I made a teacher look gay.
Mother: What does that mean?
Son: He is. (laugh)
Mother: He is not.
Son: Everyone thinks he is.
Mother: Literally?
Son: Yeah.
Mother: How do you look gay?
Son: I don't know, just look and act. There's this gay kid at my school.
Mother: And?
Son: (laugh) He's really gay. (laugh)
Mother: So, and what does that mean?
Son: It's funny.
Mother: Why?
Son: 'Cause they look funny.
Mother: I don't understand.
Son: The way they dress.
Mother: How does he dress?
Son: Like, (nervous laugh)
Mother: Nicely?
Son: No. Just really tight clothes.
Mother: So do, uh, cowboys.
Son: Not tight shirts and scarves around their necks. And -
Mother: So, do you tease him?
Son: No.
Mother: I would hope not.
Son: I don't even talk to him.
Mother: Are you mean?
Son: Mean how?
Mother: You talk about him, though, don't you?
Son: No, I barely even do.
Mother: Barely, but you do. That's not a good thing. You don't have to agree with a person's choice, but you can't - I don't believe it's right, but it's his choice. You wouldn't want somebody judging you for your choices, would you? Huh?
Son: I don't know. I don't think anyone has.
Mother: Would you want them to? Do you want people making fun of you behind their back? Behind your back?
Son: Probably not.
Mother: Probably not? Would you or wouldn't you? Let's get a definitive ((answer)).
Son: ((No.))
Mother: No, so it's not. You, you don't want people to do it to you, shouldn't do it to them. [sigh]

In this exchange, the mother, upset with her son's cavalier attitude and disrespect for gay people, commandeers the speaker role. She begins by contesting his classification of the teacher as "gay," but quickly moves to challenging his perspective and his interpretation of his own behavior. In terms of the model, despite (or because of) the instructions for the son to talk, and the mother to listen "as you normally would," the mother takes voice, and moves the pair into the "other" dimension of the horizontal axis. Several points bear noting here. First, the mother's tone in this conversation is one of disgust and exasperation - she is not warm. This exchange illustrates an interesting point in the relationship between voice and autonomy, namely, that voice not only serves to develop autonomy, but also serves other, equally important purposes. While allowing a child to have voice is one way to promote autonomy, taking voice from one's child may be done, as it is here, in the service of a different goal. In essence, the mother in the above exchange is willing to sacrifice her son's sense of autonomy in an attempt to re-shape his sense of right and wrong. Domain theorists would suggest that the mother feels the need to intervene in this particular identity-related conversational story precisely because the son is no longer operating in the realm of the personal, but has moved firmly into the domain of morality (Smetana, 1999), where parental authority remains important and parents remain invested into late adolescence. The mother is not at all concerned with the son's desired interpretation of this event and what that may mean for his identity. She refuses to allow him to use this event to explore the possibility that he is artistic, technologically savvy, clever, or funny. The conversation does involve the construction of identity, but in a way that is contested and saturated with moral concerns.

The examples thus far look at two poles - one where the mother allows the daughter to have almost total voice and one where the mother dis-allows the son's voice. Many conversations were more complex. Consider the layers of negotiations that occur in the following conversation between an 18-year-old daughter and her mother.

Trying Alcohol

DAUGHTER: Is it disappointing that I drank?
MOTHER: A little.
DAUGHTER: A little?
MOTHER: Are you disappointed?
DAUGHTER: Example wise, I am.
MOTHER: It's, uh, you know better. It's on your shoulders. It's you who have to -
DAUGHTER: (inaudible) I mean, I don't feel bad for doing it, I wanted to try it. I feel bad for the example part. I mean, not knowing -
MOTHER: The thing that makes me the most upset about it is that you drove home. That's extremely irresponsible.
DAUGHTER: Yeah.
MOTHER: That's the thing that makes me the most angry about it. The most upset, the most disappointed, is that you weren't smart enough to not.

DAUGHTER: But, it was my first time, I didn't know that (inaudible).
MOTHER: Well, if you're going to drink, you can't drive. Period.
DAUGHTER: Well, nobody would have been able to come get me, and I wouldn't tell you to come get me. (laugh)
MOTHER: Well, you should have told me to come get you.
DAUGHTER: (laugh) Oh, her mom, because it was (inaudible)'s house that I went to. She's all, "don't tell your mom." (laugh)
MOTHER: And so why wouldn't you tell me to come get you?
DAUGHTER: Because.
MOTHER: That hurts my feelings, you didn't call me to come get you.
DAUGHTER: Because I don't want you, I didn't want you to be disappointed.
MOTHER: Does it change it?
DAUGHTER: No.
MOTHER: You told me anyway.
DAUGHTER: (laugh) I know, still.
MOTHER: So what's the difference? Kill somebody else on the way home? Most people get in accidents within a mile of their house.
DAUGHTER: At least I didn't want you to be disappointed.
MOTHER: Well, you shouldn't have gone and said you wanted to try it if you didn't want me to be disappointed. I didn't think that you need to try it. That was a little disappointing, but it's on your shoulders. I didn't try it, you did. The thing that makes me mad is that you drove home.
DAUGHTER: I know. I won't do it again.

In this example, negotiation of autonomy goes on at several different levels. At the level of the event itself, the daughter has asserted her independence by drinking alcohol. The consumption of alcohol is, in fact, illegal at her age, a decidedly adult activity. The daughter has asserted her "adultness" by consuming alcohol, but her question, "are you disappointed in me?" indicates that she knows that her choices have implications for her relationship with her mother. She is hoping to both grow up and stay connected. Her mother quickly points out that her concern in this case is not with the bid at adult activities, but rather with the daughter's failure to consider moral and prudential aspects of her actions; not that she illegally consumed alcohol, but that she endangered others and herself by then driving home, a practice her mother calls "extremely irresponsible."

The daughter then explains her lapse of responsibility as an attempt to protect the pair's relationship (["I didn't call you for a ride because] I didn't want you to be disappointed"). For the daughter, the experience does not appear to be viewed positively either. That is, the daughter also construes this event as having been a negative one, but in the daughter's case, the issue is her relationships with others, and her image in the eyes of important others - her mother, and as we will see later, her friends. The discussion of her run at independence is a negotiation of connection and independence within the pair's relationship. The mother, in turn, refuses to discuss the implications for her daughter's friendships - effectively silencing this concern - but does talk about which specific aspects of the event (prudential and

moral) resulted in the threat and damage to her evaluations of her daughter. Thus, this conversation contains aspects that fall in both the "other silencing" and "other voice" quadrants of Fivush's model.

In contrast to The Artist, the mother in Trying Alcohol does not explicitly disagree with or deny the daughter's interpretations of her experience as involving concerns for relationships, spiritual dilemmas, and other identity-related issues. The mother merely refuses to take up those issues, preferring to focus on the prudential and moral considerations of the experience. While ignoring a particular aspect of an event is an effective way of silencing another, the mother's goal here is not to silence her daughter, but to redirect her attention to what the mother believes is a more pressing aspect of the experience. Moreover, she actively invites the daughter to voice her own perspective on those moral and prudential concerns. The daughter's desired interpretations are not incompatible with the mother's, as was the case in The Artist. They are simply ignored. Thus, while both this conversation and the prior one entail an "other voice" focus, they differ in the way the other's voice is related to the adolescent's voice or with the "scope" of substituting a parental voice. In the former case, the mother wants to substitute her voice for the adolescents. In the latter, the mother wants to direct the conversation to a particular feature of the event, but she does not imply that her daughter's issues are unacceptable, merely not relevant to her. Note especially the daughter's phrase "example-wise, I am," which the mother does not take up as a topic. Effectively, the mother silences this concern of the daughter's in relation to the alcohol event. Later, we shall see that in part, this particular issue is not only less relevant to the mother's concerns for her daughter, but that it is also not a concern that the mother can resolve.

Another complexity arises when we consider the case of the lower left quadrant of the model, when an individual silences him/herself. In the following exchange, an 18-year-old son talks with his mother about his decision to go to college. Following that brief exchange, they discuss situations in which he is "not like" himself. As the discussion gets uncomfortable for him, he cuts it off by waving his hands to signal to the lab assistant that they are done talking, and announcing "we're done."

College Choice

Son: Um, and my, uh, second one. I don't know. I'll tell you maybe (inaudible). So then this one was, uh, when I had to make a big decision. And, uh, I chose just, uh, college for that one. College.

Mother: Yeah (laugh).

Son: (laugh) I don't know, that's a big decision. And, uh,

Mother: Yeah.

Son: So you had to, uh, help me out, and I asked you a lot, and Dad, and Jenny, my sister, (laugh) about it.

Mother: (laugh) Yeah.

Son: And you guys told me what to do. Right?

Mother: I'm still telling you what to do, and I don't think you've made any decision yet.

Son: Yeah, I have.
Mother: Okay.
Son: Okay. (cough) (laugh)
Mother: Good. I'm glad to hear you've made a decision.
Son: And then, um, the other one was just, uh, when I acted not like me. And I don't think I ever not act like me, usually. But I just said in, um, like in, uh, new situations or surroundings, I don't really act like me, because I'm really uncomfortable around new people especially.
Mother: Yeah [nods].
Son: Would you agree with that?
Mother: I agree with that, yeah. You tend to become really quiet.
Son: Yeah.
...
Mother: I think so, maybe. When you're not like you, you come in and you're quite loquacious.
Son: That means quiet.
Mother: No.
Son: That means, what is it, that means loud.
Mother: You're talkative. You come in, and you sit there and talk, and you tell me about things.
Son: Oh, and that's not like me? (laugh)
Mother: No. Most the time you don't even tell me you're home.
Son: I do.
Mother: Well, only at midnight.
Son: (laugh) (cough)
Mother: No, in new situations you are quiet, and that's not like you.
Son: Okay. Are we done yet?
Mother: [shrugs] I don't know.
Son: I think we're done.
Mother: (laugh) Okay.
Son: This is kind of uncomfortable, isn't it?
Mother: Having you talk to me is way unusual. (laugh)
Son: (laugh) [waves] That means we're done.

In the first part of this exchange, the son's lack of autonomy is evident. His own description of his decision-making process regarding going to college is what Marcia (1966) would call foreclosure. His self-admission that "you guys told me what to do" implies that he has not staked an agentic claim in this decision-making process. He may also be setting the stage to dodge responsibility for the outcome of this decision. He clearly does not view parents, siblings, and friends as consultants in his decision, but as decision makers. His mother appears frustrated rather than flattered by her son's submissiveness and remarks pointedly that she is still telling him what to do.

The conversation then turns to identity concerns or trying to identify what is "not like" him. As the mother begins to tell her version of how she sees him, two things

are notable. First, her version is internally incoherent and bewildering. Second, her son makes a bid for autonomy by announcing his discomfort and ends the session. The mother's remark "having you talk to me is way unusual" is telling, in that it indicates that for this young man, self-silencing, at least with his mother, seems to be the norm.

The interesting thing about this exchange is that the process of the discussion belies the content. Looking only at content, the son looks like he is in a state of foreclosure, willing to acquiesce his agency to his parents even in the case of what is to a large extent a personal domain issue - one where personal decision-making is considered normative. In the act of self-silencing, however, the son actually asserts his agency and defends his boundaries. He is not going to talk to his mother. He will withhold the informational exchange and connection she seeks, and in so doing, assert his independence and power. Although it may be used beneficially on occasion, a pattern of self-silencing will ultimately undermine connection, a critical aspect of autonomy. Notice also that this case turns the conventional argument about voice equating to power on its head. This son's silence is his power. However, it appears to be an autonomy gambit of last resort, borne of desperation and a sense of powerlessness. In a sense, the conversation suggests some point on a developmental continuum where the son was repeatedly silenced or confused by powerful others (see Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2004).

What About with Friends?

Thus far, we have examined parent-child conversations and identified some complexities in the way that those conversations entail "other-voice" and also pointed to the importance of looking at self-silencing as an autonomy gambit. In considering whether topics and experiences are voiced or silenced, however, one glaring omission is that in the data thus far presented, we have only one conversational context - one involving listeners with clear agendas (Smetana, 1999; Smetana & Asquith, 1994) for their adolescent children. But adolescents also engage in identity-related conversing with friends (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986), often about the same sorts of events discussed above. Autonomy concerns are typically not examined in those contexts, because the presumption is that autonomy does not play as large a role in more equal relationships. Next, however, we consider how the events above were discussed with friends, in addition to parents. The results of our examination suggest that friends are also integral to the pursuit of autonomy and identity. However, because friends' conversations are not always driven by such clear, socialization agendas, the negotiation of autonomy and identity among friends becomes more evident when juxtaposed with parent-adolescent conversations.

Consider the following conversation, from the girl in Choosing Classes. This is how she talked about her class choices with her friend.

S: Anyway, when I was registering for high school, it was happy, because, because, I got to choose the classes, well, kind of, the classes I want. And,

uh, it was a little bit bad, because I couldn't choose the fourteen classes I wanted. (laugh)
Friend: (laugh) [nods]
S: And then stay at the school till, like, 9 o'clock at night.
Friend: More like the twenty-eight classes you wanted. (laugh)
S: Yeah. (laugh) More like that.

The conversation is abbreviated but highly positive and identity-reinforcing, in constructing an image of this girl as interested in everything. Academics and particular choices are less interesting to this pair (who quickly move to other topics around their shared social network) and the friend cannot offer the long-term bolstering of identity that the mother did. But, what is noteworthy in this exchange is the girl's capacity to articulate her mixed emotions, broad interests, and the implied larger identity of enthusiasm and energy; likewise, her friend is supportive and warm.

Now, consider the two cases we discussed where the mother took voice from her children, beginning with The Artist. With his friend, his conversation about altering the teacher's picture looks very different.

S: .... And you gotta (laugh) see the picture I did of Atwood.
FRIEND: You told me about that, on the computer. You made him look like an it.
S: Yeah, and like I put burn sides, beard, er, a, uh, goatee. And Miss Draper's hair.
FRIEND: Whose?
S: Miss Draper.
FRIEND: Oh.
S: The art teacher. I put her hair on him. And I drew some girl, uh, uh, eyebrows on it. So it looks like a girl.
FRIEND: Cool.
S: You'll see it 'cause he's gonna, he's gonna, uh, print em. And he's gonna try to get them to put them in the -
FRIEND: Yearbook?
S: No, the teachers.
FRIEND: Oh.
S: Where all the teachers' pictures are (laugh).
FRIEND: Yeah (laugh). Who, who is this, Maeser?
S: Yeah.
FRIEND: Usually he's the guy who would kinda get mad.
S: (laugh). (inaudible)
FRIEND: You know, I would if I was a teacher. I'd kill him. Especially Atwood since he's a fag (laugh).
S: (laugh)
FRIEND: Maybe he is gay.
S: (laugh) The walking (inaudible) and all that stuff.
FRIEND: Yeah.

In this exchange, the youth is more successful at constructing his actions as entertaining and "cool." His friend laughs approvingly throughout and goes on to endorse the assumption that sexual orientation is visible and detectable and that being gay is morally objectionable and open for ridicule. Having examined the two conversations provides a richer (and indeed, more troubling) picture of how this young man is engaged in the projects of autonomy and identity. Within his relationship with his mother, he is still a child in need of moral education and she suppresses his autonomy and identity concerns in favor of those parental goals. However, he has access to an alternative audience with whom he can pursue precisely the sense of identity he wishes to have and with whom he is given considerable support for doing so. That is, in the friendship context, this youth can achieve both freedom and connection while constructing himself as a homophobe. Not all disparities with friends and parents will look this way, however, that is, not all disparities will cast the friend and parent as offering an adolescent freedom and approval on the one hand and constraint and disapproval on the other. Next, we consider some additional conversation pairings that illustrate how rich the voicing of an autobiographical identity can be.

Recall the 18-year-old who tried alcohol. She suggested that she was concerned about her role as an example and her mother did not take up that concern. With her friend, this issue and a related one of spiritual crisis become the center point of her discussion.

S: (inaudible) but the something that wasn't me-that wasn't, you know, how I, you know how I've always been is just very strong in my standards, and very...
FRIEND: Uh huh.
S: ...my morals are important to me.
FRIEND: Right.
S: and I just, lately it's just gone down hill with how I feel about, ya know - I know, ya know, how I feel about my religion, ya know,
FRIEND: mm hmm [nods]
S: and everything. But lately how I've just kind of, "hmm" [shrugs].
FRIEND: [nods]
S: Ya know, I'm just lettin' go.
FRIEND: yeah [nods].
S: And then, ya know, I don't-I don't want to, but I am. And the experience that doesn't, ya know, that's "not me" is, ya know, when I went to (inaudible)'s house...
FRIEND: [motions like she's taking a drink] (laughs) yeah.
S: It's just...
FRIEND: I was pretty surprised when that happened.
S: uhh, I KNOW, I know, ((I know)).
FRIEND: ((Well, I mean)) like, I mean it's good though, like, in a way, like, that was one of my questions that I put, ya know, that I answered (inaudible). Um, cause you've always been such a strength for me, like, morally.

S: mm hmm [nods]
FRIEND: Like, you've always been such an example for me. And your standards have always been so...you know, like,
S: [nods]
FRIEND: a great example for me, ya know, to where my-my standards should be.
S: mm hmm
.... (several turns omitted for brevity)
FRIEND; and you only did that once, and I don't think it's a bad thing, because now you realize on your own that that's something you never want to do again, ya know...
S: [nods]
FRIEND: and that's good [shrugs] ya know-
S: mm hmm
FRIEND: -instead of having people, you know, "don't do it," you know now for sure that that's not something ((you want in your life)).
S: ((Cause I was always)) afraid with you guys if I did do it...
FRIEND: [nods]
S: I mean, what kind of example would I be? What-what kind of example...
FRIEND: [nods] yeah
S: It's always-I've always been afraid, ya know, I wasn't-I've always not wanted to because of my eternal perspective on life.

Her friend responds with support for both autonomy and the exploration of this issue. For this adolescent, we can view the mother and the friend as complementary audiences for exploring distinct identity-relevant features of the event in question. That is, the discussion about spirituality and exemplar status does not undermine the prudential and moral concerns raised in the conversation with the mother. Moreover, it is possible to argue that the mother is not the right person to discuss the spirituality and moral exemplar issues - and perhaps especially the latter. The mother cannot restore the daughter's sense of being a moral exemplar, because that sense was related to the daughter's friends.

Also note that this conversation with the friend is laden with moral concerns. Although issues falling in the moral domain are clearly topics of negotiation between parents and teens (Smetana, 1999), peers are also called upon to discuss morality, and, as in this example, to mollify compromised identities by finding redeeming meaning in behavior. This kind of positive identity reconstruction also tends to strengthen connections in friendships.

In these two cases, we have seen friends provide greater support for the adolescent to voice a concern or identity issue, and parents engage in more direction toward what they perceive to be important concerns that the adolescent is ignoring. However, parents are sometimes more autonomy and identity-supportive than friends. Consider the following pair of conversations involving a 15-year-old boy.

The Angry Young Man

S: Yep. The not like me I did, when I was swimming at Edgar Hill last week,
MOTHER: Oh.
S: Just like a couple days ago.
MOTHER: The diving one?
S: Yeah. And me Eddie and Nick were having, you know those noodle things that you float on.
MOTHER: umhmm (nods)
S: Like those Styrofoam things. We were going to have a war with them, and the life-guard would get really mad if you ever went like that (lifts hands above head and brings them down quickly) because its all like WUPSHH! Like gets really really loud, and just Paps, and so Nick comes over to play with me and AJ and he's like...so the first thing he does is put it like that (arms above head) and we say, "Nick don't do that" and he goes (brings arms down) BAM! Like that and it goes really loud the life guard looks at us and he's like (shrugs, shaking head). And then Nick puts it back there again, and I'm like "NICK, what are you doing?" He does it again, and then I just got all pissed off...at Nick.
MOTHER: Did ya?
S: Yeah.
MOTHER: He's been getting on your nerves lately.
S: I, he's just...I don't think he's my kind of kid.
MOTHER: Yeah (nods).
S: To hang out with. Like, he's - annoys me SO much
MOTHER: Yeah (nods) I know. I know.
S: He annoys you too (laughs)
MOTHER: (laughs) huh?
S: He annoys you too.
MOTHER: Yeah. That's true.
....(exchange about Nick's eating habits and family life omitted)
MOTHER: How come that was a not like you experience? What...what does that mean?
S: 'Cause, I don't normally get that pissed off.
MOTHER: Oh yeah. (nods) ((Yeah.))
S: ((About)) stupid little things.
MOTHER: Like hitting the thing with a noodle. Ok, got it. That's true. That's true. You're usually pretty mellow.
S: I know.
MOTHER: Laid back.
S: It's weird.
MOTHER: Yeah. Growing up. Different feelings, different stuff.
S: Yeah.
MOTHER: Any more stories?
S: No, those are the two. Like me and unlike me.

MOTHER: (laughs) So the like you right now is that a golf club will break in your face?
S: (laughs, nods) That the golf club hit me in the face. Yeah.
MOTHER: (laughs) and the not like you is losing your temper. Yeah. That's probably true.
S: Short fused.
MOTHER: Having goofy things happen to you?
S: Yeah. Weird though, one day, like I won't be...I'll be like, alright, someone does something to me I'm not going to get pissed off...another day I'll be like (sighs, clenches fists and grimaces).
MOTHER: (nods)
S: Get so mad.
MOTHER: I say it's testosterone (laughs)
S: I guess so, I haven't had any brothers to fight with lately? (joking tone)
MOTHER: Yeah.
S: Luke hasn't beat me up in a while.
....

In this exchange, which was warm and supportive, the adolescent receives a lot of autonomy to narrate the event and associated meanings in his preferred way. His mother provides elaboration (in the form of questions), justification (Nick is annoying), confirmation (that the boy is typically laid back), and an explanation for the mood swings (testosterone). Note that over the course of the conversation, the youth begins to explore some of his internal mood swings in more detail, given the supportive context. Things are rather different with his friend, as we see next:

S: Uh...oh, last week I was swimming with AJ and Nick, and we were having a noodle fight. I mean, um, and the life guard wouldn't like it when we would go like that (swings arms down from above head), because it would go like PAP! Like, extremely hard. It was just, boom! So like as soon as Nick comes over he just puts it like that (lifts arms above his head), and he gets over Eddie, were like, "Nick" don't do that and he goes (swings arms down) Whapap! So I'm like "why (inaudible) did you do that?"
FRIEND: (laughs)
S: So then we started like, noodle sword fighting (swings arms sideways), and he puts it up like that (lifts arms over head) and goes PAP! And we're just like "NICK!" (laughs).
FRIEND: (laughs)
S: (inaudible) like crazy
FRIEND: Why is that an unlike you experience?
S: (laughs) I don't know (shakes head)
FRIEND: (laughs)
S: I don't normally get pissed that easily
FRIEND: Oh, hm, except when you're golfing

S: Yeah, but, it's golf
FRIEND: ((it's golf, yeah))
S: ((I'm talking)) about at kids.
FRIEND: Yeah.
S: At a golf club it's ok, because they don't really care. Golf club (shrugs). ((Its not like (inaudible))).

The friend expresses skepticism at the idea that being angry is unlike the youth and continues to be skeptical as this youth articulates the difference in moral standing between a person and a golf club, but finally concedes the point. They quickly switch to another topic. So, here, we see a mother who encourages autonomy and identity exploration and a friend who challenges the individuals desire to tell the story "his way," offering instead an alternative implied account (you're an angry person). While we do not have power to explore gender, it is noteworthy that this male youth needs to do his exploration of his own internal experiences with his mother and that exploration is discouraged throughout with his friend. In fact, the bulk of the conversation with the friend consists of golfing anecdotes and what McLean and Thorne (2006) would call entertainment stories, not unlike the earlier 15-year-old's discussion about the alteration to the teacher's picture. These stories are also about identity and autonomy, but they involve a relative silencing of the search for meaning and explicit identity formulations, in favor of a performative identity (Pasupathi, 2006), that is, identity by "doing" funny. These kinds of chains of storytelling are common among friends (e.g., Hyman & Faries, 1992; McLean & Thorne, 2006; Pasupathi, 2006) and more common among male youth (McLean, 2005). However, in the latter case, they may entail some constraints on autonomy - constraints that are hard to see without looking at another telling context. In this case, the fact that the youth is thinking about the meanings of his temper swings and that he pursues an opportunity to talk about that suggests some self and other silencing at work in his interactions with his friends. In sum, friends and parents often permit autonomy and identity exploration around distinct issues, in both complementary and contradictory ways. Thus, one of our major conclusions is that looking at only one relationship in an individual's life gives a skewed picture of the pursuits of autonomy and identity in story.

What of self-silencing? Recall that the most incoherent and problematic story earlier involved an attempt to self-silence as an autonomy gambit with the mother. It is especially important to examine this individual's attempts at identity construction and autonomy in the context of friendship. An optimistic perspective would suggest that friendships could act as a compensatory context for doing the identity work that cannot be done by self-silencing. Other perspectives, however, suggest that the kind of story dynamics observed with the parent, assuming they reflect lasting patterns of interaction, sets the stage for subsequent relational difficulties in other contexts (Hazan, Campa, & Gur-Yaish, 2006; Oppenheim, Nir, Warren, & Emde, 1997). An 18-year-old whose attempts at autonomy and identity building have been suppressed across his short lifetime may not have developed the capacities

to engage in those projects with his friends. First, consider this 18-year-old's attempt to talk about college selection with his friend:

S: And so, umm, I don't know, I talked to my parents about it and they um, and my sister too, and they were just like, ... you should go to school first because you get the living away from home experience and um, you need that before your mission. So they were like, go on, go to school first. And I have to what college I am, um to go to. But I chose Utah State because they um, gave me the most money. (laugh) Alright?
FRIEND: Yea.
S: That's what I picked. How did you react to this situation? (laugh)
FRIEND: (laugh)
S: Hm, are we supposed to talk for longer?
FRIEND: I think we're supposed to.
S: OK. Um, I don't know? Um, Um, Where are you going to go to college?

His lack of agency in the decision process is again evident here - he does not refer to his own desires, concerns, or interests, except obliquely to choosing, but then he locates the impetus for his choice in external, economic factors. He quickly engages in self-silencing by asking his friend about his college choices - and his friend willingly provides an extended account of his own choice processes. One could argue that college selection simply was not an event where autonomy could be explored and that other events might look different. However, this conversation also involves the following story:

S: Ok, I'm supposed to tell you about these two stories. Um, OK the first one was, um, this one time in scout camp we had this scout master. I think I've told you this before.
FRIEND: Oh, yea.
S: (cough) And um, he never ever gets mad, but then this one; this is hard. This one time he like got way mad because the other scout master was being a dork and so he like got way mad. And ... it was really weird. But he got mad and so I was like, that makes me never want to be mad. And so then I sort of like, made a goal, you know?
FRIEND: Uh huh.
S: To not be mad.
FRIEND: (laugh)
S: Am I ever mad?
FRIEND: Yea, you get mad sometimes when I, uh.
S: That reminds me of, did you ever hear about Paul ...

This story recapitulates the incoherence and suppressed autonomy of the earlier parent conversation. Moreover, its content is about the desire to suppress subjective experience altogether. The result does not provide optimism about the potential for this youth to construct an autonomous sense of identity.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, we have applied Fivush's (2002) model of voice and silence to dialogues between adolescents and their friends and parents. We have seen how the twin developmental concerns about identity and autonomy play out in these conversations, both on the level of content and process. This preliminary observation of a few adolescent conversations with parents and friends suggested several patterns worth further exploration. First, we saw subtle dynamics of self and other voice and silence in these conversations. That is, parents sometimes failed to respond to adolescent-raised topics (e.g., the concerns with being a good example for friends), effectively silencing that topic. Friends, likewise, sometimes did not respond with intense interest to topics, for example, the selection of classes. Parents and friends also inserted their own concerns and interests, for example, forcing the conversation to involve moral and prudential issues around alcohol use or challenging an adolescent's assertion about a personal characteristic (i.e., not being angry or ill-tempered). Such dynamics are not necessarily a problem. In her work with young children, Fivush points out that those power differentials are not necessarily negative and that indeed part of the socialization process is teaching children when to take voice and what situations call for them to hear the voices of others (Fivush, 2002). Finally, we observed that adolescents engaged in self-silencing; sometimes in response to a challenge to their identity claims.

We also saw that different relationships involved taking up different aspects of the event being recalled - that is, friends and parents often elicited different kinds of stories about the same set of events. This occurred both when friends or parents engaged in other voice and silence and when participants themselves engaged in voice/silence. That is, the differences were mutually constructed. In some cases, the co-construction was complementary, in that a teen could explore issues in one context (i.e., risking self and other by driving drunk) and other issues in another setting (i.e., having failed to set a good example). The case of trying alcohol is particularly relevant because both sets of issues are important and identity-relevant, but the mother cannot restore the daughter's sense of being a good example for her friends and the friend cannot take the role of the arbiter of prudential and moral concerns. In this case, the two contexts offer important and complementary contexts for autonomy and identity development. In other cases, it appeared that adolescents needed to suppress or downplay one set of issues in one context, but were able to express those issues in another. For example, the young golfer was not able to explore his anger with a friend in the same depth as with his mother and the teen who altered a teacher's photo was likewise not able to enjoy his humorous achievement with his mother in the same way that his friend allowed. These experiences, where one identity must be suppressed in some contexts, are likely fundamental to being a social human being (Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993; Harter & Monsour, 1992; Swann, Bosson, & Pelham, 2002). Finally, in some cases, we observed adolescents being similar across parent and friend contexts. Sometimes this was fairly positive, but in the case of the college decision adolescent, those continuities looked disturbing in terms of their potential implications for autonomy and identity.

What do these observations suggest about the process of identity development? First, they suggest that such developments are situated within the context of what went before. Teens whose conversations with parents were open and exploring had different conversations with their friends. Even when challenged, they were able to respond to the challenge and negotiate the relevant identity concerns. For example, in class choices, the teen was confronted with less interest from her friend, but her ability to switch topics was fluid, natural, and comfortable, suggesting that lack of intense interest from a friend was not particularly problematic. As another example, the young golfer was able to negotiate his friend's challenge to arrive at a joint conclusion about his personality that was palatable for both, prior to changing topics. On a more negative note, we also saw continuities of incoherence and self-silencing across parent and friend conversations in the case of college choice. That young man's conversation with his mother suggested a longer history of inhibited autonomy between him and his family. Taking these few observations together with Fivush's work (Bohanek et al., 2006) and that of others (e.g., Bird & Reese, 2006) suggests that parent-child reminiscing practices early may not only have continuities with parent-adolescent reminiscing or within the broader family, but are also likely to set the stage for how adolescents relate to their friends around remembering and identity. One important direction, then, for future work would be to examine that process of generalization from the parent to the friend setting; this could be done by incorporating relevant observations into some of the small-scale longitudinal studies now underway.

Second, however, these observations suggest important questions about what comes next, that is, how these contexts reflect developmental processes at work in the here and now that will affect adolescents' transition into adulthood and their development beyond. Researchers interested in self-conceptions in adulthood have long acknowledged that people's sense of themselves is complex, multi-faceted, and contextual (Harter, 1998; Linville, 1987; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Thus, to some extent, we could argue that acquiring skills at suppressing identities in some settings and expressing them in others is an important developmental achievement (Bamberg, 2004; Korobov & Bamberg, 2004) and that the discontinuities in parent and friend contexts provide adolescents with the opportunity to practice this important skill. Those discontinuities can vary in whether they complement one another or merely conflict, but they are inevitable parts of living in a social world and relating to different people. Moreover, these discontinuities reflect local cultural norms around the specific niche in which individuals live. For example, the conversations about trying alcohol and about the art project might look quite different in other settings, where alcohol consumption is more normative or attitudes toward homosexuality more, or less, tolerant. Thus, friends and parents are helping to provide socialization contexts for both general cultural values (e.g., Wang, 2004) and for generation-specific and age-specific concerns (Bamberg, 2004; Holmes & Conway, 1999). However, multiplicity can entail risks (Donahue et al., 1993; Campbell, Assanand, & Di Paula, 2003; Harter & Monsour, 1992; Swann, Rentfrow, & Guin, 2003). That is, multiplicity that leaves people feeling inauthentic or diffuse can be associated with depression, lower self-esteem, and lower satisfaction with life. Thus,

one important question is how people navigate the different stories that their different contexts elicit, and how they are, or are not, able to connect those stories into some larger whole. Our data do not allow us to even speculate on that process, but it is clearly one worth addressing in future work.

Finally, we want to consider the implications of self-silencing as an autonomy gambit. In the college choice conversations, we see a young man silence himself twice - once with his mother and once with his friend. In both cases, he obtains a local, temporary autonomy through withholding access to his own thoughts and feelings and through a refusal to negotiate his desired identities. However, we believe that the long-term implications of this autonomy gambit are likely to be quite poor. By self-silencing, this young man undermines the potential for connection with his mother and his friend and he effectively creates an autonomy that is devoid of relatedness. Further, his identity development is compromised by his inability or refusal to negotiate his own claims with the responses of others. Consider his inability to negotiate his own claim of successful anger avoidance with his friend's assertion that he does, in fact, get angry. He responds to his friend by simply changing the subject. He is left with his own claim, a challenge to that claim, and no integration of the two competing ideas about the nature of his identity. This kind of pattern renders whatever identity he might tentatively hold fragile and in need of defensive work. That kind of defensiveness, in turn, is associated with poor outcomes in terms of well-being and relationships (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). In other words, self-silencing buys autonomy in the short term at the expense of long-term achievements in negotiating an identity within important relationships. Sartre wrote (Sartre, 1964, p. 29) "People who live in society have learned to see themselves in mirrors as they appear to their friends," in essence, articulating the idea of the looking glass self. When people are unable to voice their experiences to at least some individuals, and to negotiate their sense of themselves in relationships, it is unclear what they come to see in the mirror. Without some image of the self that can be relied upon, the developmental tasks of adulthood may pose serious challenges.

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What He Said to Me Stuck: Adolescents' Narratives of Grandparents and Their Identity Development in Emerging Adulthood

Michael W. Pratt, Joan E. Norris, Heather Lawford, and Mary Louise Arnold

Jim (age 21): "My Mom's father – my grandfather. A very independent guy, but a very caring guy. They (grandparents) go down to Florida every winter. And our family often goes down to spend some time with them. My grandpa really loves swimming in the ocean. So he would go out floating on his back for hours at a time. . .When I was younger, I used to stand on the shore and watch him float out. He would disappear and come back and ask me if I wanted to go out. I did once and people were worried because I was only ten. My parents and my grandma were concerned, 'Oh, he's too small,' even though I was with my grandpa. But what he said to me stuck. What he said was I need to know my own limits, my abilities. Other people are going to have their opinions and worries and concerns, but being independent is taking that stuff into consideration, but then also doing what you can."

Jim's Ernest Hemingway moment with his maternal grandfather, the old man teaching an important life lesson way out there on the sea, exemplifies the material we discuss in this chapter. We wondered what older adolescents and "emerging" young adults might have to say about the role of their grandparents in their development of a sense of self and whether they might consider that grandparent role as special or different from the impact of their parents in their lives. We drew on a corpus of adolescent stories of grandparent teaching to explore this topic in relation to identity development during the period of late adolescence. Jim's (all participant names are pseudonyms in this chapter) grandfather's story highlights how a supportive grandparent may help youth to establish a sense of some independence from the parent generation and contributes to building a sense of autonomy as an adult. This "nuclear scene" in the life story (McAdams, 2001), involving Jim and the members of his family's generations, now seemed to represent an important element in identity development for him.

Family narrative is an emerging field of study in developmental psychology that has the potential to illuminate important features of both individual and family lives, close relationships, and identities (Fiese et al., 1999; McAdams, 2001; Pratt &

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Fiese, 2004). As family members tell their personal stories, they trace the meaning of intergenerational interactions within the wider family setting. For example, grandparents' stories about their grandchildren can reveal much about the general functions of grandparenting and about individual differences in how these functions are carried out (Norris, Kuiack, & Pratt, 2004).

Over the past several years, we also have been studying the other side of this intergenerational story: the narratives that adolescents tell about how parent and grandparent generations teach them values and guide their development. Our studies have highlighted both similarities and differences in adolescents' stories about the adult generations of the family and what these two generations mean to youth in terms of value socialization (e.g., Pratt, Norris, Arnold, & Hebblethwaite, 2008). In this chapter, we focus on grandparenting stories and adolescent identity, exploring how the stories youth tell express the role of grandparents in the construction of their sense of self and identity in adolescence and emerging adulthood.

We begin by touching on past research on the role of grandparents in the lives of children and adolescents, particularly through the use of personal narratives. We also review theory and research on personal and family narrative more generally and their potential to illuminate aspects of family life and intergenerational process. We then describe our previous research on adolescents' stories of their grandparents as socializers of family values. Finally, we report some new longitudinal analyses of adolescents' stories of their grandparents and the prediction from aspects of these stories to identity development for a sample of youth moving from adolescence into emerging adulthood. Our findings suggest that grandparents in typical families may have an important role to play in this key developmental process.

Grandparenting and Storytelling in the Three-Generational Family

Research on parenthood suggests varied and complex functions of parents within the family (e.g., Grotevant, 1998). However, the research literature on grandparenthood has been much more limited. Our review of this literature in the mid-1990s indicated that grandparenthood had been reduced to a series of typologies. Most authors classified grandparents as "rocking chair" or "fun-seeking" characters and did not discuss the diversity and complexity of their relationships within the family (Norris & Tindale, 1994). A more recent review by Reynolds, Wright, and Beale (2003) shows that subsequent research has not improved the situation very much, although some work by Elder and his colleagues has begun to detail grandparenting patterns somewhat more systematically (e.g., Mueller, Wilhelm, & Elder, 2002). Nevertheless, an almost exclusive focus on grandparents caring for grandchildren in times of family distress or difficulty has emerged in the current literature (e.g., Pittman, 2007). Granted, there are increasing numbers of grandparents who do act as surrogate parents to grandchildren (Cavanaugh, Blanchard-Fields, & Norris, 2008), but this situation is not the norm in most families. Our understanding of the meaning of grandparents to younger generations would benefit from a closer look at patterns of interaction and the nature of the relationship.

A number of theorists of narrative have suggested that the development of a sense of identity in adolescence depends on the construction of a personal life story (e.g., Erikson, 1968; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 2001; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). The self, in modern cultures at least, is expressed through the stories that we tell to others and to ourselves about our lives and experiences, stories that are constantly undergoing change and (re)construction as our lives and selves change through time and experience. The family is a central context for such storytelling and a key source of such stories. Indeed, young children typically first learn how to tell stories in the context of the family (e.g., Fivush, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 2004). A little later, adolescents commonly tell stories to their parents for purposes of support and interpretation (McLean, 2005), and parents in some families, at least, encourage their children's cognitive and emotional development through family narration and reminiscence (e.g., Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006). Family lives and experiences are also a dominant source of the content of our personal life stories (Pratt & Fiese, 2004). For example, the majority of personal turning point stories told by a sample of 17-year olds about major change in their personal lives focused on family relationships (Mackey, Arnold, & Pratt, 2001). Evidently, then, the family is likely to be a major source of key scenes in the developing adolescent life story. As we describe below, these stories commonly include stories about grandparents as well as about parents.

Family stories, like other autobiographical memories (Alea & Bluck, 2003; Wang, 2004), serve several functions. When told by grandparents to children, they can build the intergenerational relationship, provide information about personal and historical events, transmit values, and act as vehicles for the expression of generativity (Norris et al., 2004). Older adults are often regarded as society's story tellers, and there is evidence that they are likely to fulfill this role in a special way within families (e.g., Nussbaum & Bettini, 1994). For example, when adolescents are struggling with identity issues, and their grandparents with frail health, shared stories can strengthen the intergenerational relationship and provide a vehicle for mutual support (Spira & Wall, 2006).

Reminiscence is most rewarding when it is shared, and sharing a special story can add to the pleasure. Ryan, Pearce, Anas, and Norris (2004) analyzed the letters and stories of old and young people to family members up and down the generational ladder. They found that the stories of both generations seem designed to build bridges across the years and establish a strong connection among family members. Further, stories of survival in the face of adversity may be especially important to younger family members as they try to make sense of difficult or tragic world events (Norris et al., 2004). Kennedy (1992) found that grandchildren of all ages sought out their grandparents for comfort, support, and advice and argued that they did so even more than youth in previous cohorts.

As well as strengthening intergenerational relationships, telling stories also provides a way for grandparents to educate grandchildren about the intergenerational history of their family and allows them to give their personal perspectives on major historical events (Ryan, Elliot, & Anas, 2000; Ryan, Elliot, & Meredith, 1999). Older adults appear motivated to find similarities between themselves and younger members of the family. Sharing personal histories may be one way to

enhance similarities. Chaitin's (2002) study of storytelling among Holocaust survivors and their families, for example, showed that these older adults reinforced family solidarity, as well as a distrust of non-family members.

Manoogian (2002) found that family stories are an essential part of the legacy that grandmothers strive to provide for their grandchildren. For the Armenian-Americans in this study, where there was virtually nothing tangible left to pass on to future generations, legacies were seen to play an essential role in adolescents' identity development. In Manoogian's research, cultural assimilation of grandchildren was acutely painful to these refugees because their stories, traditions, and values were all that were left for them.

Traditionally, grandparents are thought to be important purveyors of personal and family values to younger members of the family (e.g., Kandell, 1996). Further, older adults seem to believe that they are successful in this task. We have found that older adults see more intergenerational consistency in values in their families than do the young (Smith, Norris, Pratt, & Arnold, 1998). This view is strengthened when families are also characterized by frequent intergenerational contact and feelings of emotional closeness. However, researchers such as Sabatier and Lannegrand-Willems (2005) have found that this influence is often mediated by the middle, parental generation. As well, the age of the grandchildren may have a pronounced effect. Emerging adults exhibit feelings of similarity with grandparents in measures of consensual solidarity such as values and opinions (Mills, Wakeman, & Fea, 2001).

The nature and effectiveness of storytelling goals such as values transmission may also be affected by the generative feelings of grandparents. We investigated the kinds of stories told by younger, middle-aged, and older adults about their personal life experiences, selected for the purpose of teaching values to the younger generation (Pratt, Norris, Arnold, & Filyer, 1999). Older adults, particularly those who were assessed as higher on level of generative concern on a standard measure, the Loyola Generativity Scale (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992), were more likely to tell stories that had generative themes than were the younger groups. They were also more likely to express strong motivation for teaching values to the younger generation. Indeed, in an examination of the qualities of stories told by grandparents about their interactions with grandchildren, Norris et al. (2004) reported that generative grandparents were more likely to tell stories that represented specific memories of how they had taught the grandchild and to report more specific themes about why they were proud of the grandchild, compared to their less generative age peers. Generativity among older adults, then, is linked to both greater investment in socialization processes and to different styles of narrating the life story and intergenerational relations in service of such socialization.

Stories of Grandparent Value Teaching by Adolescents

Pratt, Norris, et al. (2008) examined adolescents' memories of both grandparents and parents as value teachers, drawing on a corpus of stories told by 35 adolescents

in a longitudinal study of intact, middle-class Canadian families. Adolescents, at age 16 and again at 20, were asked to tell stories about both parent and grandparent teaching of values. These stories were elicited by asking the youth to choose a set of three important values that served as ideals for them, from a list of ten positive qualities (such as kind and caring, fair and just, and ambitious). Then, the teens recounted a story about how their parents had taught them about their most important value ideal (or another if they could not think of such a story for their first choice). Following this story, they then told another story about how one or more of their grandparents had taught them about a value. This story again drew on their first value selection if possible. A number of other questionnaires as well as other types of stories were also part of these two data collections (e.g., Arnold, Pratt, & Hicks, 2004).

The grandparent (and parent) stories were examined for several relevant features of narrative style and content, including story presence, the recounting of direct interaction with the grandparent in the teaching of values, and the direct quotation of grandparent "voice" or commentary in the story (e.g., Arnold et al., 2004). Some of these codes were drawn from previous general frameworks for analysis of story qualities (Blagov & Singer, 2004; Ely & McCabe, 1993). It seemed to us that adolescents might find it challenging to tell any story at all about their grandparents' teaching of values and also might be rather unlikely to tell stories that involved direct interaction with the grandparent on this topic, given that North American grandparents' role in direct family socialization is limited, particularly in the sample of intact families that we studied.

Our findings across the stories told at ages 16 and 20 supported some of these intuitions, though not all (Pratt, Norris et al., 2008). A few adolescents found it difficult to tell about grandparents as value teachers, but most could recount such a story if prompted (87%). In comparison, stories about parents as teachers were almost universally present (98%) in our sample, as we expected. Stories about grandparents also were quite likely (about 67%) to be of an "inspirational" sort, depicting how the grandparent's life had served as a broad model for the child (Pratt, Norris et al., 2008), rather than describing how the grandparent had interacted with the child directly. For example, grandparents were often remembered as examples of "ambition and hard work":

Clark (age 15): "Um, well it's kind of an example. Like, my grandpa's very ambitious. He started off with nothing, built a house with his bare hands from paycheck to paycheck working in a factory, built his own house, took that house, sold it, built another one, not with his own hands but was able to finance building another one and he's like financially and economically and status-wise, he's moved up, like we're part of the upper class, and he started off in very close to the low class. Like he started off on a farm, and that's probably very low class, like the lower end of working class, and now well my grandpa and my father are both ambitious and because of my grandfather, we're up in the higher class. It makes me realize that if you want to get anywhere, you need to be hard working and ambitious."

Clark's story about grandparent ambition as model reflects quite a common theme. Likely the fact that many of the grandparent generation in this sample were

first-generation immigrants to Canada made ambition and success highly salient qualities for family tales across the generations. While these inspirational model stories were quite common for grandparents, they were less common in stories of parent value teaching, as might be expected (Pratt, Norris et al., 2008), where parents were depicted more often as active teachers. However, some adolescent scenes (33%) did depict the grandparent as an interactive teacher instead. Here is a grandparent story that exemplifies this type of memory and also illustrates the way in which the grandparent's actual voice may be highlighted in stories by the child:

Susan (age 15): (Kind and caring) "My grandparents, they've always lived on a farm, they've always had horses and ever since I was very young, my grandfather taught me how to ride. . .Like he almost, not that he gave me a hobby, he found something that I was interested in and that he was interested in and we did it together, and it was a grandfather-granddaughter thing you know, and that's something that I really do respect him for, because there would be times when we were like cleaning the horses and he'd say, 'you know, I really appreciate our time together' and stuff like that, and I'd be like 'you know, you too.' He found that thing that was something I enjoyed and it was almost like he wanted to share in my life. Like there's some of those grandparents who you never see them, like once a year maybe and they load a whole bunch of presents on your lap and then say goodbye, like do you know what I mean? [*Umhum*.] I want to build a relationship with my grandkids like he did I think."

Susan's story clearly illustrates a repeated memory for extended direct positive interactions with her grandfather, as well as reflecting a direct representation of the grandfather's voice in this recounting (e.g., Ely & McCabe, 1993; Pratt, Hebblethwaite, Norris, & Arnold, 2007). In addition to the kindness and caring value teaching theme seen here, the story clearly notes the theme of intergenerational relationship building in grandparent stories that we mentioned in our review of functions above. And in her final comments, Susan suggests how this relationship may have helped to shape her own generative aspirations within the family and to develop an ideal for the self in the context of these future relationships across the generations. Indeed, memories of grandparents in maturity are often the primary models regarding how to be a grandparent oneself (King & Elder, 1997), thus providing, as in this example, an important element of one's family identity.

Interestingly, adolescents' stories about grandparent value teaching contained direct quotations of the grandparent's specific words about 25% of the time. This was similar to the quotation of parent voice in stories of parents as value socializers, which occurred about 31% of the time in the present sample (Pratt et al., 2007).

Thus, though grandparent stories of value teaching were a little more difficult to recall than those told about parents in this role, a large majority of youth in our middle-class sample of intact families was able to think of a story about how grandparents had taught them a value, both at age 16 and again at age 20. This is noteworthy; it seems that, overall, grandparents do "stick" in the minds of their adolescent grandchildren, as Jim's story noted above. Stories about grandparents were

also more likely to focus on the grandparent's life as an example or model of a value, rather than recounting direct instruction or interaction with the child. And a minority of stories about grandparenting contained literal quotations of the words of grandparents in the adolescents' accounts, similar in frequency to those told about parents in this teaching role.

In addition to these general patterns in the stories recounted about grandparents, there were considerable individual differences in the ways that grandparents of the families were depicted in the stories on some of these measures (Pratt, Norris et al., 2008). What factors predicted these variations? The most interesting and important of these in our data set had to do with a personality quality of the adults of the family – generativity. Past research has shown that parents who are higher on measures of generativity are more likely to be positive in terms of parenting patterns (e.g., use of an authoritative style, Peterson, Smirles, & Wentworth, 1997; Pratt, Danso, Arnold, Norris, & Filyer, 2001; Van Heil, Mervielde, & de Fruyt, 2006). These parents are also more likely to be effective in socializing their college-age offspring (Peterson, 2006) and more likely to be invested in the socialization of values in youth generally (Pratt et al., 1999).

Overall, then, there seemed some reason to expect that higher levels of generativity should enhance the value socialization process in families for both parents and grandparents and that this might be reflected in the stories told by adolescents about such value teaching. In our family narrative study, parents who were more generative were more likely to be depicted as telling specific stories of a teaching or learning episode, involving direct interaction with the child. Further analysis also showed more direct quotation of the parents' actual words in the stories told about generative adults as well (Pratt et al., 2007). Overall, then, value learning from generative parents was storied by their offspring as more vivid, interactive, and intense and more likely to be memorable in some predictable ways. These narrative findings seem consistent with the evidence that generative adults may have a greater impact in child socialization (e.g., Peterson, 2006).

Unfortunately, we could not examine grandparent levels of generative concern in relation to the stories told by their grandchildren, because we did not have any measures of grandparent personality in this data set. However, we did find that more generative parents had adolescent children who were more likely to depict their grandparents as teachers through the recall of interactive stories; as well, more generative mothers in this sample had adolescent children who reported being emotionally closer to their grandparents (Pratt, Norris et al., 2008). These findings suggest that generative parents may encourage more meaningful three-generational contacts in the family, which in turn leads to more dynamic storytelling by adolescents about grandparents. Indeed, Pratt, Cressman, Lawford, Norris and Hebblethwaite (2008) further reported that generative parents were more likely to feel positive and hopeful about the grandparents' role in children's socialization and to be more forgiving of perceived grandparent "interference" in the parents' own socialization efforts. Some parents, especially mothers, may thus foster intergenerational relations that highlight the role of grandparents in family process.

Grandparenting and Adolescent Identity Formation

Theory and research on adolescence and emerging adulthood indicate that a key task for the developing individual is to achieve an integrated sense of the self that Erikson (1968) described as identity. By this, he meant an integration of the self's roles across both time (past, present, future) and contexts (the complex variety of social and interpersonal roles of the self). This identity work, while a life-long project, is particularly central during the adolescent to early adult years (Erikson, 1968). With regard to the growth of personal identity and the adolescent's family relations, the task is to achieve a level of independence and autonomy from parents, while remaining within the compass of an effective sense of connectedness in the family (Grotevant & Cooper, 1998; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). As part of this process, the adolescent must transform his or her relationship to parents into a more mutual, less hierarchical model that allows the adolescent and parent to relate as mature partners in a more egalitarian way (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). This process too is an extended one, but the typical North American adolescent at ages 16–20 is already well begun on this journey. Parents can foster this development by providing opportunities for youth to participate in guided decision-making within the family, which gradually moves toward more and more independent reasoning and planning skills on the part of the adolescent (e.g., Dornbusch et al., 1985).

Fostering a sense of the capacity for independent, skillful decision-making, and greater autonomy in adolescents is thus an important role of the family during this period. The wider extended family also may play a role in this sense of independence and competence in youth. Grandparents, often because of their extended history of a close relationship to the grandchild, may be in a special position to provide such guidance, encouragement, and support. For example, one of our young women chose to talk about how her grandmother had taught her the value of independence through the acquisition of a sense of competence in cooking:

Sherri (age 17): "My mom's mom (taught me independence). Well, cause she's my closest relative that's not immediate to me and she's played the biggest part in my life so. . .I think that encouraging me to do something like make dinner by myself and even to the point where she would let me make my own grocery list and go with her and do everything. . .and she would just follow along. . .And like really young! Like not five or anything, but in elementary school I remember doing it a couple of times so, like big meals, I can't even imagine now (laughs. . . It's something I wouldn't have maybe thought I was capable of. You know what I mean? No one would let me do something like that, and so when someone says 'I know you can do it' that's really saying something." [Why do you think she responded in that way?] "Because I've always kind of had a strong personality and I've always been more independent and she saw that in me and she just wanted to give me an opportunity to really do something. And do you know what I mean. . .take advantage of that. . .and feel independent and make decisions about what I wanted to cook."

This story presents an example of the way in which children may find encouragement from grandparents to be particularly important during this vulnerable period. As Sherri explains, grandmother was the relative outsider of the immediate, nuclear

family who was closest to her. This role of grandparents as enthusiastic coaches of the grandchild was fairly commonly mentioned in our corpus of stories of grandparent teaching. We thought that such a role might provide an opportunity for grandparent developmental contributions, somewhat augmenting the parent role, as the child moves toward a more autonomous position with regard to parents. As well, Sherri's comment about how her grandmother had recognized the independence that was uniquely a part of her developing sense of self highlights how the growth of identity may be strengthened through such supportive interactions with a valued grandparent.

One additional example from our teen stories shows how this grandparent role may be in more explicit counterpoint to the parent role in some families. Bob was a difficult youth with some risky behaviors and a sense of alienation from his parents:

Bob (age 18): "Independent. . .Well, my grandpa, yeah, he moves a lot, which means he's able to do what he can, like not what he can, like what he wants kind of deal, and that kind of strikes me as a strong person, you know. Like he wants to move on this side of X city, that's where he's gonna go, you know, he doesn't have other people saying no, you can't do this, blah, blah, blah. Like even though my parents told him you know, you're fine where you are, you've got medical help where you are, like he moved to like some place where he's got his own place kind of deal, um, so he moved there and my parents are like no, no, no, but my grandpa, he stood up and he said yeah, I'm gonna do this. So, that struck me as an independent person."

Bob's story of his grandfather illustrates how grandparents may serve as exemplars of a less dependent relation to parents (even in this challenging sense, as a rebellious example of "standing up to" the parent generation in decision-making). These examples support the potentially important role of grandparents during this transition period, as supporters, coaches, and models of a new, more mature family self in the youth. In this example, in particular, one senses that the relationship to the grandparent itself is not particularly central – rather that Bob's construction of the grandparent's story serves mainly as a foil for his expression of independence from the parental orbit.

Of course, not all grandparents were remembered in positive and enthusiastic ways. Here is an illustration of someone who felt she learned little from grandparents:

Melinda (age 16): "Yeah, I know this is a really weird reason, but my one grandma that lives out in BC, she showed me a reason to be ambitious and hard working um because she always compares us to my other relatives and I don't like being put down by them, so I wanted to prove that I am actually better than them (laugh). [*And how do you feel about that experience now?*] I feel bad that I even have to think that way [right] because I don't think it should be like that, I think it should be more we're supposed to be friends. [*Is there any time that one of your grandparents actually showed you about the importance of something more directly?*] Nope."

So not all grandparents were helpful or supportive; some were downright mean according to their grandchildren. Nevertheless, such variation may help us to understand what may be central in the grandparent role in fostering adolescent

Table 5.1 Grandparent story measures and their correlations with family relations at age 20

Story measure	Percentage of all story elicitations	Maternal grandparent closeness	Paternal grandparent closeness	Grandparent influence
Story presence	87	0.60*	0.42*	0.08
Direct interaction	33	0.37*	0.15	0.36*
Grandparent encouragement	23	−0.23	−0.13	0.37*
Grandparent voice quotations	26	0.31*	−0.10	0.50*

Note: $* p < 0.05$.

development of a sense of self. We thus decided to examine how the depiction of grandparents in stories told by their grandchildren might be related to the development of identity in youth during adolescence and emerging adulthood.

Our analyses focused on the corpus of stories about grandparent teaching told at 2 ages (16 and 20) by our sample of 35 adolescents who were part of the longitudinal family study from age 14 to 24 as described briefly above (Pratt, Norris et al., 2008). There were only 26 adolescents (of the 35) who responded at age 24 in this study, so our analyses of identity development to age 24 are based on these cases only. At both ages 16 and 20, the participants were asked to describe a time when their grandparent(s) taught them an important value. We also collected a simple self-report rating of closeness to grandparents at age 20 and a measure of grandparent influence as depicted by a standard rating task for personal life influences (Cromwell, Fournier, & Kvebaek, 1980). Scores for maternal and paternal grandparents were not very related to each other for the closeness measure. Consequently, we present data for these two sets of grandparents separately in Table 5.1. Ratings on the Kvebaek board were done for each designated influence (mother, father, grandparents, teachers, peers, television, and religious leaders) on a 0–3 scale, ranging from "none at all" to "a lot." For grandparent influence, these were reliable between two independent raters ($r = 0.72$ for a sample of 16 cases).

A 24-item questionnaire measure of identity status development based in Marcia's work was obtained at ages 20 and 24 for these adolescents (Adams, Benion, & Huh, 1989; Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). For the identity status measure, alphas were modest (0.50–0.70), but these were consistent with results for similar samples using this measure (Adams et al., 1989). In order to simplify analyses of identity development below, we utilized a composite model of identity status development that weights scores on identity achievement items (the most developmentally advanced status) as positive, and scores on the three less advanced statuses of identity moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion as negative (e.g., Marcia et al., 1993; McLean & Pratt, 2006).

As noted, the adolescent stories in some of our families tended to depict their grandparents as "coaches," supportive voices who provided both encouragement and guidance toward maturity, independence, and effective competence during this

period of individuation from the nuclear family. Story elicitations were rated reliably for four story characteristics: presence/absence of a story, reports of direct grandparent–grandchild interactions, perception by the grandchild of grandparent encouragement of autonomy or competence, and use of direct quotations of the grandparents' voices. The percentage of agreement for 2 independent raters across these 4 characteristics ranged from 77% (direct interaction in the story) to 100% (story presence) for samples of 12–20 stories. Total number of words was also obtained for these grandparent stories, to control for possible length differences in the narrative measures.

Descriptively, our ratings of the grandparent stories showed a fair amount of variability. As noted already, most adolescents were able to provide a value teaching story about grandparents (87% of all contexts across the two ages). Overall, across both ages 16 and 20, about one-quarter to one-third of the stories were coded as showing direct grandparent–grandchild interaction, as reflecting a clear sense of encouragement from the grandparent from the child's point of view, and as using a direct quotation of the grandparent's voice as part of the story (see Table 5.1). Average story length was 316 words (including brief interviewer probes as well) and did not differ over the 2 times.

We also examined the relations between our measures of grandparent stories told at ages 16 and 20. Direct interaction and story presence were modestly positively related across time in these story sets (r values $= 0.41$ and 0.22, respectively). Use of direct quotation of the grandparent's voice and grandparent encouragement were unrelated over time, however (r values $= 0.09$ and -0.10 across ages). Story length in words was also unrelated over time ($r = -0.06$). Evidently, the level of stability in these narrative measures from ages 16 to 20 was limited, though it did seem as if broad aspects of story content (story presence, recounting of direct interaction) were somewhat more stable than narrative style (story length, use of voice). Perhaps content is more linked to general dimensions of the grandparent–grandchild relationship that persist over time (like contact or intensity of interactions in the relationship, Pratt, Norris et al., 2008).

In principle, several factors may account for these rather modest patterns of narrative stability. Grandchildren did not always describe the same grandparents in their stories at ages 16 and 20 (only about 65% of the time). They frequently did not describe the same value for each time of testing and so only 24% of the time was the age 20 story about the same values and the same person(s). And certainly 4 years is a substantial amount of time in the lives of adolescents and their perspectives on grandparents may change. For example, Clark's story above about his immigrant grand-dad's ambitious nature was followed 4 years later with a similar account, but somewhat more negatively tinged, as he noted how his grandparents seemed to work "too hard" and not have enough fun. Nevertheless, despite this variation over time in the particulars of the individual stories told, the pattern of relations between story characteristics and other adolescent measures, as described below, was relatively similar across each time of assessment. For example, grandparent influence ratings at age 20 were positively correlated with story encouragement ratings, r values $=$ 0.13 for age 16 and 0.35 for age 20; direct interaction in the stories was correlated

with influence ratings at 0.30 for age 16 stories and 0.32 for age 20 stories; grandparent quotation was correlated 0.34 for age 16 stories and 0.41 for age 20 stories. Therefore, based on our limited sample of stories available and the general principle of aggregation in data analysis, we decided to report analyses on combined data for ratings of our grandparent story features across ages 16 and 20.

Descriptively, the most common value discussed from our set was ambition, representing 30% of all grandparent teaching stories told. As noted above, we suggest that this at least partly reflects the experience of immigration into Canadian society of the grandparent generation in this sample. Next most common as a value was kindness and caring, which was the topic of about 25% of stories. Third most important across the ages 16 and 20 times of telling was independence (14%). The other seven values from our list of ten represented only 30% of stories in total. Examples of stories about each of the three most common values are provided in this chapter. While these value content choices were interesting, it was the way in which stories were told that was more central to predicting identity change than the particular value content of the story.

Results for these storytelling styles showed that the four story ratings were not very related. The story characteristics, especially use of quotations of the grandparents' voice and presence of direct child–grandparent interaction in the story, were linked to higher child ratings of maternal grandparent closeness and of overall grandparent influence, both measured at age 20 (see Table 5.1). Closeness to paternal grandparents, in contrast, was not consistently related to the stories told by the adolescents. This difference probably reflects the general pattern that mothers are more important than fathers as kin keepers in connecting the grandparent–grandchild generations (Putney & Bengtson, 2001). Overall, however, the finding that grandparent "presence" in the child's self-reports was linked to these story features supports the validity of our ratings of grandparent stories, as characterizing some important differences in how adolescents from different families recollected their grandparents as teachers. The four grandparent story measures were unrelated to overall story length, so we do not control for this further. There was only one gender difference on these story measures. Girls told stories that involved direct interaction with grandparents significantly more often than did boys. Given our small sample, we chose not to pursue gender differences further.

Our main analyses focused on predicting growth in identity development in emerging adulthood from individual differences in these four features of the grandparent stories told by adolescents at ages 16 and 20. Table 5.2 shows the correlations of these four measures of grandparent stories with identity development index scores, derived from the Adams et al. (1989) OMEIS questionnaire, at ages 20 and 24. As shown, these correlations indicated some fairly robust relations among certain of the story measures and identity development on the OMEIS, particularly at age 24. In particular, grandparent encouragement, direct interaction, and use of the grandparent's actual voice were all positively linked to advanced identity status at age 24, as shown in Table 5.2.

Separate regression analyses were then conducted to test our hypotheses of predicting identity growth from narrative representations of the grandparent role in

Table 5.2 Correlations between grandparent story measures, family relations' measures and identity development at ages 20 and 24

Story measure	Age 20 identity index	Age 24 identity index
Story presence	0.26	0.34*
Direct interaction	0.22	0.49*
Grandparent encouragement	0.24	0.68**
Grandparent quotations	0.57**	0.47*
Maternal grandparent closeness	0.29	0.08
Grandparent influence	0.17	0.38*

Notes: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.

Table 5.3 Regression models predicting identity maturity at age 24

Measure entered on step 2[a]	Beta	R^2
Age 20 grandparent influence	0.37[t]	0.26[t]
Grandparent encouragement	0.64**	0.51**
Grandparent direct interaction	0.48*	0.34*
Grandparent presence of quotations	0.48[t]	0.26[t]

Notes: [t]$p < 0.10$; *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.
[a]Entered on step 1: identity and gender.

teaching values. For each regression, we entered identity score at age 20 and gender as control factors and then entered each of our coded narrative factors in turn to predict identity status development at age 24. These analyses are summarized in Table 5.3 and show that levels of perceived grandparent encouragement, reports of direct interaction with the grandparent, and use of grandparent quotations were all significant (or marginally significant) positive predictors of gains in identity development on the Adams questionnaire measure at age 24, after entering identity scores from age 20 and controlling for adolescent sex (see Table 5.3). These findings indicate that particular features in stories at ages 16 and 20 predicted gains over time in identity status during this key period of development from age 20 to 24. Simple presence of a grandparent story, however, did not. As Table 5.3 also shows, ratings of the grandparents as more influential at age 20 also showed some tendency to predict such identity growth, although reported closeness to maternal grandparents did not.

Interpretations and Conclusions

As we noted in our review, much of the research and theory on grandparenting to date has addressed their adoption of the caretaking role under special and compelling circumstances (e.g., Pittman, 2007). Yet it seems plausible that grandparents may also make an important contribution to adolescent identity formation in more

typical family settings. The longitudinal results of this study, though only correlational in nature, suggest that some grandparents, as close relatives on the boundary of the immediate nuclear family, may fulfill a special role in fostering autonomy and identity development in youth and that this role is reflected in the kinds of stories that adolescents tell about grandparents as teachers. Most of our adolescents were able to tell a story about grandparenting at ages 16 and 20, though these were sometimes brief, and some of their features were not strongly parallel over the 4 years we studied. Nevertheless, the narrative styles by which the meaning of grandparenting was represented in adolescent stories predicted to subsequent identity development (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3). Telling a story about how a grandparent had provided direct, supportive encouragement to the child, and whose guidance was depicted in a clear, well-articulated "voice" to which the child resonated, seemed to reflect an engaging context for personal identity growth during this key developmental period of late adolescence and emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). Some further narrative examples about learning independence may help to convey these ideas more concretely:

Shannon (age 19): "Okay, mom's mom. I guess she taught us all (about independence). We called her the guest lecturer, because she always told everybody what she was feeling. It didn't matter what was going on. She'd tell you flat out no matter where she was [I: *really?*], no matter what the feeling was, nothing, and it passed on – you can see that in me as well, I kinda like to say what I'm feeling right away. I guess it's kind of special because I feel like I'm close, I'm closer to her that way and it's kinda weird because it's seeing so much of me in her and as well as with my mom too, just kind of speaking out, basically." [*Okay, why do you think your grandparent, well, your grandma responded in that way?*] "I don't know, just probably from the way she grew up [*umhum*], um, she was very independent herself and she has been through so much and she was just like that, that was her personality trait." [*Okay.*] [*So, did you agree with her?*] "Always. Always."

Shannon's story reflects how a grandparent (or any other family member, for that matter) can provide a sense of validation for a child's emerging sense of self and establish a kind of special connection that means a good deal to an adolescent just discovering a sense of the self's unique role and qualities. Similarly, Carl's story about his grandfather reflects both his interactive style and his role as an example, now that Carl is a university student.

Carl (age 22): "My Opa. My Dutch grandfather. When we'd visit, I remember I was about four, and he tried to teach me how to do multiplication. Every time I'd come over, he'd try and teach me something new, he'd always make me try and learn Russian or try division before I learned it in school [*umhum*] and, I'm going on independence here [*okay*], just that he didn't really teach me much, I don't remember any Russian and I couldn't remember the multiplication by the time I got it in school, but just that I can learn whatever I want and I think this is very useful to me now and important to me now because most of what I learn isn't in school. And he taught me that just by picking up a book I can do anything I want. [*So, how do you feel about that experience now?*] I think my experiences with my Opa have made me a lot stronger . . . Mostly by his example too, because I wish I knew him when

he was younger because he was a very strong person. He taught himself to speak Russian, because he went through World War II and he was afraid of the Russians. And I always respected that when he tried to teach me things, that I could learn if I really set my mind to it, though I didn't have much interest in learning Russian. [*So, how do you think what he tried to teach you illustrates independence?*] Just that I never have to wait for someone else, or rely on someone else to learn things."

Our observations of adolescents' positive storytelling about the grandparent role seem to have much in common with the idea of authoritative parenting, as articulated by Baumrind (1991) and Steinberg (2001). Depicting the grandparent as both enthusiastic and supportive, and as directly involved with the teen within the story, seems to index a sense of "responsiveness" from the grandparent, one of the two key dimensions of the authoritative parenting construct (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Interestingly, these two qualities of grandparent stories were quite strongly positively correlated ($r = 0.59$) in our sample.

On the other hand, the depiction of the grandparents in these stories as articulating a clear message, through the recollection of direct quotations of the adult's voice (e.g., Arnold et al., 2004; Ely & McCabe, 1993), seems to reflect instead a sense of constructive guidance that the grandparent has provided for the child. This latter quality seems more parallel to the second dimension of authoritativeness in the parenting model, "demandingness" or high expectations (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Steinberg, 2001). The expression of this dimension of demandingness is likely to be somewhat muted in the grandparent role, certainly in comparison to that for parents, who in traditional families have much clearer role responsibilities for discipline and guidance in North American culture. Nevertheless, a clear articulation of the grandparent voice was not significantly related to the responsiveness measures of direct interaction and encouragement in our stories, as noted above, and seemed to predict independently to a course toward more advanced identity development for these youth (see Table 5.3).

As we showed above (Table 5.1), these two dimensions of stories also tended to predict to the grandchild's ratings at age 20 of how much influence the grandparent had had in his or her life. This finding too is consistent with other evidence that authoritative *parents* are generally perceived by their children as more influential in their lives and are storied accordingly (e.g., Mackey et al., 2001). Overall, then, grandparents who were described as responsive and engaged, and were depicted as having imparted a particularly clear message, stood out in young people's minds as quite important for their developing sense of key value learning during late adolescence. This pattern might represent a sort of narrative counterpart to the construct of authoritativeness of adult socialization styles, in this case in the context of grandparenting. The work of Mueller et al. (2002), noted above, involved a cluster analysis of questionnaire data from a large sample of grandparents in the USA and suggested patterns reminiscent of the Baumrind (1991) parenting typology as well.

A second, related idea follows from our earlier findings on parents who are especially memorable and vivid as teachers for their adolescent children (Pratt, Norris et al., 2008). As noted above, more generative parents, as assessed on the Loyola Generativity Scale of McAdams, were more likely to be remembered as

interactive, and to have their voices represented literally in adolescents' stories of parent teaching. If generativity in parents is linked to such stories, it seems plausible that generativity in grandparents might be similarly linked. Unfortunately, we did not have data on grandparent generativity in this data set, so further research on this idea is needed. Since generativity and authoritative parenting have been positively linked in previous research (e.g., Peterson et al., 1997; Van Heil et al., 2006), it seems plausible that both of these qualities may also predict variations in the styles of grandparent narratives among youth.

Thus, the broad message here may be that certain widely studied features of parent–child relations are rather parallel to similar features in grandparent–grandchild relations, such as parenting styles, attachment processes, and the expression of generativity. Of course, it would be interesting to compare directly the narratives of parent and grandparent teaching in our sample with regard to their predictive relations to youth identity development, to try to characterize what may be unique in grandparenting, as well as its commonalities with parenting. Such analyses are beyond the scope of the present chapter, however, and perhaps limited by the small size of our current sample.

Nevertheless, our educated guess is that the pattern of relations between parent and grandparent roles in the development of young people's identity is a fairly complex one. One sign of this is contained in Table 5.1, which shows that maternal and paternal grandparents generally play somewhat different roles in adolescents' lives. Earlier work suggested that mothers have more of a role in connecting their children to grandparents than do fathers (Putney & Bengtson, 2001). Parents as mediators of the grandparent connection likely moderate its impact on the child in many respects. But it may be that in some families, even in those that are intact and reasonably effective, grandparents can serve as a developmental resource when parents are not seen as highly supportive by their adolescent. We think the story told by Jim above hints at this when he suggests his grandfather's distinctive role as a model of risk-taking and Bob's story, in its way, is quite explicit about this. Indeed, from an Erikson (1963) perspective, Bob's grandfather may be an example of "negative identity" with respect to parent relations, someone who negates the parents' "good boy" model. As we suggested earlier, late adolescence may be a key moment in development when the parents' stronger influences are somewhat muted by adolescent autonomy strivings and the grandparents' role may then come somewhat more to the fore. Clearly, much more comprehensive work with larger samples of narratives told about both parents and grandparents will be needed to illuminate these complexities of intergenerational process in the three-generational family.

Finally, a central issue regarding narrative research on identity is the role of "psychosocial constructionism," of actual experience versus the narrative construction of that experience (e.g., McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997). In this context, this question becomes whether it is the actual experiences of the adolescent with the grandparents that matter to identity development or whether it is the ways in which the adolescent constructs those experiences in his or her telling of the grandparent stories that link to identity growth. Or perhaps it may be both. There is likely no simple answer to this challenging question. Some of our codes

reflect experiential features of the adolescents' lives quite directly (e.g., whether or not the story is about an interaction episode), but several of them are more readily understood as interpretive in a strong sense (e.g., whether or not the grandparent was felt to be encouraging, whether or not and how his or her voice was recollected). In some ways, then, these aspects of narrative are always a complex derivative of both actual personal experiences and one's interpretation and framing of that experience, itself in turn subject to change as a reflection of maturation and the developmental process. This is an issue that needs more investigation, but remains a significant and deep research question for the narrative approach (McAdams et al., 1997).

In conclusion, further work on grandparenting and adolescent development is crucial, since little has been reported with respect to the qualities of grandparenting in typical family contexts that matter to the family's socialization processes for youth (Norris et al., 2004). We believe that the present more qualitative narrative observations, albeit based on a modest-sized sample, may help to guide further systematic quantitative studies of variations in the typical grandparent role and how these may be associated with adolescent growth and development. Of course, the present research is only correlational in nature and thus cannot be confidently interpreted as showing the impact of grandparenting styles or variations on adolescent identity. Nevertheless, we do think these findings add to a growing body of research, some of it reported in this volume, which demonstrates the value of integrating narrative research with more traditional measures in understanding identity and its development within the social world of the adolescent and emerging adult (e.g., Dumas, Lawford, Tieu, & Pratt, in press; McLean, & Pratt, 2006). And surely grandparents deserve some place in that developmental story.

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Life Stories of Troubled Youth: Meanings for a Mentor and a Scholarly Stranger

Jane Eagan and Avril Thorne

> *I was doing well for a little while until that little demon came back into my head saying this stuff was boring and to experiment again. Stupid me, I listened.*
> *(Suzanne, age 18)*

Not long ago, a teacher of troubled youth grew weary of the school district's failure to understand why it was difficult for her students to come to school. She asked her students to "tell truth to power" by sending the school superintendent a booklet of their personally crafted life stories. In the 5 years she has taught at Penny Lane, Jane has come to connect with many of her students and feel the weight of young lives laced with homelessness, violence, and drug abuse. When school authorities ask, "Why don't these kids come to school?" Jane responds, "How can these kids possibly show up every day considering the problems they face?" She wanted the authorities to provide economic and political support for the work she was trying to do. As she explained the writing assignment the students grew silent and their eyes drifted up to the ceiling as they considered her proposition.

Six months later, Jane handed the school principal and the district superintendent a bound collection of stories from eight Penny Lane students, explaining that:

> The stories are the kids' own; I didn't tell them what to write beyond the essay topic itself, which was to write about why coming to school has been difficult for them. I only edited spelling and grammar, and removed proper names to mask their identities. The stories took about three weeks to write. The kids designed the cover for the book and the title, "Diamonds in the Rough." Each kid got a copy. With the kids' permission, and that of their parents, I am giving you these stories in the hope that they will bring attention to our plight and help us to acquire more classroom resources.

The life story project was successful. Jane's classroom got new desks and a new rug and her students said they felt more respected and interested in coming to school. Although the students were acquainted with each other, the booklet of stories

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was their first exposure to a detailed chronology of each other's lives. When Jane asked them what it was like to read each other's stories the students said they were surprised at how many of their classmates' lives were like their own or even worse.

This chapter happened when Jane got permission from the students and their parents to show the stories to her friend Avril, a narrative researcher. After reading through the stories in one sitting, Avril felt deadened and continued to feel numb for several days thereafter. These kids' lives were much more tumultuous than the lives of many of her college students. Methamphetamine pervaded entire families. Some parents were in jail for extended periods, leaving their kids essentially homeless. Furthermore, these troubles tended to be narrated in a perfunctory fashion, as if crisis had become routine.

In discussing the stories it became clear that we saw them through different lenses. Jane saw the stories from a guidance perspective. She is personally and professionally invested in the authors and sees more in the stories than the authors say. She not only works with the authors on a daily basis, but is also privy to some events that the authors have not disclosed but which have drawn the school's attention. Penny Lane is situated in a small community that is not very mobile and teachers tend to have intergenerational knowledge of the ups and downs of the families' lives.

Avril, in contrast, did not know the authors of the stories. Like many narrative researchers, her sole knowledge of the informants was the stories they produced and the prompts that elicited the stories. Avril was particularly intrigued by the possibility that the writing assignment produced a considerable audience problem for the authors. The audience problem refers to the person or persons to whom a story is directed, the real and/or imagined reader or listener (e.g., Thorne & McLean, 2003). Intended audiences presumably contour how autobiographical stories are told (Bruner, 1990; Pasupathi, 2001; Thorne, 2000). The audience for the story would seem to be especially important for adolescents, whose reference groups are expanding exponentially and for whom peers are particularly important (Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1998). In this case, the students knew that others besides Jane and the superintendent would be privy to their stories because the booklet would be distributed to their classmates and would also be available to their parents or guardians.

We now proceed to illustrate how the concerns of a proximal mentor and of a distal narrative researcher played out in their interpretation of two of the stories. We chose the stories of "Suzanne" and "Jeff"[1] because they represent an intriguing contrast. This contrast is partly conveyed by the range of troubles that emerges in their stories. As can be seen in Table 6.1, Suzanne experienced periods of homelessness, parental incarceration, hard drug use, and assaulting others. Jeff's story, on the other hand, references only a history of criminality and the offense that landed him in Penny Lane, fighting with a school principal. The stories also differed considerably with regard to how these troubles were elaborated. Suzanne's story is long and detailed, whereas Jeff's is very short, the kind of minimal story that narrative researchers might discard as a dud. For each story, we begin with

[1]Proper names have been changed to mask identities.

Table 6.1 Kinds of trouble referenced in each story

	Trouble			
Author	Homelessness or foster care	Family member incarcerated and/or drug addicted	Personal history of hard drugs	Personal history of assaulting others
Suzanne	X	X	X	X
June		X	X	
Ruth	X	X	X	
Will	X	X	X	
Teri		X	X	
Shirley			X	
Winona				X
Jeff				X

Jane's experience-near perspective, followed by Avril's more distanced view. We then pool our perspectives to consider what we have learned from each other in the process of interpreting the stories.

Suzanne's Story: "Transformation"

Jane's Proximal Analysis

I think that the title Suzanne chose for her story, "Transformation," captures the overall turn of events in her life very well, but let us start at the beginning. Suzanne's narrative begins when she was 2 years old. Her mother was arrested for robbery and forgery and was sent to prison. Her dad did not know what to do with Suzanne, so he took her to live with her aunt:

> She had dogs, cats, rats, and fish. Her house was outrageously messy. There was poop all over the floor along with pee from the animals. There was mold along the walls and a nasty smell to go along with it all. I liked her a lot, I mean even though her house was disgusting. I guess I stopped liking her when I turned four. Maybe that's when she thought it was okay to whoop me all the time. She was twisted crazy. For example, I broke a blue plastic chair from the dollar store, and she put me in a headlock. Let's just say there were a bunch of bruises on my upper body.

The way in which Suzanne describes what happened is clear and orderly. She does not feel sorry for herself or mince words. This is just the beginning of what she will go through. When she was living with her aunt, she began to train in roller skating. She excelled and was a national champion at the age of 12. "School and skating was my only escape from everything and everyone that tore me apart." This connection kept her safe for awhile. When she was 11, she ran away from her aunt's house:

> Enough was enough. I couldn't take one more beating from her so I had to pack my stuff and go. I went to my grandma's house but that was just another disaster waiting to happen. Let's face it; she was too old and I was young and damaged. I had to go one last time and I did.

> This time it was to my roller-skating coach's house. It was queen royalty status to me because I had everything I wanted. There were tons of food, cable, heat, hot water, and all those things you're supposed to have. It was a good life, so I thought. Slowly that life got boring and very, very lonely.

In her story, I can see readily Suzanne's ability to connect with people who will help her. She also reflects on her actions and the results those actions caused. Throughout, her writing maintains an almost cheerful tone as she describes her situation. The thoughts are orderly and the writing is full of nuance and detail.

When Suzanne began junior high school, she says that "I missed my mom so much, but I was too scared to admit it thinking I was going to be judged." Suzanne began drinking, then lying, and manipulating to cover it up. She says further:

> In eighth grade I lost my virginity to a boy I thought I was madly in love with. I had no morals and karma was coming back to me because boys started to lie and manipulate me to get what they wanted. My self-esteem became so low, and I thought I knew everything.

I think these statements reveal an intensely reflective capability. Suzanne understands how she acted and why. She explains the ways that she tried to cope with her own unhappiness and why it did not work. She accepts full responsibility for her mistakes and regards the errors of others without apparent grudging hostility.

At age 14, as she entered high school, Suzanne's high-risk behavior escalated. She met new friends with whom she would smoke cigarettes and weed; she started seriously drinking alcohol. During that year, her beloved coach and his wife divorced:

> After [the coach's wife] left, skating lost even more value to me. I felt like I had fallen into a black hole. Coach was a decent parent, but let's be real, every girl needs a woman figure to teach her things that men don't know. So now I had no motivation to go to school, and I was becoming an alcoholic at age sixteen. I stopped coming home, and when I would come home, it would be like five in the morning and I would be shit-face drunk.

As things continued to spiral down, she was kicked out of the coach's house. She went to her friend Annie's house and asked Annie's mom if she could live with them. The mom said yes, on the condition that Suzanne go to school. Suzanne agreed, but soon grew bored and ran away with Annie to Las Vegas. When she had finally burned her bridges with Annie's mom, Suzanne ended up on the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin District, a notoriously dangerous neighborhood. Here she reached rock bottom:

> I was poppin pills, smokin weed, drinking, doing coke, and even some meth here and there. My brain started to do crazy things, like it wasn't even connected to me, and that's when it happened. We robbed an innocent kid for just about everything he had. It was broad daylight in the avenues and everybody saw. I felt so crazy. I didn't know what was happening to me. I was slowly fading away. He was getting kicked in the head as well as being hit with a chain that had a padlock connected to it. Just a few minutes later we were all arrested.

This passage is a powerful statement of how a child's early abandonment was the beginning of a slow descent into a drug and alcohol-induced nightmare. I think the honesty is compelling and that the bold facts are frightening. Now when the school

board wonders why all students do not graduate, they will understand the answer to the question. There is so much more to the problem than meets the eye.

After writing about what happened in her life and the ways that she tried to cope, Suzanne tells the story of her transformation:

> I spent three weeks in juvenile hall and then I was transferred to Sierra County. My mother rescued me. She's officially my queen. Everything happens for a reason and I am glad it did. I got to live with my mom for the first time in years and that's when everything started to go back to normal.
> I'm happy just about every day. I go to school and work throughout the week. I have bills and big responsibilities. . .Now I appreciate small things and the fact that I'm still alive. I guess through everything that happened my mother coming back into my life was the best thing. . .Mostly because of her support and me willing to take her guidance, I have goals. . .My future has just begun and it's only going to continue to get brighter.

I think that the most remarkable thing about Suzanne is that she has gone through so much, but still remains positive. The optimism in Suzanne′s life story genuinely reflects the way she approaches life. Suzanne is one of the most engaging and charming students that I have worked with. She was able to immediately connect with me when she came to the school during her junior year. She was positive and seemed to light up the room when she entered in her tight pants and stiletto heels, carrying her little Chihuahua. In class, she has a steadiness about her as she prepares to graduate and become an adult. During the time she has been at our school, she has gotten a job, a driver's license, and a car. She was not ready to apply to the nearby junior college for fall; she wants to work for a while first. She ends with, "My future has just begun and it's only going to continue to get brighter." By external measures, she is doing well; attending school, getting straight A's, working, and staying out of trouble. She is positive and excited about her future. What a girl. I believe that she will be fine.

Avril's Distal Analysis

To understand Suzanne's story I began by charting its ups and downs. As can be seen in Table 6.2, Suzanne's narrative reads like an adventure novel, with over a dozen turning points in 16 years. Until age 12, Suzanne's turning points are mostly passive on her part, as she is passed from one home to another. By age 12, she is doing great with the coach and his wife. Then emerges a pattern of getting bored when life is comfortable and hitting the road to seek adventure. When Suzanne finds refuge with the coach and his wife, she says "I had queen royalty status. . .with tons of food. . .heat, hot water, all those things you're supposed to have. It was the good life, so I thought. Slowly that lifestyle got boring and very very lonely. Skating was dumb to me, and school was a joke. I wanted to experiment."

Suzanne's adventurer voice emerges most clearly in the episode in which she abandons her comfortable life at Annie's house to run away to Las Vegas. Notice that the adventurer is attributed to a "little demon" in Suzanne's head, as if she had no control over her actions. The story is very entertaining and told as if she

Table 6.2 Turning points in Suzanne's life

Bad events	Age	Good events
	1	HAPPY BABY. "Looked happy in baby pictures"
MOM IMPRISONED FOR FORGERY "Everything started to go downhill"	2	
		SENT TO LIVE W/SLOPPY AUNT
	3	"Happy until age 4"
BEATEN BY AUNT indiscriminately	4	
	8	COUSIN TEACHES ME TO ROLLER SKATE
	9	"I was good at it, my escape"
SUSPENDED FOR FIGHTING	10	
RAN AWAY FROM CRAZY AUNT	11	
GRANDMOTHER COULDN'T KEEP ME "She was too old, I was young and damaged"		MOVE IN W/COACH & HIS WIFE "Queen royalty status, had all I wanted"
"Slowly got bored and very lonely"	12	NATIONAL SKATING CHAMPION.
SUSPENDED FOR DRINKING.		
"Skating was dumb, school a joke"	13	MADLY IN LOVE; SEX WAS GREAT
BOYS START TO MANIPULATE ME		
	14	MET ANNIE, INSEPARABLE FRIENDS "drank and smoked weed every day" WE STOPPED GOING TO SCHOOL
COACH DIVORCES, I MISS HIS WIFE "lost the only mother figure I had in my life" "I kept coming home shit-face drunk"	15	
COACH THROWS ME OUT	16	ANNIE'S MOM TAKES ME IN "I agree to go back to school"
BORED, NEEDED A VACATION		
		RAN AWAY W/ANNIE TO LAS VEGAS
HAULED BACK BY ANNIE'S MOM ANNIE'S MOM THROWS ME OUT DRUG LIFE IN THE TENDERLOIN ARRESTED FOR ROBBERY, ASSAULT 3 WEEKS IN JUVENILE HALL PRISON		MOM RELEASED FROM "Rescues me, my queen" LEAVE REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL START SCHOOL AT PENNY LANE SCHOOL,WORK, HIKING, BOWLING
	17	"Back to normal, happy most every day"
	18	

is performing on stage to a live audience. She knows how to engage the listener's attention and the story seems well rehearsed.

> I was doing well for a little while until that little demon came back into my head saying this stuff was boring and to experiment again. Stupid me, I listened. Anyway, Annie's mom was driving us insane so we decided to take a vacation of our own. If you're thinking a little

> sleep over at a friend's house that lived down the street, you are so damn wrong it's not even funny. Can we say "Las Vegas, Nevada?" Some friends came from there and picked us up, and our trip to hell began. We got there with eighty bucks to our names and no way to get back. Funny, right? Wrong! We stayed at a friend's house for a day, but then we had to go. Where? You'll be surprised. We ended up sleeping at some apartments at the pool in the lawn chairs. There was also a vacant apartment so we decided to sleep there too. The next couple of nights we slept in a friend's garage, it was so hot. It was so hot it was hard to sleep because you couldn't stop sweating. The weather was getting unbearable and we were straight stranded and might I add, hungry.

This adventurer voice is very different from the voice Suzanne uses in describing her current life:

> I'm happy just about every day. I go to school and work throughout the week. I have bills and big responsibilities. When I have free time I do fun things like bowling, playing pool, hiking, and going to the beach. Don't get me wrong I still have a couple of beers here and there but nowhere close to the way I was abusing it before.

Suzanne's current life of getting straight A's, bowling, playing pool, and hiking is very different from the high adventure of her prior life. In her past life nothing stayed the same for very long, and when she got comfortable she hit the road in search of excitement. She showed a repeated pattern of getting bored when things were going well and jumping ship for an adventure that ultimately ended badly.

Has Suzanne really "knifed off"[2] this pattern of escaping comfort to seek trouble? Knifing off refers to changing one's present social circumstances so as to eliminate old options. Military boot camp, a supportive spouse, and a steady job are some of the changes that have been found to transform the lives of delinquent young men (Caspi & Moffitt, 1993; Maruna & Roy, 2007). Penny Lane is hardly a military boot camp, but for Suzanne, reuniting with her mother is a radical change of pace. For the past 2 years, since moving in with her mother, Suzanne seems to have succeeded in altering some of her old ways.

Notably, Suzanne does not claim to have reformed entirely. Of her redemption, she says, "Don't get me wrong I still have a couple of beers here and there but nowhere close to the way I was abusing it before." She is frank about saying that it is a struggle to stay on the good path, which she does by telling herself that:

> Nobody said life was supposed to be easy, but it's the bumps in the road that helped create the person I am today. Now I appreciate small things and the fact that I'm still alive. I took a lot of things for granted but if I could take anything back that I did, I wouldn't change it for the world.

Although I am not privy to Suzanne's personal life, I will hazard a guess that her mother is a key conduit for Suzanne to make meaning of her past in ways that help her to cope with the temptations of the present. Her mother clearly has experienced considerable trouble in her own life. Imprisoned for 13 years for burglary and forgery, she gained custody of Suzanne upon being released from a halfway house.

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[2]"Knifing off" is a violent masculine metaphor that does not seem to reflect how Suzanne undergoes transitions between the bad path and the good path.

Mother and daughter presumably have many stories to exchange about their adventures and transgressions. Suzanne may have found a true confidante in her mother. Together, they seem to have embarked on a joint project of going straight, a joint reclamation and rebonding as their relational connection is restored, and perhaps re-storied.

The mottos that punctuate Suzanne's life story may voice the kinds of life lessons that she has heard from her mother, who like Suzanne, is struggling to transform her own life. Reflections saturate Suzanne's story. For example, after describing being violently beaten by her aunt, Suzanne says "Like everybody always says, 'It could be worse.' Well, I believe that saying." Of her sexual promiscuity at age 13, she says, "My self-esteem became so low, and I thought I knew everything." On losing contact with the coach's wife, Suzanne says, "Coach was a decent parent, but let's be real. Every girl needs a woman figure to teach her the things men don't know." Of her rock bottom period in the Tenderloin district, she says, "Guidance was out of the question. I just wanted to be grown and do my own thing." Of being rescued from Juvenile Hall by her mother, she says, "Everything happens for a reason and I'm so glad it did." She ends her story with a string of lessons: "It's the bumps in the road that helped create the person I am today. Now I appreciate small things and the fact that I'm still alive. I took a lot of things for granted but if I could take anything back that I did, I wouldn't change it for the world."

I think that the voice of Suzanne's mother (perhaps channeling that of their guidance counselors) is also apparent in Suzanne's reflections on the cause of her troubles: acting out because she missed her mother. In the seventh grade, when Suzanne was suspended for drinking alcohol at lunchtime, she attributed this to "I missed my mom so much, but I was too scared to admit it thinking I was going to be judged, so I acted out in various ways." She does not say to whom she is scared to admit missing her mom, but it is perhaps the coach and his wife who have taken her in and do not regard pining for a convict as healthy. The loss of the coach's wife plunges Suzanne into a "black hole. She was the only mother figure I had in my life." At the end of her story, she says, "My mother coming back into my life was the best thing. She might not always know what to do or say but I wouldn't trade her in for everything. Mostly because of her support I willing to take her guidance, I have goals." Suzanne does not idolize her mother, she sees her vulnerabilities, but she listens to her and apparently takes her advice.

Notably, Suzanne is also capable of telling a transgressive story without lacing the story with moralisms. Rather than completely repudiating the excitement of her prior life, Suzanne can resuscitate that excitement by telling an action-packed, motto-free story. A case in point is the story about running away to Las Vegas. Arguably, action-packed stories aimed at entertainment may also be part of the repertoire that is exchanged between Suzanne and her mother. The fact that Suzanne and her mother have each lived normatively transgressive lives puts them on a somewhat level playing field. Unlike many parents and adolescents, who tend to preserve certain domains of privacy (Dolgin, 1996; Dolgin & Berndt, 1997; Thorne, McLean, & Dasbach, 2004) Suzanne and her mother can perhaps talk about

anything. Whether the mother is an adequate moral compass or whether Suzanne's claims of redemption are true, I have no idea, although the lessons learned seem a little too bubbly given the weight of the story.

Comparison of Our Perspectives on Suzanne's Story

Jane is more confident than Avril that Suzanne has changed her ways. With the aid of abundant knowledge beyond the story per se, Jane sees a resilient and charming young woman who recounts the events of her past in a temporally organized fashion, reflects upon the meaning of her troubles, has a close relationship with her mother, and is making plans for her future. This knowledge leads Jane to see Suzanne's story as a harbinger of hope.

While agreeing with Jane that Suzanne's story shows positive indications of maturity, such as reflection and a coherent timeline of events, Avril hears two voices in Suzanne's story, the adventurer and the redeemed, with little evidence that the two voices have come to terms with each other. The adventurer voice seems intended for peers, which may include her mother given their similar transgressive histories. The redeemed voice seems directed toward Jane and the school authorities, telling them what they want to hear. Suzanne's investment in each of these voices is unknown. However, she seems to have developed considerable skill in moving between the delinquent world and the world of mature adults. Suzanne's apparent bilingualism is in some ways adaptive, although Avril wonders if her repeated pattern of hitting the road when life gets comfortable is going to continue.

Jeff's Story: "Welcome to My Life"

We now turn to Jeff's story, which is much more sparse than Suzanne's. Jane and Avril differ in their interpretations of why his story is so sparse. As with Suzanne's narrative, Jane sees Jeff's story as confirming what she knows of him apart from the story per se, albeit the confirmation is of a different sort. Avril, in contrast, tries to discern the particular listeners to whom Jeff has addressed and/or is addressing this story.

Jane's Proximal Analysis

Jeff is a lanky and handsome junior at Penny Lane. Jeff spent 3 weeks crafting a five-paragraph life story and every sentence was a struggle. He hates to write and would prefer to be outside working in the garden or building things. Also, in contrast to Suzanne's story, Jeff's narrative shows little reflection on his experiences. He begins by discussing why school was difficult:

> During my freshman year in high school, I was more into drinking, smoking weed and cigarettes than doing my homework. That's what all my friends were doing. I started smoking cigarettes when my brother offered me a Lucky Strike when we were on vacation. I

> started drinking when my friend and I stole my mother's vodka, and weed. Well, I just started smoking with my friends.

What is most striking is his tone as he casually presents a laundry list of substances that he has used as if it were an accomplishment. (Often in our school, these kinds of statements are seen a honor badges that students think will gain them acceptance.) This kind of boasting is common. He says further:

> My first alternative school was C (high school). That's when my smoking and chain smoking happened.

Jeff's passive description of these events suggests that he neither can control his life, nor does he accept responsibility for it. These are merely things that have happened to him. He states the facts but does not think about how they have affected his life. He describes another incident in the same manner:

> I got kicked out of S (another high school) about two months into my sophomore year for punching the principal in the face. When he was messing with my friend, he said something stupid to me that I didn't like; he tried to hold me back for leaving. This was while I went to H (another high school). Luckily, I didn't get into trouble for that. However I got kicked out of H a little while after that for I don't really know what.

Here, Jeff's narrative is very vague and disordered. His explanation of the fight with the principal does not explain his violent response. In the last sentence, he cannot even explain why he got kicked out of the school. Considering what a major event that would have been, his lack of understanding and reflection is significant. Another list of problems is presented:

> I was always getting into trouble with my friends. Once I got off probation for two counts of battery, one count of theft, one count of brandishing a knife, and two counts of assault, I got right back on for worse things, so I decided to leave (school) before I got into even more trouble.

Again we have a list of problems and no real reflection about their import or prevention. He underplays the seriousness of his crimes. His decision is just to leave yet another school.

When he arrived at Penny Lane, Jeff was quiet, attended irregularly, and nearly always refused to do his work. During his first 6 weeks, he failed five out of six of his classes. It takes effort to fail so grandly. He seemed to repel all my attempts to connect with him. I would alternately approach him, get rejected, then back away. I refused to give up on him; I kept trying. However, he was not ready to connect with me.

In the last paragraph of the essay, Jeff says:

> Going through all these hard times I've realized that I can make it through school if I really push myself. Having other people around me pushing me to do my best helps me a lot. Now I know that if I have to face difficult times in the future, I know I'll be able to get through them with the experience I've had in the past.

This ending was a surprise. I did not realize he was pushing himself. He did begin to do some of the work; he considered this was an accomplishment. In his story, he also expresses gratitude for people pushing him to succeed. He had never suggested

this to me in any way. I still am not quite sure how to take this. Is he just hard for me to read or is he fooling himself? It never seemed like he appreciated my attempts to try to get him to do his work. In his conclusion, he expresses how his previous experiences will guide his future decisions. This seems to be very general and without apparent logic.

At the end of the school year, I could feel that Jeff was beginning to trust me, but this connection was still sporadic. In June, he told me he and his family were moving to Southern California. I was saddened that he would face yet another new beginning. I really hoped that he could indeed learn from his past and build on his small successes.

I found it particularly difficult to communicate with Jeff and to gain his trust. As with all of my students, I try to create open communication with them and to maintain optimism and faith that they can turn their lives around, up to the point that they abandon me for drugs, alcohol, or jail. I recognize that trust is a two-way street. They test me to determine whether I am trustworthy because they have learned that connecting with others is fraught with danger. If they trust too soon or with the wrong person, they could be badly hurt. If they constantly withhold trust, it is much harder to make any progress. At the time he wrote his story, Jeff was just beginning to accept my help. I grew to count on his help in the garden when the work required strength and building skill. He seemed to appreciate his special responsibilities. If I only had him for another year, I think that Jeff could make great personal progress.

Avril's Distal Analysis

I wish I could talk with Jeff to determine whether the title he chose for his story, "Welcome to my Life" was intended as sarcasm.[3] Jeff tells us very little about the events of his life or what those events mean to him. Possibly, Jeff is one of those people who defy a key premise of narrative psychology, that human beings are natural storytellers (Bruner, 1990). He may not be inclined to story his life, a skill that is nurtured early on by parents and other elders (Miller, 1994; Nelson, 1988). His gender may also come into play here, since boys are socialized to be perfunctory about their troubles, while girls are socialized to emotionally elaborate their problems (Fivush, Brotman, Buckner, & Goodman, 2000; Thorne & McLean, 2002).

Contrary to Suzanne, who seemed to relish writing the story of her life, Jeff seemed to approach the story as a distasteful assignment, producing a skeletal list of problems that have made it difficult for him to come to school. Unlike Suzanne, who started her story at birth, Jeff starts his story at age 14, when he was first kicked out of a school. He then enumerates only the bare bones of what bounced him from one school to another, and eventually landed him at Penny Lane.

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[3] On checking with Jane, Avril learned that Jeff borrowed his story title from another student. How much do researchers miss by not knowing the process by which life stories are written?

Because I am interested in identity communities, the people with whom one associates and grants access to one's life, I am particularly intrigued with how Jeff incorporates other people into his story. One part of his community consists of peers and adults who led him astray. He was initiated into drinking and smoking pot and cigarettes by his older brother and his friends. He had ready access to such substances from his mother, whom he implies is hypocritical. He was "kicked out" of two regular high schools, one for punching the principal in the face "when he was messing with my friend. He said something stupid to me that I didn't like; he tried to hold me back for leaving."

Another part of Jeff's community consists of people with whom he has a special connection. There seem to be precious few of these. The first "good" adults to appear in Jeff's story are some teachers at his first alternative high school. [Emphasis added in italics]

> *For the most part, it was a fun school. I liked all my teachers, made a lot of new friends, and then in my junior year my favorite teachers left.* So I left that school about two months into my junior year because I was always getting in fights with one of my old friends. My friend Luke had to tell me to calm down quite a few times before I killed someone. I guess you could say that's why school has been hard for me.

Jeff does not connect his favorite teachers' departure with his own, although perhaps he departed at that point in spirit. He also mentions that he accepted the guidance of his friend Luke, who suggested he calms down so he did not kill someone.

Jeff's story generally portrays a world of neglectful or hostile adults. Because I do not know Jeff, I will refrain from inferring how this experience inflects his internal psychological and emotional structure. But the fact that some fond attachments (a few former teachers and his friend Luke) leak into Jeff's threadbare narrative seems, to me, hopeful. Jeff appears to have some close connections with people from whom he accepts advice, although, in contrast to the highly verbal Suzanne, he does not make a grand story about it. I think that Jeff is aware of his own role in his troubles but that he is unwilling to confess his culpability to the school authorities, the target audience for the stories. Jeff's surprisingly upbeat finish, "Having other people around me pushing me to do my best also helps me a lot," suggests that he is open to Jane's guidance, whom he seems to view as a mentor rather than a distant authority figure.

Comparison of Our Perspectives on Jeff's Story

Jane views the guardedness in Jeff's story as symptomatic of his general guardedness, which jibes with her own experience with Jeff as closed off and taciturn. Jeff's timeline of past events is a jumble, and he does not show evidence – in his story or in his dealings with Jane – of having reflected upon, integrated, or learned from his problems. Avril, who has never met Jeff, attributes his guardedness to his being much less verbally inclined than Suzanne. He is not only loathe to express his feelings in words, but is also reluctant to acknowledge to the primary audience, the school authorities, his own role in his troubles. Avril emphasizes the passages

in Jeff's story that indicate that he has some positive attachments to others. That he expresses appreciation for teachers who push him to succeed, including Jane, seems like a positive harbinger.

Near and Distant Views of Life Stories

Collaborating on this chapter has been a hermeneutic challenge born of different professional investments. For Jane the mentor, the stories confirmed her impressions of the students who wrote them. Suzanne's redemptive storyline reflected the bubbly young woman with whom she felt close and who seemed to have embarked on the good path. Jeff's story reflected the guardedness that he displayed in his relations with Jane and his failure, in general, to come to grips with his past and to acknowledge his own role in his troubles.

Avril had neither a professional nor personal investment in the authors; rather, her interest was in the process by which the stories were written. In trying to imagine what it was like to write the stories, she was particularly intrigued by the enormity of the audience problem that was built into the writing assignment, which required the students to expose experiences that were potentially self-incriminating. Furthermore, the school superintendent was not the only audience for the stories. Jane edited the stories, and classmates would ultimately read them, as would, potentially, the parents who had given permission for the stories to be shown to others. The worlds of school, peers, and family are rarely so aligned, particularly for youth with little social or cultural capital (Cooper, Domínguez, & Rosas, 2005; Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1999). In interpreting the stories, Avril tried to imagine to whom particular passages were directed, because crafting a story that would pass muster for all of these audiences would seem to be a challenge. The audiences for particular parts of each story seemed to oscillate. Some parts of the story seemed to be positioned toward peers and other parts toward authorities, as if valued audiences were in the process of being sorted out.

In trying to read between the lines of the stories, Avril was more skeptical than Jane that Suzanne was fully launched onto the good path and that Jeff was closed off. Both stories referred to multiple strands of relationships and identity constituencies, suggesting that each author was operating on multiple tracks. The fact that Suzanne wrote a story that portrayed both an adventurous self and a responsible self suggests that she is multilingual, able to navigate her multiple worlds quite fluidly. Jeff's general guardedness made sense if one saw him addressing the story to the school authorities, who would be prone to demand a moral accounting in their terms (Lightfoot, 1997; Polanyi, 1989). Although Jeff's account of getting kicked out of high school for "I don't really know what" is not an adequate account from the perspective of a teacher, it could well be an adequate account for a like-minded buddy. Avril would like to be privy to Jeff's trouble telling to parents and to peers, to see if and how he switches gears, how he does things with these stories. She would also like to know how Suzanne recounts her troubles to her mother and how these recounts might vary when talking with "bad path" or "good path" peers.

Stories presumably reflect local and larger systems of meaning, but how local are these meanings? This question seems particularly important in late adolescence, when reference groups are shifting and expanding, the cognitive capacity for reflection increases, and society (whatever that may be) increasingly expects mature accountings. Parents, teachers, and peers are the soil on which adolescents grow a life story, and these soils may each encourage somewhat different kinds of developments. Jeff′s apparent reluctance to claim responsibility for his misdeeds might be an adaptive response to parents and prior teachers who have been dismissive or punishing of his efforts to do so. Likewise, Suzanne′s alacrity in switching from the delinquent adventurer voice to the mature voice may be a skill that she has developed as she has alternately found refuge with peers and adults.

As a result of collaborating on this chapter, Jane is now using story writing more frequently in the classroom. She has asked her current crop of students to write about turning points, an assignment that presses them, if they are not doing so already, to frame something bad in their lives as having turned good (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001). She is trying to teach them that reflecting on a troubled past can help create a better future. Sadly, many of these students have considerable trouble talking about, let alone storying, a positive future. For her part, Avril has become discontent with her presumption that narratives per se are "experience-near." Narratives are more experience-near than surveys, but experiencing the storyteller is much more experience-near than collecting anonymous stories from strangers. While collaborating with Jane, she felt at a profound disadvantage not having met the authors and not being able to discern to whom they were aiming each turn of the story.

We would like to emphasize that the meanings that we drew from these stories do not simply reflect Jane's personal investment in her kids and Avril's distanced narrative expertise. It is not the case that Jane sees the kids through rose-colored glasses, while Avril dispassionately discerns their true weaknesses, or that Jane is susceptible to emotional bias whereas Avril, the hyper-educated professional, has superior objectivity. Rather, we view our investments in the stories as complementary. Jane knows what the kids and their lives are like apart from the stories themselves and sees the stories from an active guidance perspective. Avril, like many narrative researchers, has a myopic perspective; she sees only the stories and can merely imagine the authors. By pooling our perspectives, Avril gained more information about the persons behind the stories and Jane gained more appreciation for the challenges posed by the writing assignment.

We also shared some common ground in that we discovered we had similar assumptions about what counted as a good story. We each valued stories that showed reflection on adversity, acknowledgement of one's own role in events, and a narrative that is generally coherent and makes sense. Avril knew that such features have been shown to be associated with greater well-being (e.g., Hauser, Allen, & Golden, 2006; King & Raspin, 2004; McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). The fact that a layperson and a narrative researcher concurred about what features were positive harbingers suggests that we drew our narrative values from the same source, dominant cultural narratives about what counts as a good story (Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 2006). In many ways, Suzanne's story exhibits plentiful signs of resilient recovery from adversity

(Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Masten, 2001). For example, Suzanne-the-story-character forges connections with competent and caring adults, shows self-regulatory skills, and presents an optimistic but not overly idealistic view of herself. Suzanne-the-person also seems to be doing well. She now attends school regularly, is getting straight A's, and is friendly and upbeat.

We have interpreted the stories in a way that we hope is consistent, personally and ethically, with empathy for the unusual predicament confronting the story authors. These stories were not written anonymously to an implacable researcher, but for purpose of gaining material resources for the students, to encourage them to reflect upon their past with an eye to the future, and to build mutuality in sharing their stories with fellow classmates. To coldly judge whether each story is pathological and whether each kid is truly "bad" is counter to our intentions and sensitivities. Jane has a personal and professional relationship with the kids, and Avril was powerfully impacted by the stories and what they said about Jane's sensibilities. Avril's respect for Jane's dedication to her students led her to be cautious in pathologizing the stories and to be careful in choosing which themes to highlight. For example, based on an image in Suzanne's narrative, the chapter could have been entitled "Young and Damaged," and we could have called the school "Shady Lane," instead of "Penny Lane." Writing this chapter necessitated a level of sensitivity and respect that is rarely required in anonymous empirical research.

Postscript

Six months later as we were revising this chapter, Jane heard that Suzanne was taking an algebra course at a community college and supporting herself by being a stripper. Jane was disappointed with the latter development and felt that the redemption in Suzanne's story had not been possible. Avril saw Suzanne's student and stripper activities as a continued tendency on Suzanne's part to live two lives. There was also news of Jeff. He suddenly returned on his own from Southern California, seemingly resolved to finish high school. Initially homeless, he now sleeps on a friend's couch. Jane says that he comes to school every day but is often sullen and difficult to mentor. Avril is as mystified by Jeff now as she was earlier; she has no idea who Jeff's identity constituencies are, but it seems that something is holding him to Penny Lane. Perhaps it is Jane.

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Re-storying the Lives of At-Risk Youth: A Case Study Approach

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> *He'd hit us, and if we said "ow" or anything, he'd be like "Don't do that or I'll give you something to cry about".... And then one night he came upstairs. I was in my bedroom getting ready for bed and he told me to take off all my clothe. . .. I freaked out.*
> *~ Amy*

Psychologists have long been interested in the *self* and its development (e.g., James, 1890). In more recent times, the study of self has taken a narrative turn. Works from McAdams (1993), MacIntyre (1984), and Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, and Hallett (2003) have emphasized the importance of a narrative representation of the self and have linked specific features of the development and organization of these narratives to an assortment of psychological outcomes. Our interest in narratives began when we started listening to the life stories of moral exemplars (Matsuba & Walker, 2004, 2005; Reimer & Wade-Stein, 2004). What became apparent was that moral exemplars' narratives were not only filled with commendable good deeds, but that the stories were also highly integrated and coherent, thus impressing upon the reader a sense of self-unity (Colby & Damon, 1992).

More recently, in the context of other work, we began listening to the life stories of at-risk youth such as Amy's. These stories were different from those of our exemplars. As others have reported, these youth's narratives were often pierced with episodes of neglect, emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse (see also Hauser, Allen, & Golden, 2006). Their stories told of events involving substance use and criminal activities. Their stories revealed their struggles in relating to others and to themselves. And at the end of their tale, these narrative "shards" are what remain from which youth are struggling to make meaning.

The consequences of a life filled with past trauma are that these episodes often act as barriers to youth from successfully integrating into mainstream society (Noam, 1996). To help youth overcome these barriers, narrative therapists such as Ungar (2001) have worked with at-risk youth to reconstruct their narratives from old

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stories of "vulnerability" to new stories of "resiliency." Re-storying these life narratives aid youth in freeing themselves from the oppressive negative labels they have internalized and that keep them from achieving their ideal future goals.

In this chapter, our focus is on the construction and reconstruction of the life stories of two at-risk female youth, Amy and Amber (not their real names). To begin with, we provide a select review of the relevant literature on at-risk youth and narrative self as a way of context. Following the review, we introduce Amy and Amber, and using traditional qualitative methodologies to analyze their narratives present some of the emerging theme. Finally, we introduce latent semantic analysis as a complementary approach to analyze textual data so as to further illustrate the changing self-representations among our youth. By applying different methodologies to our data, we hope to offer a representation of our youth that best captures their voice.

At-Risk Youth

Influences that put youth at-risk come from society, community, family, and within the individual and have included poverty, racism, family functioning, personal trauma, and health conditions (Hauser et al., 2006). In the context of our study, youth were considered at-risk if they were homeless, not in mainstream school, unemployed or underemployed, misusing substances, involved in criminal activity, and/or involved in other unhealthy lifestyle choices (e.g., promiscuous behaviors). Often these behaviors and experiences were co-occurring.

Previous research has identified family-level variables such as family dysfunction (Slesnick, Bartle-Haring, & Gangamma, 2006), inconsistent parenting, the use of coercion, and a lack of parental involvement (Dunn & Mezzich, 2007) as predictors of at-risk youth behaviors. Other factors such as experiencing or witnessing traumatic events such as neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Martijn & Sharpe, 2006; Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengart, & Cauffman, 2006) have also been identified as predictors. Specifically, experiences of abuse and neglect have been found to predict deviant peer associations, deviant behaviors (Huey, Henggeler, Brondino, & Pickrel, 2000), substance use (Dembo et al., 1988; Slesnick et al., 2006), and severity of substance use (Westermeyer, Wahmanholm, & Thuras, 2001).

Further, some researchers have considered mediating factors between early trauma and later negative psychological outcomes. For example, early childhood trauma has been associated with less cognitive maturity and competence in adolescence (Steinberg et al., 2006) and both of these factors have been associated with school dropout (Jimerson et al., 2000), substance use, and delinquency (Dunn & Mezzich, 2007). In some cases, these youth become homeless, which can lead to increased use of drugs and alcohol, levels of criminal activities, and socializing with like-minded peers (Martijn & Sharpe, 2006). Moreover, associating with antisocial peers has been linked to delinquent behaviors, such as physical aggression and substance use (Laird, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 2005). In turn, delinquent behaviors have been related to school dropout (Ellickson, Bui, Bell, & McGuigan,

1998; Kokko, Tremblay, Lacourse, Nagin, & Vitaro, 2006). Other researchers have reported substance use and conduct disorder predicts later arrests (Chen, Thrane, Whitbeck, & Johnson, 2006). In summary, at-risk youth appear to be caught in a vicious cycle. Many of the early childhood traumas they have experienced contributes to their current criminal activity and/or substance abuse, which then leads to later life challenges.

At-Risk Youth and the Self

Early childhood trauma has also been found to harm "self" development, which further contributes to poor outcomes for youth. Previous research has demonstrated that children reared within a dysfunctional family context were more likely to have disturbances in the development of their self-esteem (Kim & Cicchetti, 2006). Those children who suffered physical abuse had lower initial levels of self-esteem, while those children who suffered emotional abuse had slower growth of self-esteem. Moreover, studies examining self-esteem in adolescence have found that low self-esteem was related to poorer health, worse economic future outlooks, and higher levels of criminal activity compared to those with high self-esteem (e.g., Trzesniewski et al., 2006). This pattern of results suggests that the effects of early childhood trauma on later negative outcomes may be mediated, in part, by how one evaluates his or her self.

Evidence also suggests that at-risk youth's construction of the self differs from a normative sample of adolescents. For instance, Oyserman and Markus (1990) showed that delinquent youth's description of their expected and feared selves differed than youth from a normative comparison group. The delinquent youth described their expected self as being "'depressed,' 'alone,' or 'a junkie,'" and their feared self involving "crime or drugs" (p. 122). Comparison youth expected to "get along in school," and feared "failing in school" (p. 122). Further, Harter (1998) argued that the abuse of children and adolescents has deleterious consequences on their self-construction. In her review, she showed that abuse is associated with reduced self-awareness, impaired sense of agency, disruption in a sense of continuity, and a lack of self-coherence. She also demonstrated abuse to be associated with negative self-evaluation in areas highly important to the individual, a profound sense of inner "badness" and excessive self-blame. Finally, Harter claimed that abuse ultimately leads to the suppression of the "true self" allowing others to shape how one defines their self. Hence, sufficient research demonstrates that past traumatic experiences negatively impact how youth construct and evaluate the self and that negative construction of the self puts them at-risk for later problems in life.

Self and the Life Story

The study of self can also be conducted through exploring people's life stories (McAdams, 2001). Unlike dispositional traits that provide a global, stable description of personality, and measures that capture the motivational, developmental, or strategic aspect of people's personality in specified contexts, life stories offer a

unique understanding of what gives each person's life meaning (McAdams, 1995, 2001). This becomes evident in how a person organizes past, current, and future events and characters in a narrative format so as to bring unity and purpose to one's life.

Creating a narrative account of one's life requires that people connect episodes in a temporal sequence and draw causal links between the self and circumstances, thematically organize events into a multi-episodic story that is connected along common themes, and draw upon societal norms to sequence episodes to fit the cultural script (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). It is during adolescence when people are likely to have developed these requisite social-cognitive abilities, thus enabling them to construct reasonably coherent life stories (Habermas & Bluck, 2000).

While adolescence may be the time when people have the cognitive and psychosocial abilities to assemble a life narrative, it is in childhood when early life experiences occur that shape the later emerging story. Harter (1998) and McAdams (2001) argued for the importance of infant attachment security to the primary caregiver as setting the "tone" for the overall narrative that will be formally assembled later into adolescence. A hopeful, optimistic narrative tone, for example, may be set as a result of a secure attachment to the parental figure with trusting stories emerging in the narrative. In addition, early childhood experiences that get replayed in parent–child conversations are collected with the potential of the event being portrayed as an important influence on the later integrative life story. Hence, early life experiences and people are believed to play a critical role in the shape the life story will take.

Evidence that childhood events predict later events within life narratives comes from the work of Matsuba and Walker (2005). In their study comparing the narratives of young adult moral exemplars to a matched comparison group, they found that moral exemplars reported more childhood episodes revealing their awareness of others' sufferings and that this awareness predicted the frequency of self-sacrificial scenes later in their narrative. Thus, the salience of other people's suffering early in life may be impacting later behaviors and/or the remembrance of these behaviors.

Life Stories of At-Risk Youth

As a consequence to at-risk youth's past trauma, one could anticipate that the narrative tone set in their emerging life story would be less hopeful and optimistic than a more normative sample. In her review, Harter (1998) theorized how abuse can seriously disrupt the self-system, including those facets of the self that are associated with the later formation of a life story. To support her case, she cited evidence linking traumatic events to the inducement of dissociative states and amnesiac gaps that contribute to a sense of a discontinuous self. She also presented evidence showing how traumatic events can lead to the splitting, fragmentation, and compartmentalization of the self, thereby undermining self-coherence. A similar perspective was offered by Noam (1996). He argued that traumatic experiences such as sexual

abuse can lead to the separation and encapsulation of adaptive cognitive functioning in specific social arenas or domains such as interacting with a primary caregiver. However, what may begin as developmentally appropriate modes of thinking and functioning with that caregiver may remain "unaccommodated" and unchanged in that social domain, while in other arenas, such as peer relationships, cognitive adaptation continues to evolve. In the case of victims of sexual abuse, for example, they may expend much energy to maintain the encapsulation of a less mature self in relation to their abuser (Noam, 1996). This encapsulation could also explain how specific past experiences resist integration into a higher-order biographical system since it is partitioned off from other contextualized selves. If this is the case, then the challenge working with people who have experienced early childhood trauma is to begin integrating those fragmented selves.

In working with women who have been sexually abused, Harvey, Mishler, Koenen, and Harney (2000) described the struggles these women have in making sense of the trauma they have experienced. Specifically, these abuse survivors have struggled to construct coherent narrative accounts of their lives because of the difficulty in acknowledging and assimilating experiences of abuse within their life story. However, through turning point experiences, these women have been able to reframe past abusive experiences into newly constructed stories that have more positive, optimistic, and hopeful trajectories than the previous old stories. Therefore, recounting turning point moments and re-storying the traumatic past events are important to the recovery process.

However, the recovery process is not easy for those who have experienced trauma. In an attempt to bring unity to the self-system of victims who have experienced trauma, a variety of therapeutic techniques have been offered in the clinical and applied literatures. Narrative therapy is one technique that has emerged within the last 25 years. Generally speaking, narrative therapy involves the therapist and client working together to help the client dismantle the old life story and to construct a new story. In terms of an overarching paradigm, narrative therapists tend to operate from a post-modern perspective. Along with modernists, they believe people make sense of their lives and derive meaning by organizing experiences in a storied format. However, they differ from modernists in their emphasis on context. For instance, White and Epston (1990) adopted the position that knowledge is socially constructed; therefore, therapists need to take into account the social context of their clients when understanding their narratives and how they are constructed and reconstructed. Hence, unlike Harter (1998) who claimed there is a "true" self that needs to be uncovered, for White and Epston and other post-modern therapists, clients' stories are constructed and reconstructed within social contexts. In the case of marginalized people, they often internalize the dominant social discourse that portrays them as less valuable members of society based on their behavior, knowledge, and status, thereby robbing them of their sense of agency and control over their own identity. The goal of narrative therapy, therefore, is to deconstruct these marginalizing stories, to challenge the oppressive social dominant narrative, to question the underlying assumptions in that story, and to re-author an alternative story. These alternative re-constructed stories are less oppressive, are more socially resistant to

the dominant cultural voice, and give power back to marginalized people to choose their preferred realities (Brown, 2006a, 2006b).

For at-risk youth specifically, they face the challenge of deconstructing a narrative ingrained within them based on societal labeling of and attitude toward them. As Ungar (2001) stated "many of the risk factors that most impact upon the growth of young people (poverty, abuse, physical limitations, and family disruptions) limit the discursive power youth experience and therefore need to be attended to during treatment" (p. 66). To help deconstruct these narratives and reconstruct alternative narratives, therapy is one option. Ungar (2001) presented a three-phase therapy program for high-risk youth. In the first phase, the therapist aids the youth in *reflecting* over past and present experiences in an attempt to contextualize past events, deconstruct painful memories, distance the youth from their problem-saturated identities, and emphasize those events and characteristics that are counter to the oppressive narrative, what Ungar refers to as the narrative of "vulnerability." In the second phase, the therapist *challenges* the youth's vulnerability story by constructing a compelling invulnerable, resilient story. This is accomplished by help given to the youth to generate additional support that will build their story of "resiliency" and by having other significant people in the lives of the youth act as an audience to support and participate in the emerging story of resiliency. In the last phase, the youth shares his or her new *defining* narrative so that it can be accepted by other people in various social spheres. The youth also acknowledges the new "old story" chronicling past episodes of being the victim and victimizer, which is separate and distinct from the new, emerging story.

In addition to narrative therapy, there are other methods to effect narrative change. In previous work (Matsuba, Elder, Petrucci, & Marleau, 2008), we have described an employment program designed to help at-risk youth. From the program funder's perspective, ensuring that youth are employed or employable by program's end is the measure of success. However, we who work with at-risk youth know that gaining and keeping employment goes beyond employment skills training and mastery to include the seeds of a new resilient story that youth take with them once they leave the program. Future Cents is a program that works with youth to help them begin constructing a resilient narrative.

Briefly, the specific purpose of the Future Cents program is to help at-risk youth find and maintain employment. In the program, youth gain job skills by developing and implementing specific projects that serve the needs of youth in their larger community. In successfully completing their projects, youth gain insight that their life experiences and skills can be assets used to help others. Such success is important in empowering youth and helping them to create a more positive self-concept, all of which is important in helping them to construct their resilient narrative (see Matsuba et al., 2008, for more details).

As part of the Future Cents' program evaluation process, we conducted life narratives with each youth and studied the construction and reconstruction of our youth's life stories. In the remainder of this paper we explore this narrative reconstruction process for two of our youth.

Case Studies

Amy and Amber are two youth who successfully completed the Future Cents program. At time of entry into the program, Amy was 20 years old having not graduated from high school. Amber was 23 years old and had finished high school and some college courses. Both women are Metìs.

Amy and Amber were selected for study based on their willingness and availability to be re-interviewed approximately a year after the program's completion. While they were chosen out of convenience, many of the past trauma and life challenges they have faced are not uncommon among the other Future Cents' youth. Their willingness to participate in our study provided us a unique opportunity to explore the narrative reconstruction process.

Two semi-structured interviews with each youth were conducted by researchers familiar with the youth. The first interview took place within the first month of the Future Cents program by one researcher, while the second interview took place a year after the program was completed by a different researcher. In each interview, which was an hour in length, the youth were asked the same open-ended questions about their life (see McAdams, 1993 for the protocol). youth were asked to divide their life into chapters and then to describe the content of each chapter. They were also asked to describe a high point, a low point, and a turning point in their life and to describe their positive and negative futures. The interviews were transcribed and then coded by members of our research team. Initially we open-coded the textual data into discrete parts, clustered the parts into common thematic categories, and then tried axial coding the categories. After much debate and reflection, we ended up structuring our results around Ungar's (2001) stories of "vulnerability" and stories of "resiliency" framework believing this approach best represented the voices of our youth.

Future Goals and Feared Futures

The listing of youth's future goals provided a glimpse into the potential trajectories each youth's life stories could take. In our interview, we asked youth to provide a realistic list of the goals and dreams they hope for themselves. It is from these desired goals that youth hope to construct their stories of resilience. In her first interview, Amy's future goals seemed normative: She hoped to finish grade 12, go to college, get married, and have kids. Yet she did not provide much elaboration to these goals or the process of how she was going to accomplish them. As a result, it was unclear whether these were her personal dreams or ones that were part of the script of what is culturally expected.

Like Amy, many of Amber's future goals were normative. She wished for a house, a car, and a job that also seemed script-like. However, Amber provided more personal context to her future goals. She mentioned wanting more happy days

between her, her partner, and their kids where there is less "bickering about stupid, petty, little things." She also hoped they would become financially stable, and be less worried about money, and that she would have a job where she can learn, make a positive contribution and derive happiness.

We also ask our youth about possible negative futures that they feared for themselves. For Amy, her feared future was losing "everything" including her boyfriend, job, and home because of her drug addiction. She also feared going "nowhere" in her life and never being able to accept herself. For Amber, her feared future was being alone without her partner and kids, without a job or money, and suffering from depression. These feared futures were part of their stories of vulnerability drawing connections to past incidents of victimization and events where they were the victimizer.

Stories of Vulnerability

Trauma fills the life stories of our youth. For instance, Amy's three early life chapters ("A New Life," "An Addictive Home," and "Unsteady Home") were dominated by negative life events including experiences of physical and sexual abuse by her father (her low-point experience), neglect, witnessing repeated incidents of alcohol and drug use by her father, and episodes of peer bullying in elementary school. One of the consequences of these series of negative life events was Amy's feelings of attachment insecurity and rejection, which became a prominent theme in her narrative. For example, in her fourth chapter, entitled "Finding Acceptance," Amy describes her transition into high school as a time when she found peer acceptance: "I think I found acceptance in trying to avoid my old life [Unsteady Home], this is what they [peers] were doing, this is what made me feel things weren't so bad. And I just wanted them to accept me." Unfortunately, her acceptance into this peer group became a gateway to drugs and alcohol use and abuse and her expulsion from school due to non-attendance.

For Amber, her changing family structure served as chapter titles: Chapter 1, "Parents;" Chapter 2, "Step-Dad 1;" Chapter 3, "Step-Dad 2;" Chapter 4, "Just Us" (referring to herself, mom, and sister); and Chapter 5, "Grown-Up" (after she moves out of her mom's house). These titles reflected the salient role her parents and step-parents play in her life story, with much of their influences being negative. For example, she spoke of her mother's, father's, and step-father's abuses of substances that led to the deterioration of her mom's relationships with her (step) fathers. In addition, "Step-Dad 2" chapter contained scenes of physical abuse. In one episode, Amber witnessed her step-dad "brutally beat her [mom] with a guitar." Another scene has Amber protecting her siblings in a fight between her mom and step-dad:

> I would go out when they were fighting and I would grab all the breakable items. . .. I would bring them back into the bedroom and we [her sister and step-brother] would sit in the bedroom and I would just kind of, you know, talk to them and try to make them feel better. . ..

To escape her dysfunctional home life, Amber found solace outside the house with her same-age boyfriend with whom she had become sexually active by age 11. While her boyfriend made her "feel better," he was also "abusive" toward her. Moreover, being sexually active at an early age led to unwanted peer attention, peer stigmatization, and a loss of friends. In the end, Amber was "alone in school because of my sexual activity."

In her fourth chapter, life improved for Amber, at least initially. She started dating her high school "sweetheart" who was her "lifeline." She also gained popularity at school and had fun attending parties on weekends and using drugs recreationally. Unfortunately, the good times were short-lived. During this chapter, her current boyfriend suffered a "loss in his life," with which he could not cope. He ended up disappearing from Amber's life. Further, in this chapter Amber mentioned being suicidal and also spoke of her mom being "a mess" due to her alcoholism.

In her final chapter, Amber reported graduating with honors and with a scholarship (her peak experience), taking a year off to work before attending college, and moving in with a new boyfriend who also happened to be a drug dealer. During that year, she became part of a "very bad crowd" whose "ring leader" was her boyfriend. She spoke of witnessing a "brutal assault and attempted murder" by some of her friends. As one of the only witnesses, she was "dragged into court," which she describes as a "scary" low-point experience. She and her boyfriend were also victims of a home invasion where someone "from their past" entered with guns and robbed them and beat up her boyfriend.

Based on these past events, it is easy to imagine the trajectories that these two stories could take toward our youth's feared outcomes: experiencing and/or witnessing abuse; continuing unstable home life; insecure relationships with one or more parents; searching for acceptance in peer relationships; and involvement in a deviant peer culture. The logical progression of events painted a bleak future for each of our youth, filled with much trauma and many transgressions. Yet, as their stories progressed, there were signs of hope that fledging stories of resiliency were emerging.

Emerging Stories of Resilience

For both youth, their early traumatic experiences set a foundation to their stories of vulnerability. However, as their positive future goals illustrate, our youth envisioned alternate endings to their stories. For each youth, there were emerging signs of a more hopeful story and a single definable "turning point" moment that marked the beginning of that story.

For Amy, in late adolescence (Chapter 5) her life began to turn around after meeting the guy who later had become her current boyfriend (a peak experience): "I finally found the acceptance that I have been struggling for my whole life, and he didn't care that I wasn't perfect. He just wanted me to help myself." With the support of her boyfriend, Amy was able to stop "hanging around" her friends who were doing drugs and withstand the ensuing peer rejection. Instead, she turned

to the Future Cents program (a turning point experience) where she was able to gain support from other participants who were struggling to turn their lives around as well.

At the time of the first interview, Amy was at a cross-road in her life. She was struggling to move from being dependent on other people's acceptance to finding her own self-acceptance: "I think the greatest challenge was learning to find acceptance in myself. . .. It's a struggle. I'm always trying to run myself down just because of [past] experiences."

For Amber, there was also some evidence of an emerging story of resiliency in the first interview. Despite the challenges of raising a child at a young age, Amber interpreted her pregnancy as a turning point, leading to the realization that she wanted a change from her hanging with a "very bad crowd" and the associated dangers she would be exposing her child to if the old story continued. So with her boyfriend, they moved to another city for a fresh start, and the construction of her new story began.

Changing Stories

A year later, we re-interviewed Amy and Amber. In contrast to the first interviews, the second interviews provided greater details that brought clarity to their stories of vulnerability by providing a more distant and reflective perspective in describing their past lives. At the same time, the stories were permeated with hope that each youth would achieve their future positive goals.

For Amy, while the general structure of the early chapters was similar between interviews, a noticeable difference did emerge in terms of the greater detail Amy provided regarding the past episodes within those chapters. She was better able to identify the thoughts and feelings she experienced when living through these episodes. In her fifth chapter, a more reflective perspective was evident with regards to her relationship with her boyfriend. Here her comments were less glowing as she acknowledged the many fights they have had. Further, she expressed optimism about her future goals as she continued with her education and anticipated graduating and gaining employment.

Many of the events mentioned in Amber's story in second interview were also similar to the first, but in greater details which brought clarity to her story of vulnerability. For instance, Amber now confessed to trying "a lot of weird drugs" when she was 12, 13, and 14, like sniffing detergent. She also provides more details regarding her psychological state during this time. She mentioned being "just sad all the time," writing "depressing, sad songs." Moreover, her period of social isolation at school included bullying: "I got in fights, I was spit on." She also claimed that she was "so sexually active because that's what he [boyfriend] wanted, right, and I would have done anything to make him happy because he was the only person that mattered." Further in the interview, she described him as "my savior because he loved me." And when he broke up with her, Amber "spiraled" downward, drinking heavily to point of black out, picking fights, and getting the "crap beat out" of her by her peers.

At the same time, she is able to admit that her home life was worse than the first interview revealed. During the period when step-dad 2 lived with them, her home environment was bad enough to lead her to run away. In the next chapter, Amber reveals that her mom was suffering through a major depression. As a result, Amber had to perform many of the domestic duties: "I cleaned the house, and tried to make dinner, and I took my sister everywhere with me."

Amber was also more forthright about her relationship with her current partner. She mentioned the struggles in making the relationship work earlier on when she was pregnant: "We'd only been together for like 6 months with all this drama, and now that when we were alone it was like we frigging hated each other. And we're about to have a baby, and it was just, it was awful for like the first 2 years of just trying to make it work."

Amber was even more candid about her anger toward her mom: "I was always so angry with her because she just wanted to talk about her [boyfriend] all the time and it pissed me off. . .. I would try to tell her about how it was for me and she just didn't want to hear it." Moreover, Amber acknowledged being upset about how her mom raised her, especially given that her mom thinks she should be praised for her parenting.

As for the newest chapter in her story, Amber was struggling along. Her second child was born; the family lived in a trailer and was having difficulty making ends meet; she suffered post-partum depression; and she had a nervous breakdown due to stress. However, her participation in Future Cents had been helpful to get her life "a little bit better." With money flowing in and bills being paid, she and her husband were fighting less. In addition, they were now looking at plans to build a house, which has become financially feasible.

For both women, fledging stories of hope were emerging. For Amber in particular, the process has not been easy, and she continues to struggle with a number of issues, and it is unclear whether these seeds of hope will take root, or whether life challenges, many linked to her past, will overwhelm her. Yet the fact that both women were able to speak in greater detail about many of their past traumas might be additional evidence of moving forward. As Ungar (2001) mentioned, reflecting over past trauma is part of the re-storying process. Hence, Amy and Amber's ability to be far more revealing about their troubled past in the second interview may be an important part of the reconstruction process and the separation of the old story of vulnerability from the new story of resilience.

Applying Latent Semantic Analysis to Changing Stories

In an attempt to triangulate upon our results, we adopted a semantic space approach to analyze narrative text to ensure we were capturing their voice. A semantic space approach functions to reveal relationships that exist between different representations of participants' selves as captured through their use of language. This approach has been used in previous case study research investigating pathological grief (Hart, Stinson, Field, Ewert, & Horowitz, 1995). In Hart et al.'s work, they analyzed text

material from a client that was collected over 35 psychotherapy sessions that were grouped into 3 phases – early, middle, and last sessions. From their text data, they were able to plot in two-dimensional space the position of their different selves (i.e., past, future, ideal) and other characters (e.g., mother, father) in that space. Selves and others that were closer in spaces were described in sessions using similar descriptive language. Moreover, Hart et al. were able to monitor changes in the position of selves and others over three phases of therapy.

We adopted a similar approach to Hart et al. (1995). In our study, the language used to capture the structure of self was derived from each of the youth's chapters collected at two time-points. Using a computer program called Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA) (see Kintsch, McNamara, Dennis, & Landauer, 2007; Laham, 1997; Landauer, 2007; Landauer, Foltz, & Laham, 1998) we were able to compare textual materials based on similarity of meaning. Specifically, we compared chapter similarity based on the frequency of words occurring in each chapter that related to youth's future goals (e.g., go to college, get married, job, stable, happy days). Chapters that contained these kinds of future goal-related words should be more closely related in goal-related meaning than chapters containing fewer number and kinds of these goal-type words. That is, chapters that had words associated with college, marriage, job, stability and happiness, for example, would be closer in semantic space that chapters that did not contain these types of words or phrases.

In our study, we chose future goals as our semantic reference point believing that those chapters that contained future goal-related words would more likely to be a part of the new story of resilience. Moreover, as the story was reconstructed later in time and that the resilience story gains strength, then each of the subsequent later life chapters should be more similar to each other than to the earlier chapters, which typically were associated with the old story of vulnerability.

We analyzed the text from each youth's chapters using LSA. LSA makes similarity judgments between texts using a matrix decomposition technique that is related to factor analysis. In LSA, judgments are based on the model's global knowledge of the world, typically an 11 million word first year collegiate reader known as TASA. Based on this knowledge cache, the program assigns vectors to entered words, sentences, and paragraphs as meaning approximations in a high-dimensional semantic space. Vectors are positioned in semantic space based on the presence of related words in the TASA knowledge cache. As an example, the term "automobile" most frequently co-occurs with "cars," "vehicles," and "dealership" in TASA. These neighbor terms provide meaning orientation for the "automobile" vector. In this manner, vectors are compared on cosine angles, resulting in meaning similarity judgments expressed as a covariance matrix (-1 to $+1$). The model is capable of making fine distinctions in semantic knowledge, including metaphor comprehension and the ability to grade undergraduate psychology essay exams with excellent reliability compared to human evaluators (Kintsch, 2000; Landauer, 2007).

In this study, LSA was applied to our youth's chapter narratives in the TASA space. The resulting matrix of cosine values were then used to plot each chapter in dimensional space using multidimensional scaling. For visual ease, we have collapsed the multiple dimensions derived into a two-dimensional space, and located

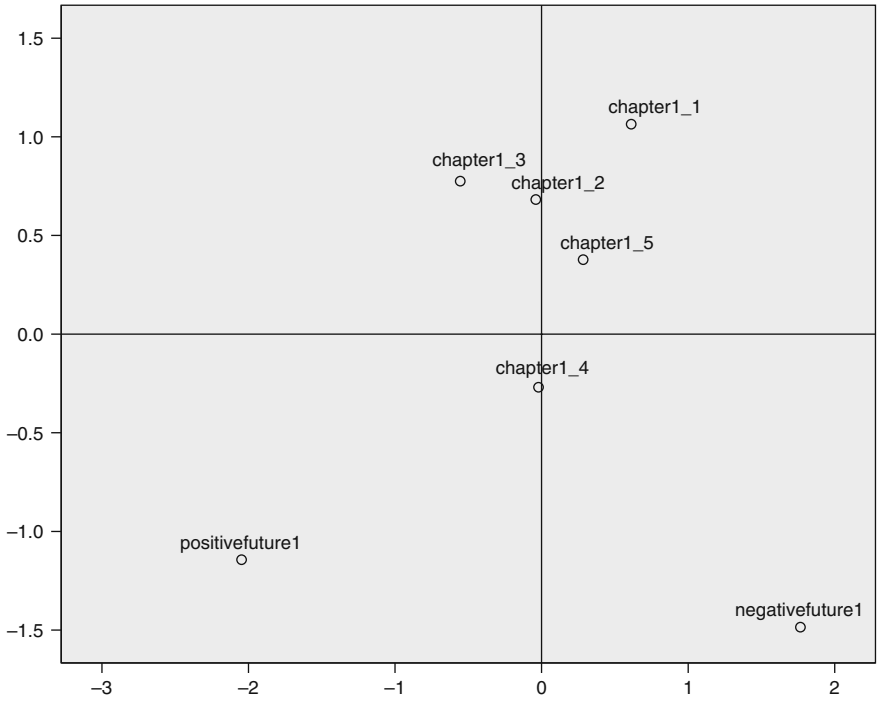

Fig. 7.1a Group stimulus space for INDSCAL model (s-stress = 0.02) multidimensional scaling analysis of self-representations based on LSA-derived similarity scores of narrative chapters and future goals for Amy during Future Cents
Note: Chapter 1_1, "A New Life;" Chapter 1_2, "An Addictive Home;" Chapter 1_3, "Unsteady Home;" Chapter 1_4, "Finding Acceptance;" Chapter 1_5, "Meeting Boyfriend".

the narrative chapters within this two-dimensional space. Hence, the labels of these two dimensions are less meaningful. Rather, we included the future positive and future negative goals in this space as reference points for interpretation purposes.

Figure 7.1a and b is the two-dimensional representation of Amy's life story. During her time at Future Cents (Fig. 7.1a), Amy's life chapters are clustered together between her negative and positive futures. There is little distinguishing the chapters from one another; that is, the chapters appear undifferentiated. Further, there is little connection in meaning between the chapters and her positive and negative futures: How Amy is constructing her earlier life stories has little reference to her positive or negative future. Rather her past experiences seem disconnected from her future.

A year later, as demonstrated in Fig. 7.1b, her story takes a more defined structure. The first three childhood chapters capture her relationship with parents and form a cluster that reflects their shared meaning, which has little association with her future. A second cluster includes "Drugs and Friends" and "Starting Over," capturing her turbulent teenage years as she struggled to break-free of the substance use

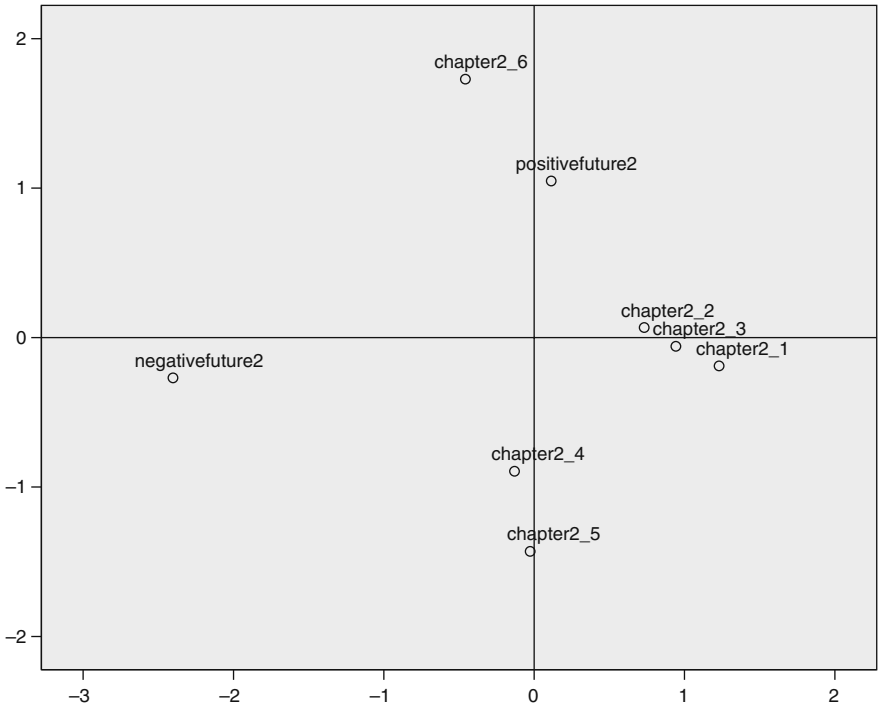

Fig. 7.1b Group stimulus space for INDSCAL model (s-stress = 0.04) multidimensional scaling analysis of self-representations based on LSA-derived similarity scores of narrative chapters and future goals for Amy after Future Cents
Note: Chapter 2_1, "My Dad Left;" Chapter 2_2, My Dad Came Back;" Chapter 2_3, "My Dad Left – Part 2;" Chapter 2_4, "Drugs and Friends;" Chapter 2_5, "Starting Over;" Chapter 2_6, "Current".

culture in which she was embedded. This cluster also appears to have little association with her future. The final "Current" chapter is in closest proximity to Amy's positive future and may reflect her current movement in life toward fulfilling those future goals and the start of her story of resiliency. Hence, a structure to her story appears to be emerging with chapters clustering together in meaningful ways.

Figure 7.2a and b demonstrates the change in narrative representation over time for Amber. Based on her first interview, no clear patterns are evident. In contrast, a year later a structure to the story is emerging. The "On My Own" chapter is in close proximity to the negative future goals, which has the potential to form her vulnerability story. A little farther from her negative future are some of her early chapters which also touch upon some of her feared future outcomes and may become further material for her vulnerability story. Yet the most recent chapter, "Son," is most closely located to her positive future goals. We hope that over time, as her story continues to unfold, more chapters will be written that are more closely aligned with her positive future and help to generate her story of resiliency.

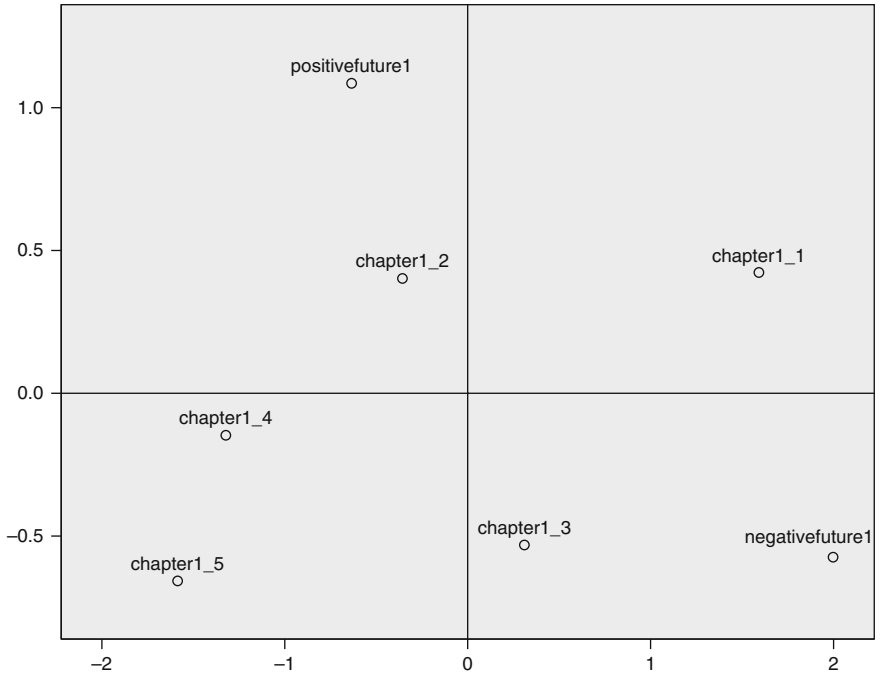

Fig. 7.2a Group stimulus space for INDSCAL model (s-stress = 0.01) multidimensional scaling analysis of self-representations based on LSA-derived similarity scores of narrative chapters and future goals for Amber during Future Cents
Note: Chapter 1_1, "Parent;" Chapter 1_2, "Step-dad 1;" Chapter 1_3, "Step-dad 2;" Chapter 1_4, "Just Us;" Chapter 1_5, "Grown-up".

Discussion and Conclusion

As both the existing literature and our case studies reveal, at-risk youth have experienced many past traumatic events that seem to have a cascading effect toward a series of poor behavioral and psychological outcomes. One area of exploration has been the study of self-development among such youth. In our paper, we have taken a narrative approach to the study of the self. Specifically, we were interested to know how the life stories that at-risk youth construct change over time, and in our particular context, after youth have participated in a career development program. Our previous program evaluation research (Matsuba et al., 2008) suggested that on standard measures of loneliness, satisfaction of life, and self-esteem youth show improvements as a result of their program participation. Yet our evaluation of two youth's life narratives has been helpful to shed additional light on how they are doing a year after exiting the program. Borrowing from Ungar (2001), we framed our youth's narratives as stories of vulnerability versus stories of resiliency. In the case of Amy, she appears to be on her way to constructing her story of resiliency and is happy with the direction her life is currently going. In contrast, Amber's

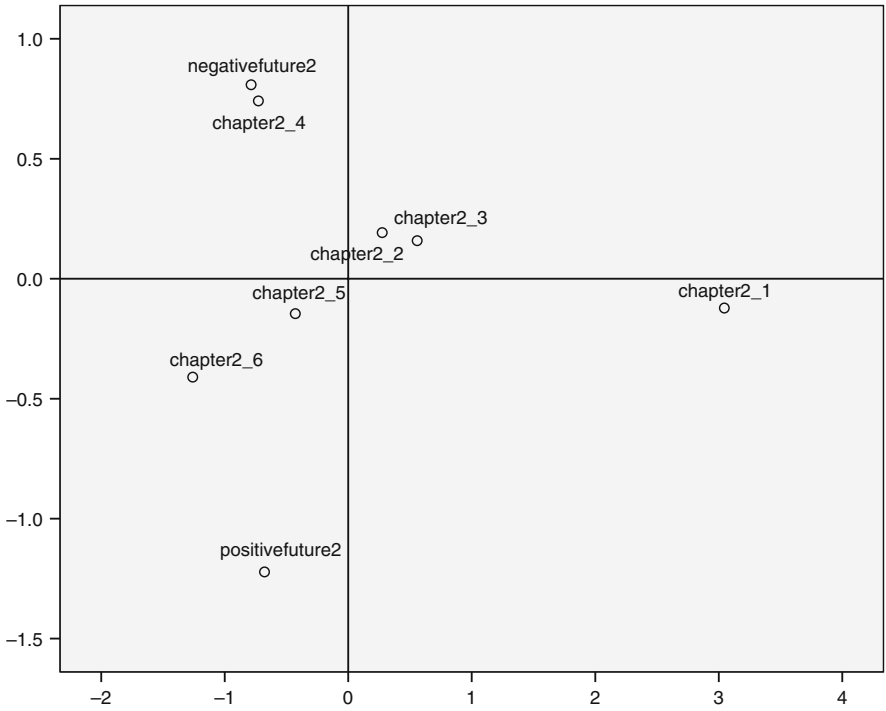

Fig. 7.2b Group stimulus space for INDSCAL model (s-stress = 0.04) multidimensional scaling analysis of self-representations based on LSA-derived similarity scores of narrative chapters and future goals for Amber after Future Cents
Note: Chapter 2_1, "Childhood;" Chapter 2_2, "Teenager;" Chapter 2_3, "Post Step-dad;" Chapter 2_4, "On My Own;" Chapter 2_5, "Boyfriend;" Chapter 2_6, "Son".

progress is slower as she continues to be faced with additional challenges at every turn. More evident is her potential story of vulnerability. Yet even in her story there are seeds of hope that, if nurtured, can help construct her story of resiliency.

While we have made every effort to obtain consensus within our research team in our coding, and to substantiate our findings with interview excerpts, there is always some doubt whether we have accurately portrayed the narrative construction and reconstruction process for our youth. The rationale of introducing LSA was to contribute an alternate data analytic technique as part of the triangulation process. In our case, our LSA analyses have helped us to converge on a clearer understanding of how the life stories of our youth are changing over time. In particular, the greater details Amy and Amber provided in their second interview seem to demonstrate how they are developing a more clearly defined narrative structure, which is illustrated in our LSA analyses.

As our results suggest, re-storying the narrative self is not an easy process for our at-risk youth. Our analysis of the narrative data suggests that effecting change at the psychological level takes time and that there is individual variability in the change process. Moreover, while programs such as Future Cents have been acknowledged

by the youth to be important in helping them to reconstruct their life stories, it is unlikely to be sufficient in ensuring that youth continue to develop their story of resiliency. As most people working in the field of child and youth care realize, few social programs exist that follow at-risk youth over a prolonged period of time. Nor do programs typically put in place sufficient structures to ensure youth's continual success. Hence, we hope that our results will help to convince those who work with at-risk youth, and funders of youth programs, of the need to follow-up on these youth and to continue to support those who are struggling to develop a strong, clear story of resiliency.

> We're actually getting better. We don't fight that much anymore. I mean I stopped going to see my counselor. And I know I should probably go see her again. It's that, some reason at this time I'm comfortable being the way I am. ~Amy

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Constructing Resilience: Adolescent Motherhood and the Process of Self-Transformation

Andrea V. Breen and Kate C. McLean

> *Before I found out I was pregnant, I don't know where I would be now. I was into drugs, I was never home at all. I would maybe come home to sleep for a couple of hours and then I would be out again. It was like from morning to night for a whole year. I never looked at my sister. I never looked at my parents. I never talked to them much and then when I found out I was pregnant, I became friends with my sister. Her and I are really close now. . .I don't do drugs anymore. My mom says that my daughter saved my life.*
>
> *(Eve, age 18)*

Teenage pregnancy poses real risks to positive developmental outcomes. Indeed, longitudinal research suggests that, for young mothers, these risks include inadequate educational attainment, entrenchment in poverty, unstable romantic relationships, and elevated risk of depression; while for the children of adolescent mothers, risks include poor attachment relationships, low IQ scores, language delays, school-related problems, emotional and behavioral problems, and abuse and neglect (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn, & Morgan, 1987; Hotz, McElroy, & Sanders, 1997; Whitman, Borkowski, Keogh, & Weed, 2001). However, by no means does teenage pregnancy inevitably doom young mothers and their children to poor developmental outcomes. Many young women manage to avoid experiencing many of the risks that are commonly associated with early pregnancy (Borkowski, Whitman, & Farris, 2007; Furstenberg, 2003; Furstenberg et al., 1987; Hotz et al., 1997; Leadbeater & Way, 2001).Moreover, as the young woman we call "Eve" suggests in the quotation that begins this chapter, early pregnancy can have a positive impact on a young woman's developmental trajectory. Indeed, recent research provides compelling evidence that, alongside the potential threats to optimal development, pregnancy in the teen years may also present new opportunities for developing resilience (Borkowski et al., 2007; Leadbeater & Way, 2001; Russell & Lee, 2006).

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Longitudinal research with urban teenage mothers and their children reveals a great deal of variation in individual outcomes, with many young women managing to adapt well to early motherhood, creating positive lives for themselves and their children (Borkowski et al., 2007; Hotz et al., 1997; Leadbeater & Way, 2001). For example, an early pregnancy can provide new meaning and a sense of purpose that inspires young mothers to make positive changes in their lives (Leadbeater & Way, 2001). Researchers concerned with antisocial and criminal behavior have found that becoming a mother may also have unique benefits for adult women with histories of criminal behavior, as pregnancy and motherhood have been linked to abrupt desistance from offending (Fleisher & Krienert, 2004; Rumgay, 2004).

Previous research has identified some of the key factors that protect young women and their children from negative outcomes, including having a supportive family and/or boyfriend, positive role models, an optimistic outlook, and succeeding in school (Borkowski et al., 2007; Leadbeater & Way, 2001). However, while the identification of these factors is important, very little is known about the *process* by which becoming a mother may lead to positive transformation. Moreover, to our knowledge researchers have not yet investigated the process of positive change in young mothers with histories of severe antisocial behavior.

In this chapter we explore narrative data from interviews with two young mothers in order to begin to elucidate the process by which teenage motherhood can lead to personal transformation. Both of these young women have experienced profound adversity, including violence, family separation, and poverty, and both have histories of severe conduct problems, including engagement in criminal behavior (e.g., repeated shoplifting, violent assaults, and drug trafficking). While other researchers have highlighted some of the personal stories of young mothers and their children (e.g., Borkowski et al., 2007; Leadbeater & Way, 2001; Russell & Lee, 2006), this exploration is the first of which we are aware to focus specifically on narrative processes of identity development in relation to personal transformation in young mothers. We focus specifically on both *desistance from antisocial behavior* and *psychological development* through the construction of self-identity and suggest that, for young women with histories of severe conduct problems, changes in both behavior and transformation in self-understanding may be essential components of positive adaptation to the challenges posed by early motherhood. We begin by discussing the theory and research that informs our understanding of the process of transformation in these young women, including research on resilience, identity development, and desistance from antisocial behavior. Next we turn to the interviews with two young women in order to illustrate the process of personal transformation as it unfolds. These interviews provide insight into the difficult process of constructing resilience in young women who are working to overcome troubled pasts and to create a better future for themselves and their children. Finally, we end this chapter with a discussion of the implications of this exploratory investigation for the narrative studies of lives.

Resilience has been defined as "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, p. 543) (italics original). It is important to differentiate *resilience* from

resiliency; while the latter term implies a stable, trait-like characteristic of the individual, *resilience* is a *process* of positive adaptation to difficult life events (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 1994). As Masten and others suggest, resilience does not necessarily involve extraordinary personal traits, capacities, or characteristics but rather it is revealed through reasonable competence in critical developmental tasks for one's particular age group, despite the presence of significant threats to one's well-being (Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten, Obradović, & Burt, 2006). Rather than being static, resilience tends to shift across the lifespan (Hauser, Allen, & Golden, 2006; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Shaffer, Coffino, Boelcke-Stennes, & Masten, 2007). Thus, resilience can be developed and cultivated and, conversely, it can also be eclipsed by future difficulties.

It is evident that some individuals manage the process of resilience better than others and a range of protective factors have been found to account for individual differences in outcomes following experiences of adversity. Examples include genetic factors (Caspi et al., 2002) as well as psychological and social factors, such as adequate self-regulation and cognitive skills, positive self-perception, a sense of personal agency, and connections to caring and competent adults (Masten, 2001). While efforts to identify the particular protective factors associated with resilience have been critical to furthering our understanding of individual differences in outcomes, protective factors alone do not fully determine how an individual will fare in the aftermath of adversity. As Hauser and his colleagues (2006) suggest, despite our understanding of some of the factors associated with resilience, we do not yet sufficiently understand the processes by which these variables lead to particular outcomes in individuals. For example, these authors suggest that there is an important gap between knowing that relationships with caring adults are protective for children who experience adversity and understanding how interactions between "at-risk" children and caring adults actually work to foster resilience. In particular, there exists a need to better understand the role of the individual in the process of developing his or her own resilience:

> Adversity challenges some kids to harvest the barest surroundings with creative determination, while others make no use even of resources that are readily available. Children are more than passive accepters—or rejecters—of helpful relationships with adults; they may recruit and sustain them, treat them with indifference, or resolutely turn them away. (Hauser et al., 2006, p. 8)

According to Hauser and his colleagues (2006), resilient individuals are those who create *for themselves* both the psychological and external environments necessary for recovery.

Self-Identity and Resilience in Adolescence

As we have suggested, our work is guided by a definition of resilience that stresses the achievement of normal developmental milestones as a critical component of positive adaptation to adversity. The development of self-identity is the paramount developmental task in the late adolescent and early adult period (Erikson, 1968)

and, as such, it is important to consider developments in self-identity in order to fully understand the process of resilience in adolescents and young adults.

Researchers have demonstrated a relationship between self-identity and criminal behavior; for example, delinquency has been linked to self-concept (Carroll, Houghton, Wood, Perkins, & Bower, 2007) and transformation of deviant identity is thought to be an important part of the process of desistance (e.g., Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Maruna, 2001; Rumgay, 2004). Although relatively few studies have examined desistance in women (exceptions include Baskin & Sommers, 1998; Fleisher & Krienert, 2004; Rumgay, 2004; Uggen & Kruttschnitt, 1998), research suggests that becoming a mother may provide an important opportunity to exit a life of criminal offending (Fleisher & Krienert, 2004; Rumgay, 2004). Indeed, Erikson (1980) recognized motherhood as an important transitional stage in the life course that offers new opportunities for the development of identity. Specifically, becoming a mother may offer an opportunity to establish new behavioral patterns and to construct a more prosocial identity (Rumgay, 2004). While previous studies have afforded important insights into the connections between identity and behavioral change, the focus has largely been on identity as social role (i.e., "mother" versus "criminal") and not on the psychosocial *process* of identity development.

Narrative, in the form of a developing "life story" (McAdams, 1985), is both a tool used by researchers to explore the development of identity and a mechanism through which identity is developed. Making meaning of one's past is one of the major processes by which identity, in the form of a coherent narrative account of the self across time, is constructed (e.g., Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). Drawing on McAdams' (1985) work, Maruna (2001) describes narrative identity as follows:

> The narrative identity can be understood as an active information-processing structure, a cognitive schema, or a construct system that is both shaped by and later mediates social interaction. Essentially, people construct stories to account for what they do and why they did it. These narratives impose an order on people's actions and explain people's behavior with a sequence of events that connect up to explanatory goals, motivations, and feelings. These self-narratives then act to shape and guide future behavior, as people act in ways that agree with the stories or myths they have created about themselves (p. 40).

Narrative researchers have shown that working to establish a coherent life story is important for positive psychological development throughout adolescence and adulthood (e.g., King, 2001; McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001; Pals, 2006). Indeed, recent findings suggest that narrative offers the possibility for psychological growth in the aftermath of traumatic experience (Hauser et al., 2006; Pals & McAdams, 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). In constructing coherent stories from difficult life events, an individual establishes a framework for reflecting on and making sense of her experiences. This framework can serve to transform the internal self-story and it may also work to inspire new behaviors and actions in the world such that the internal and external self begin to cohere (Maruna, 2001). The active construction of a coherent life narrative may thus be a critical means by which individuals can construct their own resilience (Hauser et al., 2006).

From a narrative approach, the process of identity development involves reflecting on one's past experiences in relation to the present and future self (e.g., McAdams, 1993); that is, one makes meaning of the past to understand one's sense of self through time. The individual's developing capacity for reflecting on her experiences in relation to her beliefs, values, goals, and desires – that is, for meaning-making in the service of developing the self – has not been adequately considered by either the adolescent resilience or criminal desistance literatures. Two important exceptions to this are Hauser and his colleagues' (2006) study of resilience in adolescents with histories of psychiatric disorder and Maruna's (2001) research on desistance in adult criminals. Findings from these studies suggest that both resilience and desistance are processes involving the development of a coherent life story narrative emphasizing themes of redemption and generativity.

In focusing on the process of resilience in young mothers with histories of antisocial behavior, our interest is in both the development of the self in narrative and the expression of this self in action. This connection between meaning-making and behavior is essential to the development of one's self as an individual capable of acting in the world in accordance with her own values, beliefs, goals, and desires for the self (Moshman, 2005). Prosocial behavior without psychological development may signal successful desistance from criminal behavior, but it is not sufficient to establish resilience. The converse is also true: for young women with histories of antisocial behavior, psychological development related to the formation of self-identity stops short of resilience unless it is accompanied by behavioral change.

Exploring Personal Narratives of Young Mothers with Histories of Antisocial Behavior

Both of the participants we describe in this chapter were living in high-needs Toronto communities that are known to be economically disadvantaged, often violent, and rife with gang activity. Both participants self-identified as Black. The young mother we call "Tamara" was 20 years old at the time of the interview and "Jasmine" was 19. Both participants lived alone with their 2-year-old daughters. Tamara learned of the study while attending a program for youth who are gang-involved and/or have been identified as being at risk for gang involvement. Jasmine volunteered for the study after hearing about it through a girls' support group at her local community center. These interviews were drawn from a larger study exploring the relationship between self-identity and behavioral transformation in adolescence that the first author is conducting for her doctoral thesis.

Study participants completed a battery of standardized questionnaires, including a questionnaire designed to measure current and past participation in antisocial and delinquent behavior (adapted from Tanner & Wortley, 2002) and a semi-structured interview. The interview was comprised of a series of tasks and questions, including high-point and turning-point narratives (adapted from McAdams, 1992) and questions about "possible selves" (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). At the beginning of the

interview the participant was asked to imagine that her life story is being made into a movie and to talk about what kind of movie her life would make and what her character would be like as a person. This task was designed as a "warm-up" to encourage thinking in narrative form. As well, these questions serve to provide some insight into the participant's perceptions of the overall themes of her life.

Our qualitative analyses of the participants' interviews were exploratory in nature. The question that guided our initial reading of the interviews was as follows: How does the development of a self-narrative relate to behavioral change in the life contexts of youth who have engaged in antisocial behavior? The authors started by each thoroughly reading the interviews and taking notes of important themes that emerged in the data and then comparing our notes. It was clearly evident that, for the young mothers in our sample, pregnancy and motherhood were important factors in the transformation process and, as a result, we decided to explore the relationship between motherhood and behavioral change more closely. Subsequent readings of the data were guided by the question of whether self-reflection is necessary for personal transformation or if motherhood leads to "automatic" change. In this chapter we analyze the two interviews for narrative meaning-making – the degree to which the participants connect their experiences to the inner world of personal values, beliefs, goals, and desires (i.e., to their selves) – in order to begin to address this question.

While the stories of both of these young women provide compelling examples of behavioral change related to becoming a mother in the teen years, their interviews reveal very different psychological processes associated with their behavioral change. These particular interviews were selected for the contrast they provide with regards to the processes of identity construction and personal transformation. Although both young women have made important changes in their lives, the interviews suggest very different levels of engagement in the meaning-making process. Tamara, the first of our participants, provides little evidence of meaning-making. Her interview implies a relative lack of self-reflection and her narrative is characterized by a somewhat passive approach to her own actions. In contrast, Jasmine's interview suggests that the personal changes she is experiencing include an active and profound transformation in her understanding of her self. She appears to be actively engaged in the process of constructing a new narrative in order to move her daughter and herself toward a more positive future. In the subsequent sections of this chapter we describe these interviews and reflect on the nature and implications of our participants' different narrative approaches to the development of resilience.

It is important to note that as researchers whose own life histories differ considerably from those of our participants, we recognize that we may not be able to fully understand and relate to their experiences. Narratives are both reflections of and tools used for the development of the social world, and research has shown that narrative traditions may vary according to such factors as cultural context (Miller, Wiley, Fung, & Liang, 1997) and social class (Cho & Miller, 2004). As relative "outsiders" in our participants' social worlds, it is with both caution and respect for these participants' willingness to work toward making changes in their lives that we offer our interpretations of their developing resilience.

Tamara

Tamara's interview took place onsite at the program she was attending for youth involved in gangs and/or at risk for gang involvement. She was dressed casually in jeans and a baggy sweatshirt, which somewhat concealed that she was 5-month pregnant with her second child. Tamara was quite serious, polite, and cooperative throughout the interview and responded without hesitation to all of the questions asked. However, as the excerpts in this chapter suggest, she was a good deal less talkative than Jasmine. There are many possible explanations for the differences in these two participants' narratives, including personality differences and different levels of comfort with both the interview process and the interviewer. While these differences are important, we also believe that there were real differences in Jasmine's and Tamara's narrative processing which may impact on the development of resilience.

Tamara's personal history has been challenging. Her parents do not live in Canada and she was raised by her grandmother until the age of 16 when they "had problems" and she moved out of her grandmother's house. She is no longer with her daughter's father and describes her break-up with him after 3 years together as a difficult learning experience that led her to "not really trust guys anymore and. . .like I make it hard for them to get along with me." Tamara does not talk about being in a current relationship and does not discuss the father of the baby she is expecting. We get the sense from Tamara's interview that she keeps herself at a distance from other people. She describes herself as being very self-reliant and says that her friends and family often ask her: "why do you always say you don't need anybody?"

In response to being asked to imagine that her life were being made into a movie, Tamara responds that her life would be "an adventure" film, while at the same time she describes a typical activity that an audience would see her engaged in as being at "the mall, I guess." Tamara describes a high-point experience as being the birth of her daughter. This experience is described further in the following excerpt:

A.B.: What made this a peak experience for you?
Tamara: *It was my first child and she was a girl. I always wanted to have a daughter.*
A.B.: Why is this event significant to you?
Tamara: '*Cause my daughter motivates me. She's like why I keep going on, try to do better.*
A.B.: How much of an impact would you say this event has had on you?
Tamara: *A big impact.*
A.B.: Could you describe it a bit?
Tamara: *Like I just want to do stuff like work, go to school, like finish school, do something with myself.*

Tamara's responses are somewhat vague and there is little detail in her descriptions. While she suggests that her daughter motivates her, her connection of her own experiences of the birth to the self is focused on action-oriented, external aspects of

her own functioning (e.g., going to school and doing "something" with herself) and we do not see any reflection with respect to Tamara's inner world or evidence of insight with respect to the self.

In speaking of her "possible selves" (Oyserman and Markus, 1990), Tamara says that the self she most hopes will describe her in the next year is "successful." Again, this section is noteworthy for a lack of reflection on the self:

A.B.: So what would success look like for you?
Tamara: *Finish school, career, house, car, all the good things.*
A.B.: Okay. What possible selves do you think are most likely to be true of you in the next year?
Tamara: *Hmm. . .finished school. Well I have a car already, not the house part or the career. But done school and trying to go on further.*
A.B.: Okay. What possible selves do you most fear or worry about being in the next year?
Tamara: (laughs). *A loser.*
A.B.: What do you mean by that?
Tamara: *Like still sitting at home, like no job, not doing anything. Like yeah, I don't want that to happen.*

Tamara's responses are vague and suggest very little reasoning about the self. Her focus on external aspects of the self is especially evident when she speaks of her worry about being a "loser." She does not draw from her inner world of her desires, hopes, and beliefs, but rather focuses on external behavior and material needs.

Despite there being little evidence of meaning-making in Tamara's narrative, there is evidence that positive transformation is occurring for her. Historically, Tamara's conduct problems had been related to shoplifting with a group of friends; however, she seems to have been successful in changing her behavior. Tamara describes her own process of desistance in the following excerpt:

A.B.: So when did that change?
Tamara: *After we got in trouble.*
A.B.: Can you tell me a bit about that?
Tamara: *That was. . .when was that? Like three years ago. . .we went to [a store in a shopping mall]. There was like 5 of us and we all got caught. We had to go to court. 'Cause before we used to get in trouble it was just warnings but that was the first time we actually had to go to court so that was something that was scary. And then we were like almost 18 too so it was like, okay, smarten up.*
A.B.: So how did you manage to make the changes?
Tamara: *. . .well after I got pregnant so then I had a daughter so I wasn't really around. And after I ended up moving so all of them others got pregnant too. It was like we didn't have time for each other any more. So everyone was doing their own thing after a while.*

In this excerpt Tamara attributes her behavioral change to fear of possible consequences (i.e., incarceration), but she focuses in particular on situational changes that occurred among her group of friends with the births of their children. From this description it seems that pregnancy (both her own pregnancy and those of her friends) changed the conditions that led Tamara to steal such that she was subsequently able to change her behavior. As is the case throughout Tamara's interview, there is no real sense of Tamara's self revealed in this excerpt. Furthermore, her interview suggests a troubling lack of personal agency; Tamara does not demonstrate a sense of herself as an active *doer* who creates opportunities and experiences for herself. Rather, she appears to react to situations that happen to her.

Nevertheless, it seems that Tamara has undergone real behavioral change as a consequence of becoming a mother. She has stopped shoplifting and has returned to school to try to make life better for herself and her daughter. Laub and Sampson (2001) point out that changes in social role can impact on behavior merely by reducing the amount of time available for crime and making antisocial actions less convenient (see also Gartner & Piliavin, 1988). In this view, pregnancy and motherhood may foster some relatively automatic behavioral changes. Indeed, physical changes alone may make participating in antisocial or criminal behaviors more difficult; feelings of nausea can decrease desire for drugs and alcohol, a bulging "baby bump" may make fighting more difficult, and societal expectations about how mothers should and should not behave may preclude others from attempting to engage pregnant girls and young mothers in antisocial activities. Pregnancy and motherhood may also serve as important and convenient "excuses" for young women who want to change their behavior but have been unable to find a viable exit strategy from their antisocial patterns of behavior. As Tamara's interview suggests, even without engagement in reflective processes of meaning-making, changes related to the physical self and/or to one's social role may lead to somewhat automatic behavioral change for some young mothers. Indeed, this may be the case for Tamara: as she suggests, her social involvement with her friends subsided because she "wasn't around anymore."

However, we get the sense from Tamara's interview that she may be just barely managing in her current circumstances and, as research relating to second pregnancies suggests, the fact that she is now pregnant again will pose additional challenges and increase the likelihood of negative outcomes for herself and her children (East and Felice, 1996, Furstenberg et al., 1987). Ultimately, Tamara may need to engage in a more active process of constructing a new self-narrative in order to sustain the important external changes she has made (i.e., returning to school and no longer stealing from stores) and to take active steps toward establishing a positive future for herself and her children.

Whether or not this occurs may depend on the experiences Tamara has as her future unfolds. According to Bruner (1990), the construction of a narrative is most important when a person's experiences deviate from the "canonical story" or dominant master narrative of his or her social context. It is possible that Tamara has not yet actively engaged in meaning-making because her experiences fit with the stories that are typical in her social world. While we do not know for certain what

the canonical is in Tamara's social context, her description of the events leading to her behavioral change (i.e., that her friends also became pregnant) suggests that she may merely be acting according to patterns that are typical in her context and, so far at least, she has not been motivated to deviate from these patterns. This does not necessarily mean that Tamara *cannot* engage in active meaning-making in the future, but rather than her environment is not demanding or encouraging meaning-making processes. Moreover, as Masten and Coatsworth (1998) suggest, new strengths can emerge with development. In particular, the cognitive skills, contextual supports, and motivations associated with the development of a life story narrative are thought to develop well into the early adult period (e.g., Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 1993). As Tamara continues to develop in the early adult years, new motivations and cognitive capacities may develop that could facilitate further engagement in meaning-making.

Jasmine

Jasmine was interviewed in an office at the University of Toronto. While all participants were given the option of several possible interview locations (e.g., on site at the community organization that referred them, a local library) Jasmine elected to travel approximately 1 hour by public transportation to be interviewed on campus because she had started to think about attending college or university to pursue a career in social work and wanted to become more familiar with the university setting. Like Tamara, Jasmine is no longer together with the father of her child. However, they have established a "complicated" friendship and he provides some assistance with childcare. Jasmine was cheerful and very open throughout the conversation. She laughed easily throughout the interview and was full of energy. She expressed excitement at the possibility of her experiences being helpful to other youth and seemed very motivated to tell her story so that she could "make a difference" for others.

When asked at the outset of the interview to imagine her life as a movie, Jasmine describes her life as follows:

> It would be a little bit of everything, I think. If my life, my whole entire life were to really be put into a movie it would be a little bit of everything. . .It had adventure it had excitement. It had parts in it that would make you wanna cry and break down and parts in it that were like oh my God, you did that?

Later, A.B. asks "What would your character be like as a person?" Jasmine's response

> Well if I were to put it up to date right now at this moment definitely, definitely a big change. A big change from the whole selling drugs and foster homes and having a messed up family, the whole works. Being raped, you know? And like a lot of different things. My life up to this day would be different and as a person right now I'd say I've grown and I've changed a lot. . .I'm pretty content with who I am now, you know?

At this point, Jasmine's responses leave the impression that she has been successful in overcoming a great deal of adversity and transforming her life. She has returned to high school and is no longer dealing drugs. Throughout her interview, it is evident that Jasmine sees herself as an exemplar of change and a good role model for other youth. She explains

> I found myself nowadays opening more to like certain things 'cause I see that it helps other people that's been in that situation and thinks they're going through it 'cause there's other people that's been through it like myself, you know?

When A.B. asks "what's a typical activity that an audience might see your character doing now, currently?" Jasmine talks about going to school and raising her daughter. And then she talks about change: ". . .what they'd see from me is somebody who's trying to get their life on track, you know, and making movements and steps towards that."

Later in the interview, Jasmine speaks again about the change process and how she has been learning from her experiences:

> Usually when you go through something in your life and you learn from it usually it ends up sticking with you for a very long time, unless of course you don't want it to, you know? Especially if it's positive and you see that it's helping you.

There are several promising aspects of Jasmine's story, including striking external manifestations of resilience (e.g., returning to school and desistance from drug dealing). There are also important internal aspects of resilience revealed in Jasmine's narrative. She is deeply reflective and clearly hard at work on the task of constructing a meaningful life story. She recognizes herself as changing and appears to be moving toward establishing a narrative that emphasizes redemption. Jasmine's narrative also suggests that she is developing a strong sense of agency as she notes that it is up to the individual to choose whether or not to "stick with" the lessons that are learned in life. Thus far, Jasmine demonstrates impressive strengths that will likely help her to continue to develop her own resilience.

However, Jasmine's story of personal transformation is not nearly as straightforward as it first appears. Throughout the interview Jasmine describes the birth of her daughter as the motivation for her transformation. Having her daughter is described as the "high point" in Jasmine's life story and the motivation for her change:

> Like this really changed my life to the point where it showed me that, you know what? You don't need to do this you can do so much better, like it made me see that I actually had more in me, you know what I mean?

For much of the interview, Jasmine gives the impression that her change was an overnight "conversion" experience, whereby becoming a mother suddenly and automatically transformed her behavior and indeed herself. However, near the end of the interview, Jasmine describes an important event in her life story and it becomes clear that the process of transformation is much more complex than Jasmine's story initially suggests.

> There was a moment I was at home. She was like four or five months and I still had like crackheads, I was still selling a little bit of drugs, things like that, you know?. . . I was

> hustling on the block still, right? I didn't have to but I was, you know? 'Cause I felt like my daughter needs to have brand name everything. She needs this, she needs that, but I didn't have the funds for that 'cause social assistance don't give you that much . . . So I was like I'm going back out on the block and I'd make, like I had these little kids and I'd pay them like 20 bucks for them to baby sit my daughter and I remember one night I came home and they were drunk passed out right? And there was a cigarette burn on my carpet and my daughter was lying there crying, her diaper full of shit and piss. They didn't even change it. They were too smashed to know even what was going on. I walked through the door and I just seen it and I looked and I felt so disappointed in myself. I was like how could I do this? How could I allow this to happen? Like this is my child. Like this is me, this is me, this is me, you know?

At the end of this excerpt, Jasmine suggests that her change process was not only motivated by her daughter, *but also by herself*. In the last line of this excerpt ("*. . .this is me, this is me, this is me. . .*"). Jasmine wonders how she could allow these things to happen, not only to her daughter, but also how she could do such harm to her self. We note that children are likely a unique source of motivation as they may be viewed, not as entirely separable from one's self, but as an extension of the parent's self. Although an in-depth discussion of the place of the self within the parent–child relationship is beyond the scope of this chapter, within the psychoanalytic tradition there exists extensive writing on the topic of the convergence of self and others in the mother–daughter relationship (e.g., Bernstein, 1983; Chodorow, 1978; Furman, 1996). Jasmine's narrative suggests that her daughter is a part of her self and thus, her motivation for change may be viewed as being, not just her daughter, but also her self. We suggest that the potential fluidity of conceptions of self and others in these relationships may be an important consideration in understanding how becoming a mother may influence the process of self-transformation.

Next Jasmine describes that she found her daughter lying on the floor of the balcony, not properly dressed for the cool summer night. She continues

> I gave her a bath, I changed her and while I was giving her the bath all I could do was cry. I sat there and I cried and I cried and I cried. I said why? Why would I do this? She don't even deserve this. What am I doing? I felt so horrible. I felt like a piece of shit at that moment. I felt so, so, so disgusted with myself. . .I didn't even want to look in the mirror at myself. I felt so bad. To look at her and know that she's dependent on me and this is what I put her through? That just made me say you know what? I've gotta change. If I've got to live off social assistance and I can't afford no designer wear that's it. No designer wear. Who cares? She's safe. As long as she's happy, as long as she sees that I'm here for her and I love her I don't care, you know? That was really one moment when I said I'm not gonna live like this. I can't afford, I can't jeopardize this. I can't jeopardize her life because I don't want to change. Nope. I have to change, you know? She can't grow up without a mother. I know what it is and I don't want her to be like me. . .and that's when I said no, all of that's gotta change. No more fighting, no more drug dealing, no more getting high, no more drinking, no more none of that. Forget it, out the window. And I just changed. I just changed.

From her account, this is when Jasmine actively decides to make crucial changes in her life. Confronted by the antisocial, neglectful self she sees in the mirror, Jasmine decides in this moment to become a new self – the responsible mother she herself never had.

This story was likely quite a difficult one for Jasmine to tell. Indeed, she did not tell it at the beginning of the interview when asked specifically for a "turning point" memory, but waited for the end of the interview when the discussion was coming to a close. This may have been because she had become more comfortable sharing her story over the course of the interview. We also suggest that perhaps Jasmine was in the process of developing her narrative during the time when the interview was conducted and the interview process itself was providing structure or scaffolding within which Jasmine could consider aspects of her experiences that posed challenges to the coherence of the straightforward redemption account that characterized much of her narrative at the beginning of the interview.

Other aspects of Jasmine's story also suggest that her transformation is not as complete as she initially implies. Although she has stopped associating with many of the friends she had while dealing drugs, Jasmine (and thus her daughter) may still be at elevated risk in terms of safety because she remains very close friends with some members of her "street family," who have continued to deal drugs and to be involved with violent incidents involving weapons. In addition, Jasmine's responses to the behavioral questionnaire suggest that her narrative omits some potentially important aspects of her functioning, including relatively recent incidents in which she used a weapon to threaten or harm someone, used force to obtain money or other items, and attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting that person. Clearly, Jasmine's responses to this questionnaire are troubling and she is evidently at continued risk in terms of both physical violence and criminal sanctions.

The inconsistencies in Jasmine's interview and her responses to the questionnaire may be suggestive of an attempt to portray herself in a particularly positive light for her audience, which may include those she imagines herself helping through her participation in the research project as well as the interviewer. It is also possible that some of the more troubling aspects of Jasmine's behavior were excluded from her narrative because they threaten the coherence of her developing narrative and perhaps her emerging sense of self. While aspects of Jasmine's story may not completely "ring true," it is important that she is imagining a more positive self. The redemptive structure of her narrative may itself be an important motivator for sustaining and making further change. As she works to make sense of her past experiences through the lens of her present project of reform and redemption, she may strive to increasingly match her actions to this redemptive narrative (Hauser, et al., 2006 Maruna, 2001). In this way, the life story itself, even as it is developing, serves as a guide and a structure for self-development (Singer & Blagov, 2004).

The image of Jasmine that emerges is of a strong and active young woman who has made many remarkable changes in her life. Her story gives the impression that she is in the midst of an important process of self-transformation and appears to be actively working toward creating a story and a future for herself and her daughter that are much more positive than her past. As Jasmine herself suggests at the beginning of the interview, what we see from her is indeed "somebody who's trying to get their life on track, you know, and making movements and steps towards that."

In contrast to Tamara, Jasmine is actively constructing a new narrative for herself that seems to be very different from the more "typical" narrative in her social

context. She is actively striving to be different from her family and friends and we get the impression that she is somewhat unique in her social world for her active attempts to turn away from the drugs and violence that have characterized her past and move toward a different kind of future. Although she has not yet managed to transform her narrative or her behavior entirely (i.e., aspects of her life "on the streets" have not yet changed), Jasmine seems highly motivated to create a story that resonates with an alternative narrative that is prominent in contemporary western society and popular culture – a narrative which emphasizes overcoming profound adversity to achieve redemption and success (McAdams, 2006). Jasmine's success in constructing her own resilience and creating a new life for herself and her daughter may depend on the degree to which she is able to both make meaning of her past experiences in order to construct a coherent narrative and establish behavior patterns that closely adhere to the redemptive narrative she is constructing.

As Jasmine suggests in the following excerpt, breaking away from the patterns that permeate and comprise one's social world is not easy:

> If you grow up in a neighborhood where all you see is violence every day most likely you're going to turn out to be violent cause that's all you know. If you teach a kid their abc's when they're small they're going to grow up and still remember those abc's and that's what they're gonna live off of. . .Whatever they see, whatever they take in, whoever's around them that influences. . .who they're gonna become, you know. . . if you grow up in a neighborhood where it's poor, low-income, it's just a proven fact. . .most likely you're going to fall into the category of poor, low-income, violence here, violence there. There's only a few that actually might say "no I'm getting out of here" and actually take that step because it does take a big step to actually get out of a situation like that, you know.

We cannot know for certain why Jasmine is struggling to break away from the negative master narrative she describes in this excerpt and create a new narrative for herself while Tamara appears to be more passively following a narrative that may be typical in her social world. Perhaps these differences are due to disparity in these young women's patterns of behavior and their related experiences. Indeed, Jasmine's history of conduct problems certainly appears to be more severe than Tamara's and perhaps it is the severity of the risks she has faced (i.e., "jeopardizing" her daughter's life and risking her own through dealing drugs and engaging in violence) that has, in effect, jolted her into actively constructing a new narrative. On the other hand, perhaps the differences in these two participants' narrative patterns are due to individual differences relating to personality, cognitive ability, and/or the meanings that they have made out of role models or other protective factors that they have encountered. The exploration of how the self is positioned in relation to the available master narratives of one's social context may be an important avenue for future research in the area of personal transformation.

Implications for the Study of Narrative Identity in Adolescence

The interviews with Jasmine and Tamara suggest that becoming a mother initiated a process of positive transformation for both of these young women. Indeed,

both credit their daughters with profoundly changing their behavior and their lives. However, the interviews also suggest that self-transformation does not occur suddenly and there exists more than one behavioral and psychological pathway to resilience. While becoming a mother may necessitate some behavioral change, it does not in and of itself lead to self-transformation, but rather can serve as a "triggering event" (Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, 1998) that presents an opportunity for the development of resilience. As Leadbeater and Way (2001) have written, "having a baby as a teenager can be a critical transforming event, but this even alone neither erases the tape of past experiences nor determines future ones" (p. 4). Similarly, in his study of adult offenders Maruna proposes that desistance involves long-term maintenance and, much like quitting drinking, one is always in danger of "falling off the wagon." For both Tamara and Jasmine, personal transformation is, we hope, ongoing. While these two interviews are certainly not sufficient for drawing firm conclusions, they suggest that making meaning of one's self and one's experiences is a critical piece of constructing resilience. However, the development of a coherent self-narrative is not an easy task for young people, even for those who function in highly supportive environments (McLean & Breen, in press; McLean, Breen, & Fournier, in press). Jasmine and Tamara face the daunting task of developing their identities in chaotic and often dangerous social environments that may provide little nurturing for prosocial identities.

Early pregnancy can be a positive transformative experience for young women with histories of antisocial behavior. So far, the changes that Tamara and Jasmine have made in their lives are relatively new and potentially fragile. Their success in both maintaining the changes they had made at the time of the interviews and continuing the process of positive transformation may depend in part on the degree to which they are able to secure positive support for these changes within their social contexts. We note that Tamara and Jasmine have both found their way to community programs that have been designed to help young people to make positive changes in their lives and we hope that they will find in these programs the kind of assistance and support necessary to continue along their respective paths toward resilience.

In this chapter we have suggested that the interaction of meaning-making and behavior is important in understanding individual differences in the development of resilience. The stories told by Jasmine and Tamara suggest that narrative meaning-making may be an important tool in developing and sustaining the self, both internally and in one's external actions, and there is a further need for research to provide greater clarity as to how these processes unfold and interact. We believe that future narrative research should be focused not only on internal processes of meaning-making, but also on how these processes produce as well as develop from one's actions in the social world.

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Negotiating the Meanings of Adolescent Motherhood Through the Medium of Identity Collages

Cheryl Spera and Cynthia Lightfoot

Negotiating the Meanings of Adolescent Motherhood

Responding to flyers posted in high school hallways, and distributed by counselors working at an in-school program for pregnant and parenting teens, the girls gather around a large table strewn with popular magazines, scissors, glue, and poster board. They have come to participate in the Art Project, advertised as an opportunity to meet with other teen mothers for the purpose of discussing their experiences, defining their goals, and exploring their dreams for the future.

After introducing herself and the project, Cheryl, the facilitator (and first author), instructs:

> Today we're going to start cutting out images that we'll use to make collages. Choose images for your collage that reflect your thoughts and feelings about four areas – Motherhood, Relationships, Education, and Future Goals – one for each quadrant of the poster.

Jasira, speaks first, all energy and exuberance and waving a picture that for her, at least, appears to say it all – a young, buff, dewy-eyed black man posing with a hip and elegant black woman, against the backdrop of an enormous, new Cadillac:

> I'm gonna put this picture on there. That's my man and my car in the future. Look. That's beautiful. That's the American Dream. You drive them [cars] and look cute with your hair nice and you ride around to music, laughing, and your cute little daughter in the car seat – looking cute. . . This is what I'm going towards, like, the dress, the shoes, the beautiful car.

Jasira is 18, in 11th grade, and mother to a 3-year-old girl. The ease with which she locates herself at the center of the American Dream is also apparent in stories told by the other three teen mothers who participated in the project. To some, their dreams and desires, materialism, and idealism, may strike a dissonant and somber chord when juxtaposed with their current circumstances and the statistical forecasts of their likely futures. In their predominantly African American community, 27% of the population lives below the poverty line, teenagers account for 23% of all

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births, less than 70% of adults over the age of 25 have a high school diploma, a scant 5% have college degrees, and the violent crime rate and the proportion of new HIV/AIDS cases identified each year are among the highest in the nation.

Minority, low-income populations are typically the focus of teen pregnancy research, perhaps because demographic research finds significantly elevated risk for teen pregnancy among African American and Hispanic populations compared to white populations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Indeed, the community in which our study was conducted has the highest teen birth ratio of all the municipalities in the state. With both empirical evidence and public opinion feeding the perspective that teen parents in general, and low-income minority teen parents in particular, are at greater risk for high school dropout, unemployment, and poverty and that their children are likely to suffer a variety of intellectual and social-psychological problems, as well as abuse and neglect, few would dispute the notion that that teen pregnancy is a social problem of sufficient scope as to warrant large-scale efforts to prevent, intervene in, and shed light upon the causes and consequences of young mothers having and raising children (McLeod & Durrheim, 2002, etc.).

Our goal for this project, however, is somewhat different. Rather than working to expose additional correlates of teen pregnancy and parenting, we engage a narrative perspective for the purpose of illuminating how low-income teenage mothers negotiate the meanings of motherhood within the vast complexities of their lives – their values, ideals, and goals for the future. We set out with the explicit aim of both acknowledging and seeking the complexity of the identities of adolescents living in poverty – a complexity often overlooked in both public opinion about teen mothers, as well as in teen pregnancy research (Shultz, 2001).

We begin by providing an overview of the Art Project within the context of the theoretical traditions that inspire our approach. We then describe the results of our method – the stories we composed of how each young woman negotiates the meaning of her experiences as an adolescent mother. Finally, we identify two specific areas – sex and marriage – that seem particularly revealing of the young women's struggle to navigate between their personal experiences and desires, and normative cultural scripts regarding expectable behavior and goals.

The Art Project

Within the broad scope of a narrative perspective, our analytic approach leans heavily on Bakhtin's dialogic theory and its presumption that identity construction is a process of self-authorship freighted with competing and conflicting self and other "points of view" that settle uneasily and without finality into a position from which meaning is made (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). Thus, we move forward our agenda by creating a context – the art project – that inspired a sharing of personal stories around issues central to the experience of being an adolescent mother, as well as the representation of that experience in the form of collages constructed of images gathered

from popular magazines. Anchored to the assumption that art is a vehicle for making sense of one's self and experience, the art project provided opportunities for teen mothers to create and discuss collages that represent their lives in four domains: motherhood, relationships, education, and future goals. In the course of the project, the teens addressed issues of sexuality, family, fathers and marriage, and education and careers.

We chose a creative medium for generating material for two related reasons. First, we adhere to a theoretical posture in which aesthetic activity is viewed as a principal mechanism of identity development to the extent that it defines a transitional, experimental space for exploring the boundaries of self in relation to other and generates a sense of control over lived experience (Winnicott, 1971; Lightfoot, 2003, 2004). Secondly, because other research on the "identity collages" of teen mothers finds evidence that representations of idealism and universal motherhood myths abound in apparent ignorance or denial of the press of social forces (e.g., Luttrell, 2003, p. 79), our plan to juxtapose the meanings inflected abstractly and symbolically in the collages, with meanings emergent in the concrete fellowship of others with similar experiences, may provide an avenue for exploring the process by which personal subjectivities and authoritative, canonical scripts are brought into "dialogic contact," thereby defining a "space of authoring" (Bakhtin, 1981).

Recruiting Participants

Participants were recruited from an in-school teen pregnancy program called Project ELECT/TAPP (Education Leading to Career and Employment Training, and Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting), which was instituted in response to the extraordinarily high teen birth ratio in the community. The program includes four offices within the high school, one for each grade. Miss Nina, a Project ELECT/TAPP Case Manager, who participated in the Art Project, explained that the program works in concert with other social service agencies to co-ordinate education and healthcare services for young mothers. Although the services are also available at neighboring middle-class and upper-class communities, there is no perceived need in these communities for in-school programs aimed specifically to support and educate teen parents.

An informal information session introducing the Art Project was held for the teens enrolled in Project ELECT/TAPP and their parents. Our group of six included four teen mothers, Miss Nina (the case manager), and Cheryl (the facilitator). After various permissions were acquired, we agreed on a start date for the project and a plan to meet once a week, 2 hours each session, for a period of a month. However, school closings associated with bomb threats, gang violence, and guns found in the school resulted in rescheduling several sessions, drawing the project out over the course of 2 months. Each of the four, 2-hour sessions was videotaped and later transcribed. Material presented here is based on the written transcriptions, as well as the collages constructed by the participants.

Creating Collages

From a pile of current popular magazines, the girls were instructed to select images to express their thoughts and feelings about four domains: motherhood, relationships, education, and future goals. Cheryl explained that they would use the images to make a collage on a large poster, divided into four quadrants, each quadrant devoted to one of the four domains, with the motherhood domain located in the upper left quadrant of the poster, the relationship domain in the upper right, the education domain in the lower left, and the future goals domain in the lower right. While cutting images from magazines, they discussed their personal histories, plans for the future, and many other topics including school, boyfriends, sex, music, and cars. During the second and third sessions, the collages were slowly assembled in the midst of snacking, chattering, ringing cell phones, and laughing.

Our reconstruction of each girl's personal narrative has been carefully pieced together from discourse that emerged across the four, 2-hour sessions of the project, as the girls prepared, and finally presented their personal collages. Each session had its own rhythm and tone that took shape as the girls constructed their collages, and with them, their understanding of themselves and each other. As you will see, consistent with arguments made by sociologists and feminist scholars (e.g., Schultz, 2001; Fernandex, 2007; Morgan, 1999), we found that the girls found purpose and meaning in their role as mothers, challenging stereotyped notions of the teen mother as victim, flawed, and failed. But we also found evidence, particularly in stories of early sexual encounters, of uncertainty, confusion, and submission. There were considerable equivocations and inconsistencies both within and across sessions, outright contradictions as well as lapses in cohesiveness. Just by verbalizing their personal histories and contemplating images to reflect relationships, each girl's imagination of who they once had been was sometimes amended to show the present or self in the best possible light. It is clear that this is new territory for them. Speaking serves as the counter story to the silent stories formed out of self-doubt, fear, and an inner understanding of their position in our society.

In respect to the collage work, for example, participants could be seen wavering in certain domains showing the challenge to think abstractly about a particular aspect of their life. Integrating the new information received from group interaction was also challenging for some. Even though these challenges to assimilate new ideas were constructs of spontaneous discourse over the course of the project, they seemed to reveal subconscious premises or theories that were born as they spoke, which even surprised the speaker at times. This is particularly evident when the group discussed issues surrounding sex.

First you will meet Mandisa, the youngest of all the participants, whose personality is gradually revealed with each session. Next is Sakina who begins the project 8 months pregnant and ends up having a baby girl around the time of our last session. Then there is Jasira, the eldest of the group, who has a presence and energy that often buffered, propelled, and expanded conversations. And finally you will hear about Jeanine who attended two sessions and did not complete a collage.

Portraits

With the collage construction providing a loose thematic structure for organizing the sessions, the young women began the journey of unfolding pieces of their life experience. The backgrounds of each participant are pulled from transcripts of the dialogues that took place over the course of the four sessions of the project. Although the actual sequence of the telling moved back and forth through time and context, we produce them here as narrative chronologies. Each young woman's history leans into her story of early sexual encounters, pregnancy, and ways of framing who she is, who she hopes to be, and why. But personal histories are just one source of material for constructing interpretive frames of identity. In addition, the young women's identity narratives were co-constructed in the course of their collaborative interactions on the project, so they also used each other's stories and experiences as tools in their story-making (Bamberg, 2004; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004).

Mandisa

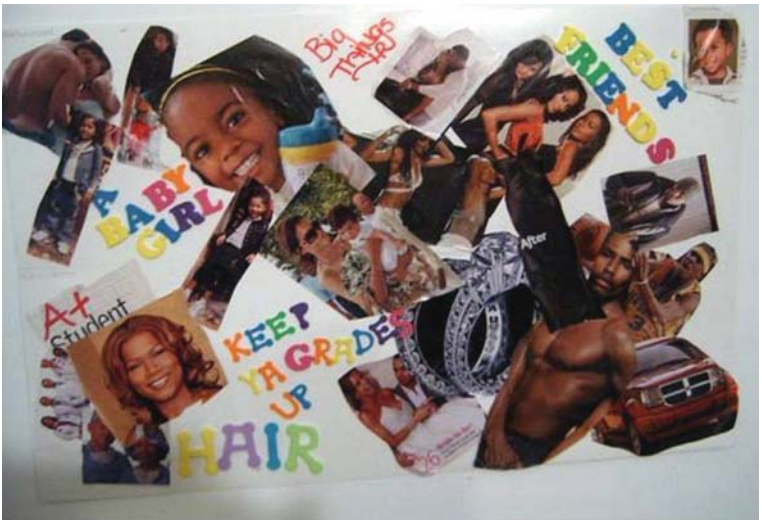
Mandisa, a ninth grader who is 16 years old, is the mother of a 3-year-old girl. Mandisa, whose parents split up when she was very young, was born and raised in Kansas. Her mother was 14 years old when she became pregnant with Mandisa, who was 13 when she became pregnant with her daughter. Sometime during her pregnancy after her first trimester, she moved out of state with her boyfriend's family. She explained that her mother and her boyfriend's mother were very good friends, and everyone was supportive of her moving. The reason for this moving arrangement was "because my sister had a baby." No other explanation was given, so Cheryl asked if maybe two babies in the house would be too much for the family and she simply replied "yeah." At some point after she gave birth to her daughter, she left her boyfriend and moved to her current neighborhood where her mother and other relatives are now residing. Her daughter is cared for by family, while she attends school in the evenings. When asked about her child's father, she replied that their relationship, thankfully, was over.

Mandissa's first comment about the collage was to question whether images of pregnancy could be put in the motherhood quadrant. She then describes how she learned of her pregnancy at about 12 weeks' gestation, because she "just knew" her body. Although Mandisa knew she was pregnant, she did not tell either of her parents. When Mandisa discusses this in her collage presentation she states that, "it was funny I guess, cause nobody knew I was pregnant." Her mother, who was apparently aware of her 13-year-old daughter's menstrual cycle, noticed that she "stopped" and confirmed what Mandisa already knew herself. Cheryl asked her if her mother was upset. "Yeah! She was upset!," Mandisa admitted, and then giggled nervously. Her father, she says, was mad when he found out. Cheryl asked if her father stopped talking to her, to which Mandisa sounding very annoyed, replied, "No, he didn't stop talking to me." However, in the second session when Jeanine describes her father's

reaction to her pregnancy as rejection and that he was never going to speak to her again, Mandisa this time agreed that "my Dad did that to me too."

During the collage presentation Mandisa begins with her career and educational goals. She is literally all over the place with ideas about what kind of career she would like to have. On the other hand, there are no comments made about education, although her collage includes the phrases "A+ Student" and "Keep Ya Grades Up." Images that reflect her career are placed in the education domain of the collage (see collage in Fig. 9.1). First there are two images of doctors in scrubs and lab coats. Overlapping those images is a picture of a hair stylist. While Mandisa is vague and says very little about the "medical field," she is animated and elaborate in her plans to open a hair salon with her sister and her cousins (who are like sisters).

Motherhood Relationships



Education Future Goals

Fig. 9.1 Mandisa's collage

Mandisa's career goals and family are very much intertwined in her presentation. Indeed, this is reflected in how she represents her third and final career interest – fashion design – on her collage. As she explained, the dress placed on the border of the relationship and future goal domains reflects this possible career path. It is interesting that the dress is not placed categorically with the other career images. The placement is rather the consequence of a narrativized understanding of how becoming a fashion designer would allow her to make things for her family that would make them happy and that it would give her status in her neighborhood – which all the girls reference at some point as a future goal.

In the relationship domain, she selects images that represent the important female relationships she has in her family and speaks easily and articulately about them. Looking over to the motherhood section of the collage, she comments that she wants

a strong relationship with her daughter, unlike the relationship she has with her own mother. She wants "just mom and daughter happy together." Pointing to an image of a man and woman in an intimate embrace, she explains "you know, havin' sex young" – a reflection of her own motherhood. As with the other collages, Mandisa's includes references to marriage – as a future goal, in her case. This clearly conflicts with her current view of relationships with men, a topic that we address in detail below.

Sakina

At 17 years of age, Sakina is in 12th grade and 8½ months pregnant. She is Puerto Rican, lives with her mother, step-father, and siblings and is the first child on her mother's side of the family to have a baby. On being asked whether her mother was young when she had her first child, Sakina nodded without further comment. But when asked if her grandmother also was young when she first became pregnant, Sakina stated, "My grandmom retarded." She then went on to explain that because of her mental disability, her grandmother was unable to care for Sakina's mother, who was consequently raised by her physically abusive grandmother, that is, Sakina's great-grandmother. Sakina remembers, "when we used to go over her house to visit her, she would smack me with a spoon and her husband always be ignorant (i.e., abusive) to her – he still be ignorant."

Sakina was very careful about selecting images for her collage to be sure that she would do it correctly and chose appropriate images for the quadrants. It was not hard to notice that most of the first images she selected were about motherhood and babies, but she eventually embarked on a mission to find a picture of a big house. Asked who would live in her house, she replied that she is "just taking me, my daughter, my sister, and my mom." The males in her life, brothers and boyfriend, can live in "the small house," which is noticeably absent from her collage (Fig. 9.2)

Sakina presents her collage methodically, moving from one domain to the next, making brief comments about the images she chose. Starting with motherhood, she points to the family of bears and says "A nice family" (note that bear family does not include "father" bear). When asked about the woman on the scale, she replied, "I don't know." With her belly fully of baby, it is clear that she is thinking about what she will need for the baby, as indicated by the multiple images of baby products on her collage. She uses phrases and words on the collage such as "strong babies," "health," "love," "fun," "grow," and "daughter" to reveal what she hopes for, but does not verbalize these words or what they mean for her.

The education domain is full of images of hair care products carefully placed around the word, "beauty." Sakina points to the images and states, "my career is a beautician." She then moves to the relationship domain, commenting that, "my relationship is to get married to my baby's father." The large image of wedding rings is surrounded by references to love and marriage. Confronted with her previous comments about her boyfriend "staying home" rather than moving into her big house,

Fig. 9.2 Sakina's collage

she asserts that she will marry him, but probably be miserable. Sakina sums up her future goals in one sentence: ". . . to have a healthy baby, nice car, a house full of money, to have a big bed, and a nice closet full of stuff."

Jasira

Jasira turned 18 during the project and has a 3-year-old daughter. Cheerfully, she tells the group that life as a mother is better than she had expected. Apparently, motherhood has been a pathway out of a "reckless" lifestyle in which she "kept getting with older and older men. . .whatever paid my way." Jasira goes on to attribute her success as a parent to the fact that she herself has good parents. She is no longer in a relationship with her baby's father.

Jasira lives with her father and mother, younger brother, and daughter. She has an older sister who is living on her own with her 5-year-old daughter and an older step-brother living in MN, USA with his family. Her mother was 28 years old when she gave birth to Jasira. Growing up around a large extended family, she knew at an early age that she wanted kids, whether her own or through adoption. When she was 14 years old, she skipped her period. In her own words, "I knew something was wrong." Just as Mandisa's mother noticed the absence of her daughter's menstrual cycle, Jasira's mother was equally attuned. Lying to her mother one month that she got her period when she did not, and had even confirmed her suspicions with a home pregnancy test, she admitted the following month that she was "'probably'

pregnant." Her mother was not content with the "probably" pregnant, so she had Jasira take another home test. It was agreed, for a short amount of time, that Jasira's father would not be told, but eventually, her mother told him. His reaction was that he "got real quiet."

Jasira speaks to her vision of the future for herself and her daughter frequently throughout the sessions. Without any prompting she elaborates that everything she does right now is about her daughter. Indeed, as literally splashed across the motherhood quadrant, being a mother is, "What It Is." Jasira explains that the three images on her collage of adults with children reflect her value of spending time with her daughter no matter what they are doing. The topic of motherhood is one of clarity and intention for Jasira. It is important for her that her daughter participates in things "most parents want their kids to do," such as dancing lessons, sports, and singing lessons. Motherhood is so big that it entirely consumes the education quadrant of the poster. The relevance of motherhood in her life is even more apparent when she discusses the image of the television character Monk which is placed in the education quadrant. Jasira explains that he represents the work of motherhood – the cleaning as well as the psychological challenges of not becoming angry at her daughter for making messes. She feels that if she can understand her daughter's motives – boredom or seeking attention, for example – she can redirect or intervene before her daughter does something naughty (Fig. 9.3)

Motherhood Relationships

Education Future Goals

Fig. 9.3 Jasira's collage

Where "What It Is" captures Jasira's sense of her motherhood, "What's It Gonna Be," located at the center of the collage, belies the doubt with which she faces her future. Again, as found in the other collages, images of marriage abound, although a

good deal of doubt and ambivalence is expressed when Jasira translates the meaning of those images into what she imagines for herself.

When Jasira addresses the words "Power, Money, Respect" that are creatively linked on her collage, her energy shifts upward as she explains these three words are her personal motto, influenced by a number of social forces in her life. The church, for example, has taught her that "Knowledge applied is Power"; the radio supports her belief that "America is about what you have" (i.e., materialistic); television programs such as Oprah, who she describes as her "role model" and depicts on the collage between the motherhood and relationship domains, reinforces her value of raising children and helping others; and rappers Jay-Z, P-Diddy, and Queen Latifa, whose image is located in the future goals section of the collage, "all possess respect for the things they do which cause [them] to have money." Finally she submits her motto to a causal order: "Power leads to Money – Money leads to Respect."

Jeanine

The fourth young woman, Jeanine, is in the 12th grade and the 17-year-old mother of a 3-year-old son. Jeanine lives with her mother, her son, and her younger brother. Jeanine's father, whom she sees frequently, lives about 15 miles away in an upper-class neighborhood and helps to financially support her and her son. Jeanine attended but two sessions and did not complete a collage.

Jeanine tells us that she did not know she was pregnant until she was about 8 months along. She said she began feeling sick and that her nose got really big (yes, her nose), so she asked her mother to take her to the doctors for a physical. There she learned she was pregnant. During the telling of this experience, the group asked her many questions about how she did not know she was pregnant. Thirteen years old, soon to be 14, she was stunned and speechless by the positive results of the pregnancy test.

It is evident that she does not have a good relationship with her child's father when she calls him a "good for nothing" during one of our sessions. She will not say the difference in age between them, possibly because of legal implications because she was so young, but she does try to explain: "The thing is, when I first started talking to him I was twelve, so he was already about to be grown (18 years old). So, his birthday was in a year so it seemed like he wasn't." Even though she does not have a good relationship with him now, she tells us that he was supportive of her "decision" about the baby. He comforted her by saying it would be alright and that he would stay with her "regardless." Notwithstanding his apparent sincerity, they did not stay together was because "we had the little girl problem – he just didn't know how to keep his hands to his self." Nonetheless, Jeanine reports that she loves him, "but I love myself more as to get played, so, I get on with my life." In the absence of her child's father's support, she relies on her own father who gladly helps her financially to care for her baby. The man who said he would be there for her, her

child's father, was not. Conversely, her father, who told her he would never speak to her again after he found out she was pregnant, is very much a part of Jeanine's life.

After graduation, Jeanine plans to attend a 2-year trade school to become a medical assistant. She has applied to one school, but so far has not worked out any of the financial details.

Negotiating Between the Personal and Canonical

As apparent in the portraits presented, there were frequent discrepancies, inconsistencies, and contradictions between the collage images, the girls' talk about the images, and their talk about their lives and experience. In the main, discrepancies emerged when the girls' subjectivities washed up against the breakwater of culturally normative, canonical scripts for expectable and appropriate behavior – for marriage, career and sexual behavior. Two areas were particularly evocative of confrontation between the personal and the canonical: sex and marriage.

Between Sexual Experience and Safe Sex

Not surprisingly, sex was a frequent topic of discussion throughout the project. For the most part, it was discussed in terms of its consequences (STDs as well as pregnancy) and as personal experience. One of the earliest discussions of the young women's sexual experience took place when a magazine article caught Jasira's attention and she read it aloud to the group. The article featured a woman who knew she was HIV positive, informed her partner, and eventually became pregnant. The woman expressed her conviction that she would not terminate the pregnancy due to her HIV status, but admits to struggling with the idea of transmitting the virus to her child.

Jasira, clearly moved by the article: *It take my heart being HIV and being pregnant. It just seems like there's no way to get around it [STD]. Y'all are having sex and sooner or later, you know what I mean, something is gonna happen. And you know you got it, sooner or later something gonna [be] contagious.* (Recall that the incidence of new HIV/AIDS cases in this community is among the highest in the nation.)

The group then turns to what soon becomes a very silly discussion of yeast infections. Jasira, however, is undeterred and pulls the group back to the more serious matter of HIV:

> Let's talk about HIV. That shit's scary. I'm sorry, but if a dude... Let's say we started talking and we was getting into it, and he go on saying, "I got HIV"... I wouldn't know what I would do. I wouldn't want to have sex with him... I mean you can use a condom, but it's just the fact that we're having sex and your ding-a-ling is in my thing and you are infected. I don't know what I would do.

The girls, barely recovered from yeast infection stories, launch into another fit of laughs and giggles, moved by both Jasira's word choice and the serious manner of

her delivery. At this point, Cheryl asks what they were each thinking about condoms when they first had sex. Jeanine is the first to respond, and she does so soberly.

> When I first started talking to him I was 12, so he was already about to be grown (i.e., 18 years old). I was thinking can you please get off me 'cause this stuff hurts. That's what I was thinking.

The emotional tone of the group changed instantly – the laughs became less animated, replaced by nervous giggles. Responding in the same tone Jasira said, "I was thinking, man, he told me to get up – I hope I ain't get pregnant (she giggles)." The confluence of topic and tone was a sharp reminder that the girls were reflecting back to sexual encounters that occurred when they were 12 and 13 years old. Weighted heavily with emotional, physical, and psychological consequences, these experiences may not easily invite attention to contraception. Nonetheless, in families and communities in which teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections are common, becoming pregnant, as Jasira indicates ("I hope I ain't get pregnant"), or engaging in safe sexual practices are often part of the complexity surrounding early sexual encounters. Jeanine, for example, relates that, "When I was getting my virginity tooken, and I tried to. . . I basically said to my friend, oh, he can't do that without a condom cause he your first."

Apparently, a girl's first sexual experience defines a special context in which instantiating the "safe sex script" carries special weight – or is expected to do so. Clearly, it did not in her case, and we can only wonder what that transgression – that violation of a tacit agreement made in light of an irrevocable situation – may have meant to Jeanine.

As Jasira went on to describe, negotiating safe sex in subsequent sexual encounters can be compromised even as it is underway: "I start using it (condom) in the beginning, but it start messin' everything up, so you take it off. . ." She realizes that it is not safe to do this and calls herself "stupid," but cannot explain why she does it: "I don't know why I do it"; "I don't know why I did it."

Jeanine asked for clarification, "Now, you still do that?"

Jasira responds by laughing, but some moments later, even though the group has moved on to another topic, she mutters, "I don't know why I do it though. . . He'll take it off and I won't say anything."

Cheryl asked the girls if they had ever decided to abstain from sex. Jeanine says she tried, but that it only lasted 6 weeks. Eventually, she gave in, not to pressure from her partner, but out of boredom from just hanging out with nothing to do. Interestingly, Jeanine tells us that she is now abstinent and will never do it again (sex), in which Miss Nina gave her a sideways glance and slyly said, "Yeah?, think about it."

Between Collecting Babydads and Marrying Fathers

As apparent in our discussions above, the fathers of the teen mothers' babies often play ambiguous roles in the lives of teen mothers. Of the four who participated in the

project, only Sakina maintains a relatively positive relationship with her babydad. The relationship quadrant of her collage is dominated by a diamond engagement ring and other images of romance and marriage. In presenting her collage, Sakina, who is expecting her baby in a few short weeks, expresses desire to marry her baby's father, although she qualifies her statement by asserting that should she do so, she will "just be miserable." When she informs the group that she is looking for an image of a big house to include in her collage, Cheryl asks about with whom she will share her home. Sakina replies, *I'm just taking me, my daughter, my sister, and my mom. I don't like my brothers.* Cheryl asks, "what about your boyfriend, is he coming?" "No," she says, "he staying home," although she later suggests, tongue in cheek, that he might be permitted to clean her house.

The other young women have minimal, if any contact with the men who fathered their children, and often speak of them in bitter, disparaging terms. Jeanine, remember, referred to her babydaddy as a "good for nothing" who had "the little girl problem – he just didn't know how to keep his hands to himself." Likewise, Mandisa, barely 13 at the time of her pregnancy, when asked if she had a boyfriend, replied, "I don't want that kind of crap; they're trouble; relationships get old." Later, she reported, "my babydad – we're not conversating. . .I ain't staying with mine; I left him. I'm going to move with my dad." In presenting her collage, she remarks pointedly on the peripheral role of a father in her daughter's life:

> So, then that's when now you see her dad is not in the picture (pointing to the collage) – it's the little girl and her mom. And they just happy together (in a sing-song tone). The dad, he be around sometime, but it's just the dad and the mom (meaning the dad will not be a part of the child's life, only the mom's) chillin', crawlin' back, ridin' around and just when she get when she gets older and goes to school. It's her mom and her baby hanging out together (referring to an image on her collage), being together, like having a relationship with your daughter. That's how I want it. Cause like me and my mom cause we don't get – we got a relationship, but I want me and my daughter relationship to be strong so she can tell me things, you know. Like how I didn't tell my mom – cause I was scared to tell her (about her pregnancy). I want my daughter to have a strong relationship.

Although Mandisa places great emphasis on the mother–daughter relationship, to the apparent exclusion of an imagined relationship between her daughter and a father, she later qualifies this early perspective when she discusses the significance of the diamond engagement ring on her collage:

> One day I would like to get married. . ..I want my daughter to grow up to have a family. Like I had a family, but like my mom and dad weren't together for as long as I can remember. So I want my daughter to grow up and come home to a nice healthy family – and know she have a family at home. Like when she go somewhere, "well I wanna go home and sleep in my own bed cause it feels wonderful". . .. I want my daughter to have a family, a father, brothers and sisters. And if her dad don't be there, there's gonna be a father figure.

Like Jeanine, Jasira was impregnated by a significantly older man ("I kept getting with older and older men. . . whatever paid my way"). She no longer has a relationship with her daughter's father, although a comment that "birth control saved our lives" (that is, prevented another pregnancy) suggests that their relationship

persisted at least for a while after the birth of their daughter. In an interesting conversation inspired by images on her collage of marriage, and a father and daughter snuggled up and reading together, Jasira juxtaposed getting married with collecting babydaddys:

> I do want to get married, I guess (laughing). I guess, cause I figure it's better for my baby. And I did used to wanna be married. It's just such a trip to go through. It's work. It sucks.

Cheryl points out the multiple images of marriage that appear on the collage, suggesting that their number may index the weight Jasira attaches to it.

> Jasira: *Yeah, "married" (referring to the word appearing on her collage). So, yeah, I'd like to walk down the aisle one day. I can't say when. I can't say I won't die if I don't.*
> Cheryl: *So is it the idea of a committed relationship?*
> Jasira: *It's not so much a committed relationship. It's what you have to do to keep a marriage, you know what I mean? It is a lot of compromise. It just takes a lot.*
> Cheryl: *You want a marriage for what reason; what would motivate a marriage?*
> Jasira: *My daughter is actually motivating marriage (laughing).*
> Cheryl: *So having a father around, and a two-parent home. . ..*
> Jasira: *Yeah, I do value that a lot. And, I mean me not being married leaves me open to being with one person for two years, then somebody else for maybe two years, which also leaves me open to having babydaddys. I can't deal with that. I want more kids and I'm not havin' a bunch of babydaddys. I'll have a husband. My baby will turn out a lot better – a lot more stability and security.*

Interestingly, the stories of these girls repeatedly suggest an unbreachable gap between babydaddys and husbands and fathers. They are, it would seem, two entirely different and non-overlapping categories of roles and relationships. Thus, babydaddys do not enter into the standard cultural script about marriage and family stability. Indeed, babydaddys are antithetical to instantiating such a script, as Jasira suggests when she describes the consequences of staying in a relationship with the child's father: *When you stay wit your babydaddy, you have a(nother) little baby real quick. . .you too quick to have another baby.*

Conclusion

Overall, the narratives of the mothers who participated in the Art Project appear to be inconsistent at times, disorganized, and uncertain. To some extent, this is consistent with the challenges of adolescence as a period of trying to figure out who one is and where and how one fits in the world – a process that entails a negotiation between abstract ideals and normative expectations and the reality of prospects grounded in personal history and concrete circumstance. However, teen motherhood

is viewed by most as imposing considerable constraint on the process of negotiation. It is, in fact, a modern cultural archetype for adolescent female oppression, particularly in low-income families (Schultz, 2001). Yet the stories, passions, hopes, and dreams of the young women who participated in the Art Project dare to suggest that oppression is subjective and antithetical to the positive effects on lifestyle that motherhood has offered. For Mandisa, Jasira, Sakina, and Jeanine, motherhood has proved to be a positive and rewarding experience, as much as it has proved to be one of the greatest personal challenges. So, for example, toward the end of the project, Mandisa and Jasira exchange ideas on what their futures might have held had they not become mothers at such an early age. Mandisa remarks, "*Man, I mad. I could have done a lot of things with myself*," to which Jasira responds, "*I wasn't mad. I could have did a lot of things with myself, but they wouldn't been good."* And on the subject of whether teen pregnancy is a "social problem," Jasira notes that she has heard people remark that, "they shouldn't be havin' all these babies," and that, "they will pray for my baby"; but "if somebody say it's a problem, I'd be like, 'what you gonna do to fix it? Let's get busy, you better do something to fix it.'"

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How Violent Youth Offenders and Typically Developing Adolescents Construct Moral Agency in Narratives About Doing Harm

Cecilia Wainryb, Masha Komolova, and Paul Florsheim

Experiences that involve having harmed another person tend to compel individuals to consider their own behavior in light of their understandings of right and wrong, thereby serving as an important context and source of moral development. Although this process begins in early childhood, adolescents become quite preoccupied with the type of person they want to become and are thus likely to be most fully engaged in constructing a sense of themselves as moral agents.

Research has demonstrated that most adolescents think it is wrong to hurt others (Turiel, 1998). Nevertheless, in the course of their normal interactions adolescents often act in ways that result in other people feeling hurt or mistreated and must negotiate the threat insinuated in their own harmful actions, namely, that they are the sort of person who sometimes causes harm to others. Hence, experiences in which they have hurt others, and the ways in which they make sense of these experiences, are laden with implications for adolescents' views of themselves as moral beings (Wainryb, Brehl, & Matwin, 2005; Wainryb & Pasupathi, 2008). Whether this is also true for delinquent youth, many of whom chronically engage in extreme forms of violence against others, is less certain. Given their documented delays in moral development (e.g., Stams et al., 2006; Tisak, Tisak, & Goldstein, 2005) and deficits in empathy (e.g., Bush, Mullis, & Mullis, 2000; Robinson, Roberts, Strayer, & Koopman, 2007), these youth may differ from more typically developing adolescents in the extent to which they think of themselves as moral agents and in their motivation or capacity to consider their own harmful acts in moral terms.

We take adolescents' narrative accounts of instances in which they have hurt others to be a window into this process. In telling about any sorts of events, adolescents (like most people) tend to talk not only about what actually happened, that is, about the concrete actions that took place in the physical world – what Bruner (1986) referred to as the "landscape of action" – but also about the varied thoughts and feelings that they experienced and that they believe others to have experienced – the "landscape of consciousness." Accordingly, their narrative

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accounts typically include more than summations of the past; they also implicate their interpretations and evaluations of the past as well as their future prescriptions and commitments. This may be particularly so in the retelling of transgressive events, as such events require justification and tend to initiate a search for meaning (Bruner, 1990). Therefore we expect that in re-construing the full landscape of their own harmful actions, adolescents would consider not only the ways things were and the ways they behaved, but also their thoughts, feelings, regrets, and commitments about the ways things could have or should have been and the ways they could have or should have behaved. Narratives lacking in such materials might in turn be seen as reflecting a truncated process of meaning-making – a process suggestive of developmental deficits.

In this chapter we compare how a group of adolescents enrolled in a public high school and a group of incarcerated violent youth offenders talk about instances in which they have caused harm to another person. The typically developing adolescents spoke about instances in which they pushed and shoved their peers, lied to them, excluded them from activities, or betrayed them; violent youth offenders described stealing cars, beating people up to unconsciousness, shooting, and killing. We examine the organizing patterns reflected in their narrative construals and consider what these patterns reveal about how these two groups of adolescents make sense of these experiences and the extent to which they construe a sense of themselves as moral agents within the context of their perpetration.

Knowing Wrong and Doing Wrong

Research with typically developing samples of children and adolescents has reliably shown that, starting at a young age, children judge it to be wrong and unacceptable to hurt or mistreat others, not merely because of the potential for ensuing punishment but because of their concerns with fairness and the well-being of persons (Turiel, 1998). Nevertheless, most children (like most adults) engage, some of the time, in actions that hurt other people. While one might take this to mean that children (or, more generally, people) are morally flawed or hypocritical, living a moral life does not truly require "moral purity." Morality is inextricably bound up with a range of nonmoral concerns that also make up people's lives, and most people struggle to integrate their moral concerns with competing desires and needs such as friendship, autonomy, self-preservation, power, and retribution (Turiel, 1998; Wainryb et al., 2005). Therefore, developing an understanding that people can be hurt and that hurting people is wrong is just one part of becoming a moral person. In those instances when competing desires get the upper hand, the struggle to make sense of the experience of having hurt another person and to integrate that experience within a view of oneself as a moral agent is also part of living a moral life.

A recent study (Wainryb et al., 2005) comparing children's (ages 5–16) narratives of instances when they hurt others ("perpetrator narratives") and instances when others hurt them ("victim narratives") suggests that perpetrator narratives may be particularly well suited for understanding how children integrate their own moral

transgressions into a broader view of themselves as moral agents. When children spoke about instances in which they had been the targets of harm, their construal of the experience focused narrowly on what they themselves had thought or felt. When they spoke about times they had perpetrated harm, their narrative construals presented a more complex focus, shifting back and forth between a concern for the victim's fate and welfare and a concern with their own goals, intentions, and beliefs.

Whereas some may interpret the "back and forth" shifts in children's narration of their own perpetration as a dithering strategy designed to minimize responsibility and appear blameless (e.g., Baumeister & Catanese, 2001), explanations couched exclusively in terms of self-presentation are limited and tend to minimize the complexity of human experience. In their stead we propose that instances in which one person has hurt another present an opportunity for genuine moral learning and moral growth (Wainryb et al., 2005). We further speculate that the patterns characteristic of perpetrator narratives can be understood as reflecting children's attempt at acknowledging and owning up to the negative consequences their actions had for others without entirely banishing themselves from the moral universe. Indeed we think that it is precisely by focusing not only on what they did and how they affected others, but also on their own subjective experience and mental life – that is, on their goals, intentions, beliefs, and regrets – that typically developing adolescents work to integrate the harm they had caused with a view of themselves as moral people.

It is possible, however, that this particular way of making sense of harmful acts does not apply to youth who chronically engage in more extreme forms of violence. In the United States, youth violence remains a foreboding challenge. According to the report of the US Department of Justice (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006), in 2003, the last year for which there are complete data, children under the age of 18 accounted for 15% of all violent crime arrests in this country, with a small proportion of these youth offenders being responsible for the lion's share of violent offences. These statistics sharply underscore the importance of understanding how juvenile offenders think about right and wrong and about their own aggression.

Research has documented serious deficits in the social-cognition, moral thinking, and affective processing of delinquent adolescents. In general, these youth have been shown to perceive and interpret social behavior in ways that increase the likelihood of aggression (Larden, Melin, Holst, & Langstrom, 2006; Liau, Barriga, & Gibbs, 1998; Tisak, Lewis, & Jankowski, 1997) and retribution (Slaby & Guerra, 1988). In general, they exhibit consistent developmental delays in moral judgment, scoring largely at preconventional stages 1 and 2 – stages that are characterized by self-interest and the endorsement of retaliation (Nelson, Smith, & Dodd, 1990; Stams et al., 2006). While they judge moral transgressions as being wrong, they also tend to reason that such acts are wrong not because they hurt others but because they negatively affect their own well-being, as when they are punished or sent to a juvenile detention facility. Consequently, they are less likely to view moral transgressions as wrong in the absence of rules and sanctions (Tisak et al., 2005; Tisak & Jankowski, 1996).

Research on affective processes linked to morality complements the picture emerging from the social-cognition and moral development literatures, as it points to

serious impairments in these youth's abilities to appreciate the emotional significance of events. Their distortions in the perception of others' feelings (Slaby & Guerra, 1988; Carr & Lutjemeier, 2005) and deficits in empathy (Bush et al., 2000; Robinson et al., 2007), in particular, are likely to have serious detrimental effects both for the way they interact with others and the way they interpret those interactions (Arsenio, Gold, & Adams, 2005; Wainryb & Brehl, 2006).

How youth offenders may apply their moral understandings to the real world and, in particular, to their own acts of perpetration, is not known, as most of the research about this group of adolescents has been conducted using hypothetical dilemmas and self-report measures. Evidence from two small qualitative studies with incarcerated adult offenders (Green, South, & Smith, 2006; Presser, 2004) suggests that some of these individuals try to claim "morally decent selves" in spite of their lives of crime by neutralizing the immorality of their actions (e.g., by framing their criminal behavior as fleeting or as atypical of their "true self"); others speak of their lives in incoherent ways, as though they were not capable of salvaging a sense of themselves as morally good or felt uncompelled to do so. These data coupled with data indicative of their concern with self-interest and with the endorsement of retaliation, and data concerning their deficits in empathic understanding of the victims' plight, all suggest that delinquent adolescents construals of their own harmful actions may differ from that of their more typically developing peers.

In the next section we undertake a systematic analysis of narratives by both typically developing adolescents and violent youth offenders about instances in which they hurt other people, as a means for understanding how adolescents do, or do not, integrate their own moral transgressions into a broader view of themselves as moral agents, that is, as moral people who sometimes do "the wrong thing."

Adolescents Speak About Having Harmed Others

The data we present below pertain to two separate samples collected in the same mid-size Western city. One is a group of male violent youth offenders ($N = 40$), between the ages 14 and 18 (mean age = 16.5 years), of varied ethnic background (54% Caucasian) who had been convicted of a violent offense and were serving time at a youth corrections' facility. All had multiple previous arrests (mean number of arrests = 22, range 2–72) related to offenses such as truancy, drug possession, theft, and assault, with a mean age at first arrest of 12 years (range 8–17 years). As part of an interview about their family histories and social relationships (Cloward & Florsheim, 1995), these youth were asked to recount "a time when you became violent."

The other is a group of male and female adolescents ($N = 28$), between the ages 15 and 17 (mean age = 16.2 years), largely Caucasians (71%), middle class, attending high school. (This group of adolescents was part of a larger sample of children and adolescents between the ages 5 and 17.) As part of an interview dealing with various aspects of moral development (Wainryb et al., 2005), they were asked to

talk about "a time when you did or said something, and someone you know felt hurt by it." Whereas the narratives of female participants were longer than those of males (mean number of words was 218 and 134, respectively), no other significant gender differences were found in the content or organization of the narratives. For our present purposes therefore we combine the narratives of male and female adolescents in the normative sample.

We note here that the data from these two samples were collected at different times, using protocols that were similar but not identical. The primary differences were that the youth in State's custody were asked specifically about violent behavior (rather than harmful behavior) and were not required to pick an instance in which they had hurt someone they knew. It is also the case that the social milieu in which the interviews occurred was vastly different. While all interviews occurred in private rooms, the violent youth were interviewed within the confines of a juvenile lock-up facility and normative youth were interviewed in their schools. Moreover, the participants in the two groups were not matched on dimensions such as SES, ethnicity, or intellectual ability. Thus the comparisons between the two groups of adolescents should be interpreted with caution and used largely as a means for highlighting distinct patterns.

The Language of Mental Experience

We first consider the extent to which adolescents include in their narratives their subjective experience, by contrasting the proportion of "factual" and "interpretive" language. Factual language pertains to references about perceivable aspects of an event, that is, references about any information that would be available to the perceptual capabilities of a bystander (the label "factual" does not necessarily implicate veridicality or accuracy). Interpretive language pertains to the subjective aspects of an experience, that is, any utterances about people's internal mental states and processes, including emotions, goals, beliefs, and inferences.

For the purpose of scoring, narratives were first divided into idea units roughly corresponding to verb phrases (Pasupathi & Hoyt, 2008), which were subsequently scored as either facts ("we were driving around"; "it happened in the summer") or interpretations ("I was mad"; "he was an annoying kid"). Inter-rater reliability was 83%, $\kappa = 0.68$.

As shown in Fig. 10.1, the narratives of violent youth offenders featured more than twice as many facts as interpretations. The large majority of facts referred to actions (I ran; I said); indeed, most of these narratives read like action movies. By contrast, the narratives of nonviolent youth included equal proportion of facts and interpretations.

The relative dearth of internality in the narratives of violent youth and the preponderance of facts render their accounts fast-paced. Consider, as an example, the following account, which scored at 45 fact-units and 8 interpretation-units (names of people and places in all narratives have been changed to ensure confidentiality):

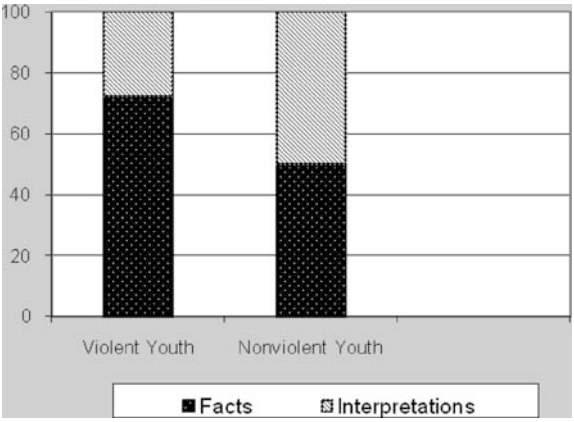

Fig. 10.1 Proportion of facts and interpretations in the narratives of violent and nonviolent youth

> I just beat up on people just for the fun of it. I'd just be walking down the street. And I'd just be sitting in the yard and someone would walk by. I would just jump up and hit him. About a month before I came in here, I had a headache or something and I was just laying there looking at the sky. I heard someone walking. I heard the gravel and I looked over and this kid was walking by, looking at my car, and he stopped and looked at the stereo for a minute, looked around, and kept walking—I don't think he saw me—kept walking, and I got up and started following him and I said "Hey!" and he looked back and kept walking a little faster and I said "Hey! Hey, puto, come here!" and the kid turned around and I just rushed him and started beating him up. I said, "Where you from?" He goes uh, I think he said Idaho or Nevada. I said, "Not that, what gang are you?" and then I started beating on him. And there was this house. I hit him against a fence, and behind this fence was a house, and he lived right there. So I started to walk away, and he turned and just went through the fence, I was like "Aaah". He just ran into the house. I was like. . .I took off. [YO#1]

This narrative illustrates a construal that is rich in facts and short on interpretations. There is coherence in this account in the sense that the factual aspects of the event are well represented: it is not hard to understand what happened when or who did what. But there is also a sense of incoherence: the narrator's actions – confronting, harassing, following, and beating up – are not organized around any thoughts, goals, or feelings. What did the narrator think "this kid" intended by looking at the car stereo? What did the narrator want to accomplish or think he would accomplish, by confronting this person and beating him up? How did the narrator feel prior to the event or after the beatings? What did he think the victim felt or thought?

Typically, the language of mental experience provides the psychological glue that allows people, narrators and listeners, to make sense of the *who–what–when*; it allows us to see actions as springing out of intentional agents. The dearth of internality in the above account renders the experience psychologically incoherent, not only to us as readers, but possibly, and perhaps more importantly, to the narrator himself as an agent, a moral agent. Contrast the youth offender's account to the one below, given by a nonviolent adolescent, which scored at 19 fact-units and 19 interpretation-units:

> Um. . .let's see. . . probably...probably was, let's see, a couple of months ago. Yeah it was probably a couple months ago. We were playing, let me think. No, we weren't playing, we were going to a game and we stopped off to get something to eat and my friend left without paying. And so I was like, "Man..." So I . . . I like walked over to him and I'm like, "You had the most expensive thing, you don't expect us to pay for your meal, right?" So I kind of said some bad words to him, like "get back over there," like "do that." So and I. . .I can see like in his face that he was hurt by it. But at the time, I thought it was okay because you don't just walk out on something. So that was. . .that was probably the time that I said something to somebody that...that I feel that I hurt them. And later...later I found out that I kind of...I kind of didn't get the whole story before I walked to him because later I found out that he didn't have any money with him and one of his. . .like one of my other friends was going to pay for him, and he was going to pay him when he got back to his house, so I kind of didn't get all of the situation before I took it...I walked over to him and talked to him so... [NV#1]

This narrative account clearly differs from the previous one in terms of the extent to which internality is represented. As was typical of most accounts given by nonviolent adolescents, the telling in this narrative is less fast-paced and more reflective. The narrator tells us not only what he and others did, or when they did it, but also what he thought and how he felt as well as what he thought the other people intended and how they felt; indeed the narrative hinges on what the narrator thought his friend intended and on his later realization that his belief about the friend's intentions had been mistaken. As clearly distinct from the narrative of the youth offender, in this case the narrator's actions are rendered coherent and sensible through a rich sense of the internal experiences of both the narrator and the person he hurt. Indeed, through this telling the narrator implies that beyond the actual actions lies a "moral lesson."

The Contents of Their Experience

Whereas the scoring of interpretations and facts captures, quantitatively, how much of what adolescents said in any given account represents internality and how much of it refers to noninternal, observable, elements of the event, it doesn't tell us much about the actual contents of their experience. What sorts of actions do narrators describe? What sort of mental states and emotions?

The scoring of the narratives' content was two-pronged (Wainryb et al., 2005). First, we scored the presence/absence of references to nine specific narrative elements deemed relevant to understanding adolescents' construals as moral events. References to the perpetrator's harmful behaviors, the victim's response, and the incident's dénouement, as well as references to any precipitating events, made up the "landscape of action"; references to intentions, emotions, and other mental states (e.g., beliefs, desires) made up the "landscape of consciousness." Next, the actual content of each narrative element (e.g., the specific types of harmful behaviors, the specific emotions) was also scored. For both scoring systems, inter-rater reliability ranged from 84 through 100%, with κ's ranging from 0.81 through 0.97. (It bears noting that, while the distinction between facts and interpretations corresponds roughly to the distinction between landscapes of action and consciousness, the two scoring systems are only partially overlapping. Adolescents could, for example,

speak about their own "harmful behavior" [scored within the landscape of action] in ways that suggest internality [scored as interpretation]. In spite of the differences in scoring, the proportions of action/consciousness were strikingly similar to those of facts/interpretations.)

The Landscape of Action

The components of the landscape of action represented in the narratives of violent and nonviolent youth are shown in Fig. 10.2. Given that participants in both groups were asked to recount incidents in which they harmed another person, it is unsurprising that virtually all narratives included at least one reference to their own harmful behaviors. References to the victim's response were present in a majority of narratives as well. Nevertheless, there were three significant differences between the two groups' narratives.

One major difference was in the nature of the interpersonal harm. Indeed, the universes of interpersonal harm depicted in the accounts of violent and nonviolent youth were almost entirely nonoverlapping. For the violent youth offenders, the bulk of incidents referred to assault with weapons (33%) or without weapons (36%), and robbery and property destruction (12%); their victims responded by pleading or asking for help (44%), engaging in verbal and physical confrontation (32%), or running away (12%). By contrast, youth in the normative sample spoke largely about incidents involving offensive behavior, such as name calling and making insensitive remarks (50%), and trust violation, such as breaking promises or divulging secrets (30%); incidents involving even minor forms of physical harm were extremely rare (5%); the most common responses by victims were verbal confrontation (38%) and withdrawal (24%).

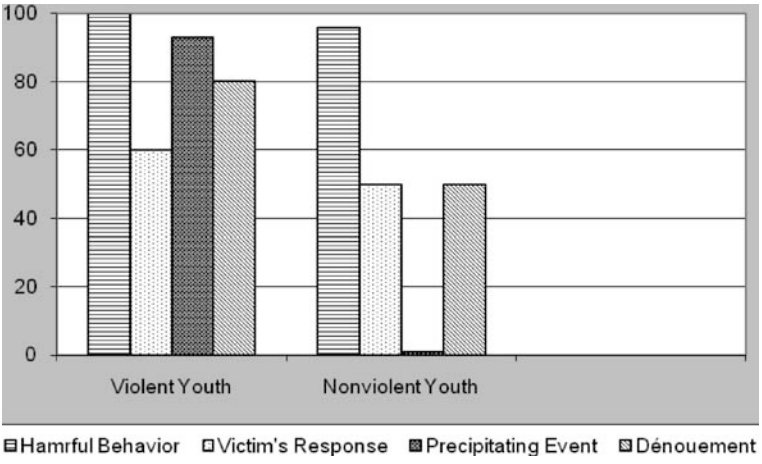

Fig. 10.2 Landscape of action in the narratives of violent and nonviolent youth

It is surely unsurprising that adolescents who enter the juvenile justice system describe a world of interpersonal harm that is different from the world of interpersonal harm within which nonviolent youth exist. We will suggest that the severity and chronicity of the harm depicted by violent youth offenders may be related to the lack of internality and psychological coherence represented in their narratives – a relation likely to operate in multiple directions.

A second important difference between the landscape of action of violent and nonviolent youth was in their spontaneous discussion of the ways in which the conflict ended. As shown in Fig. 10.2, the majority of narratives by violent youth offenders (80%), but only half of those by nonviolent adolescents (50%), included references to the incident's dénouement. It is possible that events experienced largely in terms of actions tend to have clearer endings than events construed in reference to internal states: internal events end less abruptly, as people continue turning things over in their minds.

In addition, the contents of the depicted endings also differed, with violent youth offenders emphasizing the consequences the incident had for themselves, such as arrest and incarceration (52%) or escape (28%), and nonviolent adolescents referring largely to the effects that their behaviors had on their relationships, such as positive resolutions (48%), damage wrought to their relationship with their victims (21%), or attempts at reparation (27%). It makes sense that the conflicts of nonviolent youth result in damage to relationships and those of violent offenders result in incarceration or escape. It is important to also note that in construing their harmful actions, nonviolent youth focused on the repercussions those actions had for others or for relationships, whereas violent youth focused on the repercussions for themselves. These findings are indeed consistent with findings of the moral development literature (Tisak et al., 2005; Tisak & Jankowski, 1996) and with research on empathy deficits among delinquents (Bush et al., 2000; Robinson et al., 2007), as well as with the generally self-referential focus that children in normative samples assume when they speak about themselves as victims (Wainryb et al., 2005).

A third difference in the landscape of action as depicted by violent and nonviolent youth was the extent to which they included, in their descriptions, references to events or interactions that, in their view, had precipitated their own harmful actions. Recall that participants were not asked directly to speak about what may have precipitated these events (or about any other aspect of the incident); they were merely asked to talk about an incident in detail. Whereas references to precipitating events were virtually nonexistent among adolescents in the normative sample, the large majority of violent youth offenders included at least one reference (and often multiple references) to events that, in their telling, precipitated their own violent behavior. Consider, as examples, the following two accounts by violent youth offenders:

> Um, my dad got really, I was mad at my parents cause we had gotten in an argument and um. . .Yeah, and got mad. . . And I got mad, yeah, and left and then I went over. . .Um, I had gotten in an argument with my mom and went over and I got to one of my friends and I started getting in an argument with him and I got really mad and um, I had this butterfly knife that I carry around because there's like a whole bunch of gangs um living in the area

> that I was living, and um I pulled out the knife and pulled out the blade and um, I remember I grabbed his arm and turned him around so his back was facing me, and I held the knife to his throat and I told him not to mess with me cause, that I was mad and that I didn't want him to keep messing with me and uh, he left me alone for a while and um. . .I, um. . . left and then I guess he told his mom, or he told somebody. And then like an hour later the police came over to my house and talked to me, and I admitted to it, and they charged me with it. [YO#2]

> There's only one crime I really remember that I've done on my own. This one was up on Washington Street. You know where Pete's Corner is, up on Washington street, that little gas station? There's an alley across the street from there, and I was back there going to the bathroom because in Pete's Corner the bathroom is broke. So I was back there, you know, going to the bathroom behind a trash can when I just noticed this car going down the alleyway a little further up. I didn't know what was going on in the car, only that there was people in it. So I was going to the bathroom and people started getting crazy saying "What's up?" you know, "What's up?" And I looked down and there were all these Cuban members hanging out the car and stuff and they started yelling at me. So I pulled the gun out that I had and opened fire at them. And I hit the one kid six times right here in the shoulder, and he started crying, you know, and crawled back into the car talking about "Drive!" you know "Drive, drive, he hit me! He hit me! Go, go!" So I took off running back across Washington Street and fortunately the light was red so I could cross. And Pete's Corner was just full of everybody who was on Washington Street at that time. And I just ran through everybody. And there's a fence behind and I just ducked the gun over the fence. The cops came and started asking everybody, and after awhile everybody left. And I came back later that night and got the gun out of the bushes. Then I went home. [YO#3]

As suggested in the two preceding accounts, these youth tend to think of their own violent behavior in the context of, and as a direct or a displaced response to, previous frustrations and perceived insults, threats, or provocations. These cyclical construals wherein, in their eyes, their aggression blends into or is confused with their victimization, seem consistent with findings concerning these youth's hostile attribution bias (Larden et al., 2006; Liau et al., 1998; Tisak et al., 1997) and endorsement of retribution (Slaby & Guerra, 1988). And yet, the construals are more fragmented than one might expect based on said findings. In YO#2, for example, the narrator tells of an argument with his mother, then with a friend; it is unclear what the arguments were over, whether they were over the same matter or how – if at all – they related to his pulling a knife and threatening his friend. YO#3 makes more sense, inasmuch as the yelling could be construed as a more direct insult or threat; nevertheless, it is hard to see the narrator's shooting as being commensurate with (and thus explained or justified by) those verbal insults.

In addition to conveying a sense of fragmentation, their construal of their own perpetration in terms of embedded sequences of actions also betrays a sense of diminished psychological agency. This is not to say that these youth are not actors. Both narrators in the above accounts are clearly action oriented and, presumably, are also motivated by something. However, they do not, in construing their experiences, integrate their actions with their own goals and reasons; rather, they present their actions as being embedded in external circumstances or in other people's actions – both beyond their control.

The Landscape of Consciousness

Consistent with the findings from the fact/interpretation scoring, the landscape of consciousness of violent youth offenders was thinner, less populated, than that of nonviolent youth. While the fact/interpretation scoring does not specify whose internality is represented, the content scoring revealed that the dearth of internality in the narratives of violent youth was characteristic of the way they talk both about themselves and, even more so, about their victims.

As can be seen in Fig. 10.3, nearly all adolescents in the nonviolent sample included in their accounts references to their own intentions and to other mental states, and about half included references to their own emotions. In fact, 100% of narratives in this group included at least one reference to their own intentions, emotions, or mental states, and the majority (83%) included four or more references. By contrast, less than two thirds of the narratives of violent youth offenders included references to their own intentions or their own mental states and about one third included references to their own emotions. Altogether, 10% of the narratives by violent youth included no references whatsoever to their own internality and another 33% included a single reference.

The types of intentions that nonviolent youth and violent youth attributed to themselves were also different. For the most part, nonviolent youth spoke about their acts of aggression as being incidental to their pursuit of other, legitimate, goals; examples were breaking up a relationship or excluding one person to spend time with another. When violent youth offenders discussed their own intentions they talked overwhelmingly (43%) about the motivations behind their aggressive acts in terms of responding to a direct provocation, to a sense of threat, or as retribution for a past slight inflicted directly on them or on friends or gang members. To a lesser extent they explained their aggressive behavior in relation to their own emotional dysregulation (11%), such as when they were angry or frustrated, or spoke about

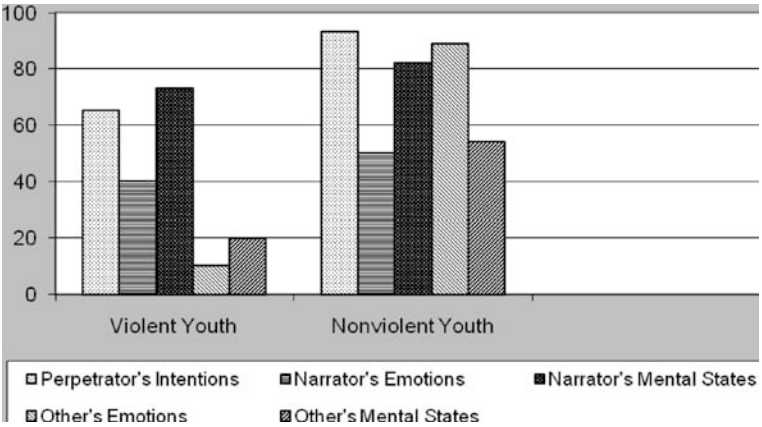

Fig. 10.3 Landscape of consciousness in the narratives of violent and nonviolent youth

their desire to hurt the victim (12%), as well as about instrumental goals such as to obtain money for drugs and to cover up crimes (10%), and social goals such as to impress a peer group (8%).

The dearth of references to internality becomes more marked when the focus is not the self but the other: 89% of nonviolent youth but only 10% of violent youth included in their accounts at least one reference to their victim's emotions. Similarly, 54% of nonviolent youth but only 20% of violent youth speculated about their victim's mental states. In general, in terms of their infrequent use of internal state descriptors, violent youth are similar to much younger children (ages 5–7) in normative samples. However, the scarce attention that violent youth pay to their victim's emotions resembles not so much the way in which such young children attend to *their victim's* emotions, but the extent to which younger children in a normative sample, speaking as victims, attend to the emotions of *those who hurt them* (Wainryb et al., 2005). Naturally, the meaning of such similarities between violent youth and much younger children drawn from a normative sample is not transparent; our data cannot speak about the functions or structures behind the dearth of internality among violent youth versus 5- or 7-year olds. Thus we do not, by these comparisons, imply that violent youth offenders are *like* 5- or 7-year olds; rather, we report these figures to underscore the extent to which violent youth appear to be developmentally off track.

Our findings concerning the *general* dearth of internality in these youth's accounts are consistent with research documenting deficits in empathy and social-cognition among juvenile delinquents (Bush et al., 2000; Robinson et al., 2007; Tisak et al., 2005). To our knowledge, there has been no other research documenting how these youth describe and make sense of their harmful behaviors in terms of their own thoughts and feelings or the thoughts and feelings of their victims. The lack of attention to their *victims*' internality, and in particular to their victims' emotions, is especially troublesome, given the centrality that these attributions have for making moral decisions and, more generally, for the process of moral development (Arsenio et al., 2005; Wainryb & Brehl, 2006). Indeed, this seemed like such a serious concern that we decided to explore this question using a different and less conceptually demanding, definition of internality; we turn to this question next.

Implicit Psychological Concepts

The scoring of internality both in terms of the distinction between interpretations and facts and in terms of the presence and type of emotions and mental states attributed to self and other relied solely on the *explicit* utterances and statements made by the narrator in the course of accounting for the event. Internality, however, may be implicitly represented in narratives. For example, adolescents might speak about situations in which they hurt others in ways that implicitly convey an understanding of persons (self or other) as such that they can be disappointed, betrayed, or hurt, that is, in ways that convey a psychological presence.

To assess this more implicit representation of self/other, narratives were scored for the presence/absence of five aspects of personhood embedded in the

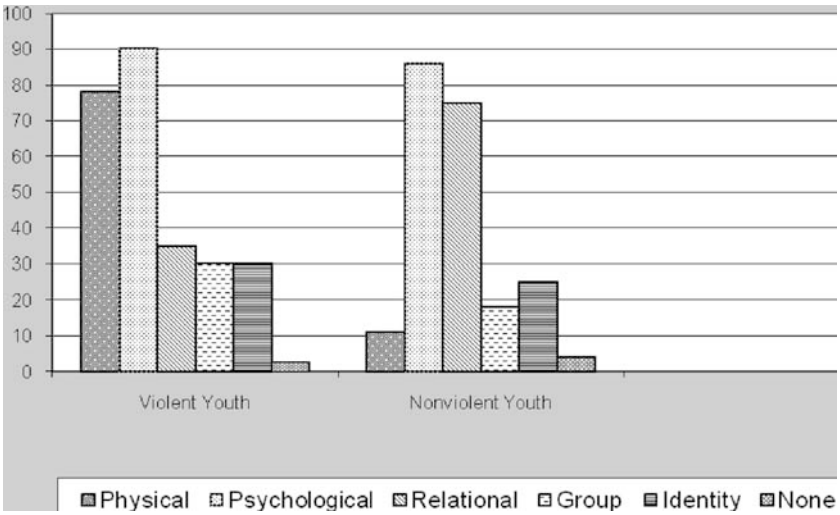

Fig. 10.4 Notions of personhood embedded in the narratives of violent and nonviolent youth: SELF

narratives, including physical/material, psychological, relational, group, and identity (Pasupathi, Wainryb, & Bezemer, 2007). The scoring was done once for the types of concepts of personhood applied to the "self" (i.e., the narrator) and once for the concepts of personhood applied to the "other" (or others). The range of inter-rater reliability scoring was 86–100%, with κ's ranging from 0.828 through 0.921.

The distributions of conceptions of personhood implicated in the descriptions of the narrator ("self") and the victim ("other") are represented in Figs. 10.4 and

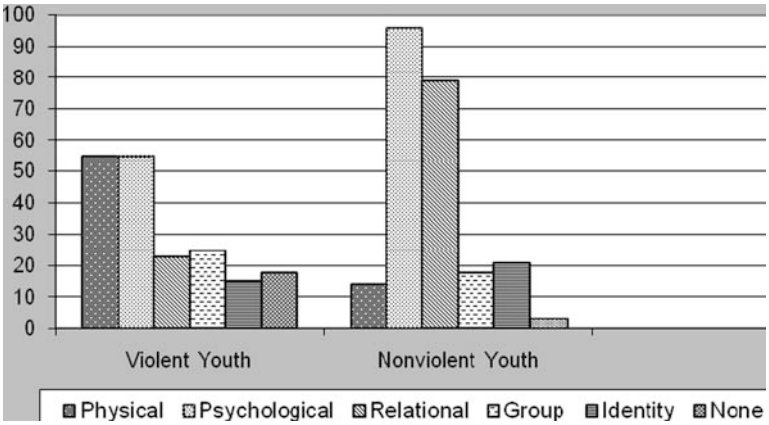

Fig. 10.5 Notions of personhood embeded in the narratives of violent and nonviolent youth: OTHER

10.5, respectively. As shown in Fig. 10.4, nonviolent youth spoke about themselves in ways that implicated their psychological and relational beings; Fig. 10.5 shows that they depicted the "other" in very similar terms. The following account serves to illustrate the aspects of self and other implicated in narratives given by nonviolent adolescents:

> It was in ninth grade, and. . .I liked this girl and we ended up going out, and I made the mistake of telling her I wanted to go out with my ex-girlfriend again. So she got very upset and [. . .] her name was Casey and, I don't know, we've been kind of off and on for about two years. And, I left this private school because I had bad grades, so, I went out to public school and I met her again. And for about two weeks, it was kind of [mumbles], internet and stuff, and then I finally asked her out, and she said yeah and the next day, um, I think it was – it was a weekend. And we went to the movies and we came back and I said, "That reminds me of when I used to go out with my girlfriend." And she said. . .she asked questions about her, and I told her. . .and just pretty much what was she like, and how was she. And I told her and then she said, "Do you still like her?" And I said, I said "yeah," and she said, "Are you sure?" And I said, "I think." And she was like, "Do you like me?" and I was like "Yeah." But she didn't believe me, so she got really mad and that's when she kind of started getting back at me, yelling stuff at me, kind of starting stories and. . .yeah. That was about it. [NV#2]

Implicated in this account are two clearly psychological beings. The narrator is capable of experiencing feelings and attractions, reminiscing about past attractions and feelings, and of reflecting on his mistakes. The "other" is capable of feeling jealous and angry and of considering and suspecting the narrator's promises. Inasmuch as the interpersonal conflict and the resulting hurt hinge on relationships, past and present, the relational dimension of both the narrator and the "other" is also implicated.

Like the nonviolent peers, nearly all violent youth offenders spoke about themselves in ways that implicated their psychological being. This finding is tremendously significant given the dearth of internality *explicitly* represented in their narratives. It appears that, while these youth did not use language such as "I thought that. . ." or "I felt. . .," they nevertheless described their own actions and experiences in ways that implicated themselves as psychological sentient beings. Consider the following example:

> Um, uh, me and a friend of mine were walking to my house. . .going through a school park and there were some kids playing basketball, starting shit with us, talking a bunch of shit, running their mouth. And me and my friend took their basketball, and my friend threw it at one of their heads, and I hit one. And the kid I hit, hit the ground, and my friend kicked him in the head. Then we took off running, chasing them. One of their friends, the one that my friend threw a basketball at his head, he took off running, and we started chasing him. [YO#4]

The narrator's physical self is clearly involved in this account (as it is in the majority of narratives by violent youth offenders): the narrator (and his friend) pick up a basketball, throw it, hit, and kick; they also run and chase. This event, however, could not have happened without the narrator's implicit, though obscured, motivations to act the way he did. Although this narrator does not use any psychological, or interpretive, language when speaking about himself, this account

implicitly hinges on him becoming psychologically responsive to a perceived provocation. Unfortunately, we do not know whether the narrator was upset or angry, or perhaps excited and thrilled by an opportunity for violence. Either way, the dynamic described suggests that something psychologically relevant was happening.

The picture of the "other" emerging from the narratives of violent youth offenders (see Fig. 10.5) was profoundly different from both how these youth depicted themselves (Fig. 10.4) and how nonviolent youth depicted the other (Fig. 10.5). Only half of the narratives by violent youth featured an "other" depicted as a psychological being. Half their narratives included a "physical" other (see YO#4 above, where the "other" appears in the narrative as merely a collection of hurt body parts), and 25% included "others" depicted in terms of their belonging to a group (an example would be a narrative in which the only aspect of the "other" implicated in the account is his being a member of another gang). Most remarkable was the finding that, even as *all* of their narratives depicted situations in which another person had been the target of their harsh and ruthless aggression, nearly 20% of their narratives depicted the "other" in ways that included no discernable concept of personhood (coded as "none"). Consider the following example:

> I was just beating up some kid. I don't know, I don't know what hit me. He said something to me, and my other friend just hit him. He hit him, and I don't know, I just got into it, I started going at it, too. . .I was. . .My friend just hit him. That's why I got into it. I see my friend doing something, I've gotta do it too. I've gotta be able to watch his back and stuff, you know? Then, it just got to the court offices. I guess some kids filed assault charges. [YO#5]

In this narrative, the physical and relational aspects of the narrator's personhood are implicated; some of his utterances also implicate a psychological being – albeit one without insight into his own behavior. By contrast, the victim ("other") in this narrative appears as "this kid," "he," or "him." Although we hear that the narrator beats "this kid" up, we do not gain even a vague insight into who this person might be (is he the member of a specific group?) or what he did; not even this person's body parts are represented in the narrative. In this respect, in this story, the "other" could be replaced by an inert object. Recall, again, that this was not an isolated occurrence. One fifth of all violent youth offenders depicted their victims – the targets of their severe aggression and attacks – in ways that failed to notice even the most rudimentary aspects of their personhood.

It is important to note here that adolescents in the normative sample were encouraged to discuss an instance when they hurt someone they knew, but the interview protocol used with violent youth offenders did not specify whether the victim should be known or unknown. As it turned out, at times it was difficult to know the nature of the relationship between participant and victim precisely because the relationship was not a matter of concern, as in the case of the previous narrative, where the victim is described as "some kid." Of the narratives in which the victim was identifiable, about half referred to a person known to the participant and half against a person unknown to him. Notably, whether the victim was known or not known made a difference not so much in terms of the mental states explicitly attributed to the victim, but in terms of the implicit conceptions of person attributed to the victim. In general,

known victims were depicted in ways that implied a psychological being more often than unknown victims, and most of the victims whose depiction lacked any attribute of personhood were unknown.

Conclusions

In this chapter we examined the narrative accounts of two groups of adolescents who were asked to describe a situation in which they had hurt another person. Adolescents drawn from a normative sample spoke about times when they made insensitive remarks, excluded their peers from activities, lied to them, or broke promises. Violent youth offenders told of times when they beat up people, threatened them with knives or weapons, or shot at them. Both groups of adolescents were clearly able to discuss their moral transgressions in some detail, but constructed their narratives quite differently. In each case, their narrative accounts provided invaluable information about how these youth construct, or fail to construct, a sense of themselves as moral agents within the complex landscape of their experiences.

Typically developing adolescents, drawn from a normative sample, situated their own acts of unfairness and aggression within a rich landscape of consciousness. That adolescents are attuned to victims' internality, especially victims' emotional responses, has long been recognized as being essential to their developing understandings of the intrinsically negative and hurtful consequences of moral transgressions (Arsenio et al., 2005; Shaw & Wainryb, 2007). It is therefore no surprise that nearly all adolescents in the normative sample included references to their victims' emotional states; it is also unsurprising that their accounts were rich in conceptions of their victims as psychological and relational beings.

The study of moral development has been less attentive to the representation of the perpetrators' internality, including their depiction of their own cognitions and emotions and their efforts to make sense of their actions. Our findings in this regard are straightforward: the overwhelming majority of nonviolent adolescents included in their accounts rich explicit and implicit representations of themselves as psychological beings. In so doing, these youth bare their assumption, or conviction, that their world is one in which *agents*, each with her or his subjective mental experience, interact, and come into conflict. This, we think, allows them to view their own wrong-doing as arising from conflicting, albeit at times opaque, goals, desires, beliefs, angers, and regrets. It allows them to not only acknowledge their own aggression as wrong, but also as explicably human. They have done wrong, but they are also more than only "bad": their harmful acts have become integrated into a complex sense of themselves as moral agents who, like the narrator who hurt his friend's feelings by jumping to conclusions (NV#1, p. 191), can acknowledge and regret the pain they caused, learn moral lessons, make future commitments and, possibly, also forgive themselves.

By contrast, the narratives of chronically violent youth were characterized by a pervasive emphasis on the observable and a relative dearth of the psychological.

While their narratives conveyed a fairly clear sense of what they did, these youth did not explain their actions in relation to their own psychological processes, such as what they were thinking or wanting, feeling, or intending to do. Indeed, at times the psychological language was so impoverished as to create the impression that their behavior was incomprehensible even to them. The frequent references to the ways the events ended (e.g., arrest, juvenile detention) further contributed to the sense that these incidents were experienced as taking place in the external, not internal, landscape.

There is some research indicating that when delinquent boys are put into a room and left to their own devices, they often begin to speak about aggressive acts they have committed or would like to commit (Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmiller, & Yoerger, 2001; Granic & Dishion, 2003). It is possible that the stories delinquent youth tell each other are deliberately stripped of their internality to give the impression of toughness and it is also plausible that this tendency to regale each other with bravado, known as "deviancy training," may ultimately contribute to the scarce internality observed in the violent youth's narratives. It is worth mentioning, however, that, as an audience, interviewers are distinctly different from delinquent boys and are trained to neither step away from nor boost lurid or dramatic details. In any case, the possibility that the stories told by violent youth are intended to convey toughness does not diminish the point that the relative absence of internality is problematic. Whatever a youth's motive for telling a particular story in a particular way, we believe the narrative structure reflects something meaningful about how the event has been, and is being, encoded.

In our view, the dearth of internality explicitly represented in these youth's accounts of their own experiences betrays a deeply undermined sense of agency. Other features of their narratives support this interpretation. For example, their recurrent reference to precipitating events presumed to have triggered their actions, and their portrayal of their own actions as having been motivated by the desire for retribution, by the need to strike preemptively, or by unavoidable affect or circumstances, all hint at a complex perpetration–victimization overlap, such that a given instance of aggression is experienced as a point in a cycle of violence rather than the endpoint of a linear pathway from perpetrator to victim. We recognize that to some extent these narrative features communicate an implicit appeal, on these youth's part, to the larger time-flow of slights and injuries in their lives. We suggest that they also convey a compromised sense of agency. It is as though these youth cannot fully distinguish between what they do and what is done to them.

None of this implies that these youth are not actors. Clearly, these youth act in and on the world. Furthermore, they speak of themselves in ways that suggest, implicitly, that they *are* sentient actors. And arguably, were they to be asked directly, all would surely concede that they *had* done these deeds. Nevertheless, their construals of their own actions and experiences do not underscore their agency, but undermine it. In their telling, their actions are not fully integrated; they do not emanate from fully psychological agents.

To some extent, the argument could be made that these violent youth integrate their actions around moral concepts such as self-defense or retaliation. The fact that

these youth develop such concepts has been documented in the moral literature (e.g., Tisak et al., 2005) and their concerns with self-interest and retaliation can indeed be gleaned from their narratives. We propose here that while self-preservation and retribution are eminently moral concepts around which narratives of perpetration can cohere, these notions tend to diffuse the location of moral responsibility and reduce the sense of alternatives or choices – all fundamental aspects of agency. This is not to say that it is impossible to construct a sense of moral agency – though perhaps a diminished one – around concepts of self-defense and retaliation. And yet, violent youth offenders in this sample do not actually do that. Consider the following passage:

> . . . I was going to the bathroom and people started getting crazy saying "What's up?" you know, "What's up?" And I looked down and there were all these Cuban members hanging out the car and stuff and started yelling at me, so I pulled the gun out that I had and opened fire at them . . .. [YO#3]

When we, readers, read such a passage, we make sense of it by connecting the various actions – the people yelling, the narrator pulling out a gun and shooting – via some internal attributions: upon perceiving the yelling and such, the narrator felt afraid, angry, or excited, or perhaps thought he was being threatened. But these psychological statements – this psychological glue – are not present in the account. They are part of *our* understanding, not the narrator's. Thus we argue that even as notions of self-preservation and retribution loosely organize these youth's narrations, they do so without establishing a firm sense of psychological agents acting on the world.

Why such a diminished sense of psychological agency? These youth's limited abilities to connect their actions to a clear sense of agency may be seen as a failure in meaning-making associated with the severity and chronicity of the violence implicated in their experiences. One possibility is that extreme forms of violence, and the consequent hyperarousal, interfere with these youth's abilities to make sense of their experiences and construe them in a psychologically coherent fashion while the events unfold (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2004; van der Kolk, 1994). Even after the events are over, it may be hard for these youth to retrospectively reorganize such extreme forms of violence in ways that allow them to retain or construct some sense of moral agency. As we suggested above, construals based on self-defense or retribution might work to undercut their sense of agency.

Another possibility is that at least for some of the chronically violent youth, the lack of psychological coherence and internality in their understanding of violent experiences helps them maintain a view of an interpersonal world in which their own and other people's violent behaviors are intrinsic to the circumstances themselves. Such a view, that violence is a fact of the world rather than a human response, makes the extreme violence in the midst of which they function more tolerable (Frick, Stickle, Dandreax, Farrell, & Kimonis, 2005; Loney, Frick, Clements, Ellis, & Kerlin, 2003). Further contributing to this view is the finding that these youth produced highly impoverished construals of their victims' internality and agency.

Whereas adolescents in the normative sample represented self and other in fairly similar ways, the narratives of violent offenders betrayed a conspicuous discrepancy in the way the narrator and the victim were represented – a finding that was pervasive, especially in regards to unknown victims and even when internality was indirectly measured via implicit representations. It is hard to tell how generalized their impoverished representation of other people's internality and agency may be. On the one hand, findings concerning these youth's pervasive distortions in the perception of others' feelings (Carr & Lutjemeier, 2005) and deficits in empathy (Bush et al., 2000; Robinson et al., 2007) suggest that this phenomenon may be quite generalized. On the other hand, the finding that known victims were depicted in more psychological terms than unknown victims suggests that their impoverished view of victims may not be indiscriminately applied to all *others*. These youth might construe other people in more agentic and fleshed out ways in the context of more positive experiences, such as when they help a family member or friend. However, even if their construal of friendly *others* were more adequate, the fact that they so often view their victims as nonintentional agents or unidentified representatives of a group, with no discernable human characteristics, is likely to both reflect and perpetuate their tendency to engage in continued violence.

In fact, this is true more generally. The representations contained in the narratives of these two groups of adolescents both reflect their organization and integration of past experiences and inform how they are likely to respond to future experiences (Noam, 1988; Toth, Cicchetti, Macfie, Rogosch, & Maughan, 2000; Wainryb & Pasupathi, 2008). Thus adolescents' narratives about times when they hurt others help us understand these youth's potential and limitations as moral agents. The distinctions found between the narratives of violent and normative youth suggest that violent youth have a deficit in their capacity to reflect upon internal states. It is premature to suggest that violent youth lack a fundamental, perhaps even biological, capacity for self-reflection or empathy (Raine, 2002). Indeed, some nonviolent adolescents can be highly externalizing and nonreflective when describing their moral transgressions and some violent youth are more reflective and empathic than others. It might be that the difference between groups is relative rather than fundamental or categorical. Nonetheless, the possibility that seriously violent adolescents have deficits (relative or fundamental) in their capacity to reflect upon the internal states of self and others seems clinically relevant and an important developmental consideration when devising treatment models and practices. Although we stop short of declaring that the violent youth offenders in this sample are sociopathic, as defined by Frick and others (Salekin & Frick, 2005), our analysis of their narratives provides a window into the development of sociopathic potential, just as the narratives of the nonviolent youth provide a window into the development of a more sophisticated understanding of the self as a moral agent, who must grapple with the occurrence of moral transgressions.

Our analyses also suggest that the stories typically developing and chronically violent adolescents tell about their own experiences may be an important conduit for moral development and clinical intervention. In the course of everyday interactions, typically developing youth tend to recount their harmful behaviors, telling

stories about what happened in the school yard or the internet, often half-bragging about and half-confessing to a moral transgression. The telling of such stories and the spontaneous conversations that ensue from these stories, with parents and teachers, and sometimes with peers, serve as a context for youth to make sense of their transgressions and ultimately integrate their own harmful potential with a continued sense of themselves as people who make, or are capable of making, moral decisions.

But adolescents who commit acts of serious violence face a unique developmental conundrum: they are violent *because* they lack the capacity to manage their impulses, to comprehend the consequences of their behavior, and/or to empathize with their victims, but these same developmental deficits also interfere with their ability to think of their experience in ways that help them learn from it and develop moral agency. Moreover, these youth, who experience themselves as morally adrift, also rarely have the sorts of interpersonal relationships within which they might work to make sense of their transgressions and learn to regulate their aggression. While more research is needed to glean specific clinical implications from the narratives presented in this chapter, it seems possible that when adults are able to listen to and acknowledge these youth's aggressive impulses and desires, as expressed in their stories about their very serious transgressions, an interpersonal structure for containing these youth's destructive potential might emerge and develop and, over time, become internalized. Thus we believe that providing chronically violent adolescents with an interpersonal context that encourages them to narrate their moral transgressions while considering the thoughts and feelings of those involved and sorting through the possible antecedents and consequences might also help them learn to monitor and control their aggressive behaviors. Whether this interpersonal context is provided by parents, teachers, counselors, or probation officers probably matters less than whether it provides the mix of guidance, autonomy, and balanced compassion that typically facilitates the development of moral agency in more normative contexts.

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Critical Narrating by Adolescents Growing Up in War: Case Study Across the Former Yugoslavia

Colette Daiute

It happened at the crossroads when two drivers got out of their cars and, for some reason, started an argument (probably one of them violated traffic regulations). They stopped the traffic and nearly started to fight physically. The other drivers were yelling and cursing from their cars. A young man interfered and made the two men stop arguing. Personally, I was appalled by the incident and I was particularly irritated because they prevented the others from moving.

(By Rudy, 15, BiH)

The problem emerged when a neighbor appropriated half of the street - remnants of the last century's mentality. The neighbor is an ex-cop who still thinks that he has the power. There has been a lot of argumentation, but the status quo has prevailed.

(By I.S., 17, Serbia)

The conflict was about the Homeland war. My opinion is that we shouldn't forget the past but that we must look forward to the future. The adults find it difficult to forget certain things from the past. This problem can never be solved because it exists subconsciously.

(By Feniks, 20, Croatia)

My mom and uncle had a conflict. My mom was inviting my uncle to move to America but he was torn because he had to leave his elderly parents. He ended up moving anyway but with much difficulty. My uncle felt that he was abandoning his parents and my mom felt guilty for being pushy, but she thought it was too good of an opportunity to miss. He moved here but he still regrets leaving his family, we all do.

(By Krusko, 18, United States)

These narratives, by adolescents living in the aftermath of the 1990 s wars that fractured the former Yugoslavia, express adolescents' focus on issues in their now

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diverse societies. The generation of 12-21-year olds who were babies or young children during acute phases of war is growing up with its consequences. The material and symbolic remnants of war across each context become embedded in adolescents' narratives of their everyday lives and, thus, their development toward adulthood. In his narrative, for example, Rudy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) focuses on tensions among adults in public life, tensions also noticed by his peers who explain that these tensions result from "problems from the past" and serve as "stress releases." Characteristic of her ex-Yugoslavian country of Serbia, I.S., in contrast, focuses on divisions in her society, in this case between the "last century's mentality" and the implied new one which allows for argumentation. Feniks, like most of his Croatian peers, uses this observation of conflict among adults to mention future possibility, while Krusko, a refugee of mass destruction in Bosnia, turns nostalgically to the past and her family's ongoing difficulties. In this chapter, I present a case study with these and other adolescents positioned differently around a war to explain how they use narrating to mediate development of individuals in society.

A research design and analysis of young peoples' narratives in the context of war and its aftermath adds to our knowledge about the role of narrating in identity development. Examining within as well as between context differences and similarities in narratives of conflict, the study discussed in this chapter offers insights about how adolescents' self-expressions are sensitive to the socio-political contexts where they live. This study is particularly revealing of the interdependent development of individuals and society as countries make uneasy transitions from war to peace and from a socialist dictatorship to capitalist democracies at the same time as the youth generation experiences transitions toward adulthood.

Consistent with the other chapters in this book, I propose that human development is, at least in part, a narrative process and offer an analysis of young people's narratives of conflicts in their everyday lives to consider how they are interacting with different national war stories in their countries and with stories about economic, political, and social challenges they will face as young adults. Building on previous research with children and adolescents (Daiute, 2004; Daiute & Turniski, 2005), I explain that narrating, especially in highly contentious situations, is a critical process in which adolescents use discourse to understand their environments. Situated precariously between childhood and adulthood, adolescents may be especially sensitive to a range of narratives in their environments and judgments made about people sharing various versions of stories about the past, present, and future. Once they have mastered the basics of the narrative genre by around age 11 (Berman & Slobin, 1994), young people take increasing control over social-relational processes linking persons and contexts, that is, control over how one's own stories match up with those one hears and to expectations of actual and imagined audiences. Being able to narrate an issue, like conflict, from diverse stances (self, other, actual, and imaginary) involves youth in social-relations with diverse audiences and offers us information about the role of narrating in development. Rather than being windows into adolescents' minds and hearts, storytelling is, thus, a cultural tool (like

other discourse genres and symbol systems) for managing (mediation) self-society relationships (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55).

To examine narrating as a mediational process, I present analyses of 250 narratives by 108 adolescents living in 4 countries positioned differently in the aftermath of the war in the former Yugoslavia. This post-war context is appropriate for studying narrative development because young people across the countries resulting from the 1990 s wars in Yugoslavia are interacting with a range of diverse meanings of conflict. While interpersonal conflict may, in some ways, be a universal process, issues of societal conflict become embedded in national and international ideologies expressed as "frozen narratives" and "myths" (MacDonald, 2002). We can learn about the interdependent engagement of personal and societal narratives among adolescents who are especially motivated to understand the societies where they hope to have jobs, influence, and well-being. This research design offers participants opportunities to narrate conflict from diverse perspectives, in this case, generational perspectives, thereby providing a stage for echoing or transforming societal narratives.

If narrators adjust accounts to match their goals to audience expectations, as the data herein illustrate, each narrative is a communication. As communications, narrative accounts are likely to vary and, thus, may seem incoherent, but our recognizing that contexts are embedded in narratives can help us see that the coherence of individual life stories is tied to individuals' relations to their environments. In this way, I propose that adolescents narrate with skills of communicative complexity, achieving situational coherence. I will illustrate how situational coherence emerges as narrators adjust stories of conflicts to audience expectations. The narratives about conflicts among adults at the beginning of this chapter mention problems leftover from the past, which these authors tend not to mention when narrating their own personal conflicts with peers or hypothetical community events. Narrators reveal their sensitivity to self-audience relations when they refer to contentious issues from the past primarily when narrating conflicts by other protagonists but not their own conflicts, which steer clear of "past mentalities." Such differences indicate communicative complexity as our participants use the affordances of the various autobiographical and fictional genres to present themselves in positive ways. Guided by the following questions, this case study examines such communicative complexity: How do adolescents across diverse post-war contexts use systematically varied opportunities to narrate conflict? What do we learn about adolescents' uses of narrating to address their local circumstances? What do these insights suggest about future research and practice with adolescent narrating?

Development in Crisis

Most psychological research with children and youth in post-conflict situations has focused on assessing trauma (such as by using instruments to measure post-traumatic stress disorder) among those directly involved in or exposed to violence

(Apfel & Simon, 1996; Neuffer, 2001). Many scholars and practitioners have argued, however, that the effects of war last long after it has officially ended, for at least 7 years (Collier, 2003) and sometimes for generations (Abraham & Torok, 1994). For this reason, the specific effects of conflict on children and adolescents need to be considered within the context of human development, rather than solely from a disease model. Those working in the psychodynamic tradition have identified trans-generational haunting, the transmission of war-related knowledge and "psychic conflicts, traumas, and secrets across time and context (Abraham & Torok, 1994, p. 166). If trans-generational haunting can occur via social-relations, which use silence to shape discourse as much as they use words, then young people born during or after a war could assimilate a wide range of verbal and non-verbal messages. Given the myriad enduring conflicts at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we should examine psychological effects as developmental processes.

The need to understand cultural-historical processes in adolescence is particularly acute in situations like the post-war Western Balkans, where 12 years after the official end of the war, there is still little agreement about a grand narrative of the war as disagreements persist about causes, effects, perpetrators, and victims (Bajraktari & Serwer, 2006). Such ambivalence about history results in ongoing problems for the post-war generation, who remain curious about events while efforts to create a contemporary history curriculum have ended in stalemates (Freedman & Abazovic, 2006). From a cultural-historical perspective, this research foregrounds the social-relational nature of development, in particular in terms of adolescents' management of diverse communications across narrator, character, and context positions.

Developing Narrative Theory

Researchers have explained that children develop abilities to narrate as others tell stories around them (Nelson, 1996). One explanation relevant to the current inquiry is that children become familiar with cultural scripts (values and ways of knowing) in the context of daily activities like meal time, bathing, and family rituals. As they mature, children focus increasingly on broader social contexts, like school, and transform scripts into stories (Bruner, 1986; Nelson, 1996). Thus, storytelling socializes children via the cultural scripts that parents, teachers, and others repeat and reinforce, and, in turn, adolescents socialize those around them by transforming over-wrought societal scripts to address personally salient motivations. Previously explored in normative contexts, this theory is relevant to development in crisis.

Storytelling shapes public life. It is, for example, through storytelling that leaders justify war and peace by basing political arguments on certain motivations, sequences of causes and effects, and other perceptions of events. As citizens take up these stories, boundaries between national scripts blur as individuals share their

perspectives. Even though they may be persuasive, national stories often suppress power relations and the voices of individuals, especially minorities (Amsterdam & Bruner, 2000; Scott, 1990). Such powerful narratives become "frozen" because "Language and its control are powerful and recurring themes within this socio-political stage where one very quickly learns what can and what cannot be publicly discussed..." (Berman, 1999, p. 139). Adolescents' perspectives are rarely included in public life or in research, in part because they are defined as in crisis themselves (Erikson, 1968), because they are interested in more socio-sexual matters (Freud, 1909), because they are considered at risk (Turiel, 2002), because they lack knowledge, or because they seem to be focused on interpersonal rather than political issues. A cultural-historical view, in contrast, is that adolescents participate in the development of the society, at least in part through their transformation of historical narratives. In order to do so, they use storytelling, and other symbol systems, to interact with contexts rather than to merely report on personal experience.

Researchers have recently begun to offer systematic studies to examine how narrating interacts with the development of identity. Narrative psychologists have, for example, explored literary features such as "chapters" (McAdams, 1993), "turning points" (McLean & Pratt, 2006), and "coherence" (Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Pasupathi & McLean, this volume), in particular for their impact on narrators' self-perceptions, health, and socio-cognitive development. Linguistic and literary analysts have also distinguished between structural and semantic aspects of narratives, with concepts like "landscape of action" to denote time-ordered events and "landscape of consciousness" to denote the significance of those events to narrators (Bruner, 1986), which correspond to referential meaning and evaluative meaning (Labov & Waletzky, 1997). These concepts of landscapes of action and consciousness, referential, and evaluative meanings provide tools for studying narrating as a social-relational process.

According to discourse theory, identity and knowledge are created in the context of culturally meaningful activities in verbal and non-verbal practices (Bakhtin, 1986; Leont'ev, 1978), as each linguistic utterance is a response "in the chain of communication" with proximal and distal interlocutors in society relevant to the narrator. This view is aptly described in the statement "no utterance is the first to break the silence of the universe" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 69) and the related statement that "...when the listener perceives and understands the meaning (language meaning) of speech, he [she] simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He [she] either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially)" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 68). On this view, narrators work not only with the structure of event representation but also with affordances of the narrating context, such as expectations of present and imagined audiences, power relations among the narrator and diverse audiences, features of the physical setting, and, of course, literary features. We, thus, become aware that discourse is performance.

Recent psycholinguistic analyses implore us to consider narrative diversity in terms of narrator stance (first versus third person focus), audience, narrating context, cultural organizations of meaning (scripts), and significance (evaluative devices).

Narrators use these features, intentionally or spontaneously, as tools for perceiving situations, organizing meaning, and gaining insights from the narrative experience itself. Narratives are, thus, a collection of affordances that can be combined in flexible ways. If we ask adolescents to narrate from diverse character perspectives, they might consider, for example, how people they do not empathize with spontaneously (such as parents, teachers, and national leaders) are coping with challenges in their lives. Such flexible narrating activities extend interpersonal perspective-taking processes to interactions with social institutions, thereby potentially increasing communicative complexity.

Several previous studies have shown how children and adolescents use narrative activities to express a range of knowledge and self-presentations. Adolescents in Croatia, for example, expressed diverse knowledge about the past, present, and future when they had the opportunity to narrate conflict from varied generational perspectives (Daiute & Turniski, 2005). When narrating conflict among adults (the generation directly involved in the 1990 s wars), adolescents portrayed characters as irrational and incompetent, echoing youth skepticism about the need for war after many years of a relatively peaceful Yugoslavia, while younger protagonists (the post-war peer generation) were portrayed as resourceful problem-solvers. This finding about the distributed nature of narrating is consistent with results of a study of younger children's strategic uses of narrating in the context of a school-based violence prevention program in a large American city (Daiute, 2006). Analyses of the curriculum, classroom interactions, and hundreds of autobiographical and fictional narratives indicated that the 7-10-year olds in the study increasingly shaped narratives about their personal experiences of conflict to conform to the values promoted in the curriculum, such as using words instead of fists to resolve interpersonal problems. In a parallel series of narratives about conflicts involving fictional characters, these same children increasingly expressed counter-curriculum values, such as fighting and intense emotions (Daiute, 2004; Daiute, Stern, & Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2003). Such flexibility indicated the social-relational nature of different narrating activities, in particular to mediate the narrators' presentations of self in relation to audience values and expectations.

As a social-relational practice, narrating is, thus, a psychosocial mediator or "conductor of human influence on the object of activity ... externally oriented ... aimed at mastering and triumphing over nature... and ... a means of internal activity aimed at mastering oneself" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55). This use of narrating as a meditational tool operates on a large scale, such as in Croatia's explaining the need to clear the homeland of non-Croats and Serbia's complaint about hundreds of years of aggression by outsiders (Gagnon, 2004). At the same time as such narratives circulate in public discourse and around family dinner tables, alternatives are created by those devoted to post-war development, including many non-government organizations, educators, and young people motivated to create a peaceful and productive future. I propose that narrating from diverse perspectives, especially in highly contentious socio-political contexts, engages a broader range of adolescents' knowledge than any single narrative telling or writing and that such diverse narratives are identity in action.

Integrating Cultural-Historical Narratives of Post-war Contexts

Since the argument in this paper is that individual and societal narratives interact in an interdependent developmental process, I offer a relevant, albeit necessarily brief history of the transition from the Yugoslavian state to the resulting countries of BiH, Croatia, Serbia, and a community of refugees to the United States. Following this summary is an analysis of the prospects for young people across those contexts.

For 40 years, individuals of myriad different ethnic groups had lived together peacefully in across the six federated republics of Yugoslavia (some say in a forced peace), yet the 1990's wars involved creating separate ethnic states. The 1990 s breakup of the former Yugoslavia and the resulting political transitions create the context for human development at the transition of the twenty-first century. Tensions in Yugoslavia mounting since the death of the long-time dictator Joesp Broz Tito in 1980 were exacerbated with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Responding to the resulting political-economic shifts in the region, Slovenia and Croatia, the two Yugoslavian republics with relatively good potential independent resources, such as proximity to Western Europe in the case of Slovenia and geographic position on the Adriatic coast in the case of Croatia, declared independence in 1991. These moves were followed by Serbia's response, declaring an independent Serbian state in an area of Croatia heavily populated by Serbs. Following this were violent conflicts from 1992 to 1995 and attacks on Bosnian territory with the siege of Sarajevo in 1994, an attempt to stave off independence movements in that area. Violence accompanied such political changes in the form of bombings, armed conflict, mass executions, rapes, seizures of property, and massive displacement within and outside the region. Reports of deaths range from 200,000 to 400,000 depending on the source, and up to 3 million displacements. In addition to deaths, displacement, and injury, there was massive destruction to the built environment, the political-economic infrastructure, and civil society (Johnstone, 2002; MacDonald, 2002).

Although armed conflict officially ended in 1999, eruptions of violence and displacements continue. While popular accounts explain that the violent process referred to as "ethnic cleansing" was caused by long-standing hatreds among ethnic groups, many political scientists focus on political leaders' manipulations of resources like the military, police, and supplies to exacerbate tensions (Gagnon, 2004). Independent measures of wartime violence, political stability, economic, and cultural circumstances during the post-war transition offer information for a general description of the circumstances facing the post-war generation. Table 11.1 lists features indicating national circumstances that create prospects for youth - society development in the aftermath of war. Drawn from research by political scientists, historians, and other social scientists, these indicators include commonly noted political, economic, and cultural factors. These factors include nature of war violence (deaths, missing persons, discoveries of new mass graves); expulsions (["ethnic cleansing"], bombings); political instability/stability, as measured by previous and ongoing displacements of refugees and returnees affecting sending and receiving contexts; political stability as measured by constitutional reform, rule of

Table 11.1 Relevant national prospects in 2007 transitions from 1990 s wars

	BiH	Croatia	Serbia	United States
Prospects given war violence to overcome deaths	−	+	+	−
Missing and new graves	−	+	+	+
Human expulsions	−	+	−	−
Bombings	−	−	−	−
Political (In)stability				
Democ score change	+	−	+	na
Population stability				
Refugees				
Outgoing	−	+	+	+
Incoming	+	−	−	−
Returnees				
Outgoing	−	+	+	+
Incoming	+	−	−	na
Economic level (GNI)	Lowest	Middle	Middle	Highest
EU candidacy status	−	+	−	na
Culture				
Media indep score				
International image	+	+	−	+/−

+ = indicator suggests positive prospects. − = indicator suggests negative prospects. na = not available

law, media independence, etc. (Goehring, 2007)[1]; economic level (GNI)[2]; status of EU candidacy[3]; culture, in particular independence of the national media (Goehring, 2007), and international image (MacDonald, 2002).

[1]To appear in K. McLean & M. Pasupathi (Eds.) *Narrative development in adolescence.* New York: Springer. Write to cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu with comments and suggestions.

[2]Political scientists have offered measures of political stability in terms of progress toward democracy of 22 former Soviet states, including the Western Balkan countries (Goehring, 2007). Democracy scores from 1 to 7 with 1-2 indicating consolidated democracy, which embodies "the best policies and practices of liberal democracy" (p. 19), and 6-7 indicating a consolidated authoritarian regime, which characterizes "closed societies in which dictators prevent political competition and pluralism are responsible for wide-spread violations of basic political, civil, and human rights" (p. 23). Factors considered include national democratic governance, electoral process, civil society, independent media, local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence, and corruption (Goehring, 2007, p. 10). Summary scores cover the period from 2006 to 2007, the data collection period for this study. Lower scores indicate better match with democratic practices. Western Balkan states involved in the study discussed indicate slight improvements in BiH (4.07-4.04) and Serbia (3.71 to 3.68) and decreases in Croatia (3.71-3.75). Serbia's score improved primarily because of improvements to its constitution and electoral process; BiH's score improved for advances in police reform, civil society initiatives, and constitutional reform; Croatia's democracy score because of a weakening of freedom of the press. Although changes may seem slight, the rigorous nature of the Freedom House process and the small range of scores 1-6 assure the meaningful nature of these changes.

[3]Having passed all but the final step in the "stabilization and association agreement" process, Croatia has the status of candidate member to the EU with expected entry in 2010 or 2011. In

Table 11.1 notes a + or − in relation to each indicator for each participating country. Plus (+) means the indicator bodes well for youth development, while negative (−) indicates ongoing challenges. BiH, for example, experienced relatively extreme human and environmental destruction during the war, which continues to be a negative factor for youth who lost parents, witnessed physical violence, or were babies or children in the midst of extended bombings. In contrast, the + for BiH next to "incoming refugees" indicates that they must cope with relatively fewer returnees than young people in Croatia or Serbia. These indicators offer a broad relative picture of the political-economic context of the post-war generation.

Counting the relative number of pluses and minuses per country offers a summary of the contemporary circumstances and prospects for development. With seven positive indicators, participants in Croatia appear to have relatively good prospects, in spite of ongoing challenges to democracy (indicated in the rating decrease) and the strain of accommodating well to returning Serbs and Bosnian Croat refugees. Ironically, while the United States has the most established democracy and much better economic prospects than these other countries, the situation for Bosnian refugee families continues to be fraught with issues of displacement and exclusion as many of them are Muslims suffering post-9/11 discrimination. With different combinations of positive and negative indicators, Serbia and BiH appear to have more compromised situations. During the year of the study, Serbia was suffering from an extremely challenged economic situation and an ongoing negative image for having failed to turn over three accused war criminals wanted by the International Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).[4] BiH suffers from effects of violence, ongoing tensions in a government system organized around ethnicity, lack of investments, and outmigration by Bosnian families in need of economic opportunities.

Although also controversial for the Balkan countries, the country status in the European Union (EU) association process is a major summary indicator of good prospects. Prospective EU membership signals international approval of democratic and economic advances in these post-war countries, ongoing prospects for economic growth, and inclusion in international politics. With the EU association process taking a decade if not more, Croatia is in the best situation as a candidate nation with expected membership by 2011. In contrast, the process had not begun for BiH or Serbia in 2007.

This summary is consistent with dominant narratives that have emerged from scholarly sources, media, political decisions, and local responses to those dominant narratives. Such characterizations tend to depict Serbia as a primary aggressor, BiH

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spite of not having met some requirements of the post-war period, in particular turning over war criminals wanted by the International Tribunal, Serbia has recently been offered to begin the "stabilization and association agreement" process, with an expected entry into the EU by 2013. Because of economic and political issues like those described above and below, Bosnia is not yet in line to begin a process for entry in the EU.

[4]Six months after data collection, the situation in Serbia changed considerably with international recognition for their stemming violent responses to Kosovo's independence and for arresting war criminals.

as victim, Croatia as politically ambivalent about the past, while relatively poised to progress to a bright economic future, and refugees in the United States as the lucky ones. The picture emerging from youth themselves as reported below offers some challenges to these images, as well as some support. Adolescents in politically and culturally heterogeneous contexts, especially those emerging from wars fought, at least in part, around issues of ethnicity, are likely to be particularly sensitive to conflicting values in their environments as they share and reflect on their experience. We considered such developmental challenges when designing an inquiry in which: (1) narrating is a social-relational process comprised of interactions among narrator and context and (2) adolescents in socio-politically tense contexts would exercise communicative flexibility to manage self-society relations. Consistent with analyses of youth prospects, we posit that while ethnicity was salient during the 1990 s, other factors are more salient for this post-war generation facing challenges of the global market, among other issues.

Methodological Approach for Narrating Development

Building on the goals of community centers in the region, our research with war-affected adolescents occurred within a workshop designed to elicit youth perspectives on history, society, and the future (Daiute, 2007). In addition to this motivational and practical purpose, workshop activities were designed to engage within, as well as across participant diversity, in particular about issues of conflict in the post-war period. To allow for such complexity, the affordances of narrative activities were varied systematically as in the following prompts.[5]

Peer Conflict Narrative: Write about a time when you or someone you know had a conflict or disagreement with someone your age. Tell me what happened... Who was involved? What happened? Where was it? When was it? How did those involved think and feel about the conflict? How did you handle it? How did it all turn out?

Adult Conflict Narrative: Write about a time when adults you know (or the "community") had a conflict or disagreement. Tell me what happened... Who was involved?

[5]The heart of the research was a 5-hour workshop as part of a curricular or extra-curricular social studies, language, social service, or computer program. Workshop activities were designed to engage high school and college students in a variety of communication and inquiry skills related to post-war development, migration history, social inclusion, and the collective development of individuals and society. The three narrative conflict writing activities are embedded in activity 1. Completion of "Youth Perspectives on Society" Survey – *What are we experiencing?* This survey includes 22 open-ended and likert scale prompts for demographic information, including selection of a pseudonym to be used on all written materials, place of residence, age, etc.; requests for participants' involvement in extra-curricular activities, such as community centers, sports and arts activities, social service, etc.; requests for stories about conflicts in daily life; participants' assessments of the problems in the society, the positive aspects of the society; and a letter, written to an official about how adults in their society can help youth prepare for a positive future. Subsequent activities in the workshop (reported elsewhere) involved discussing results of the survey (#1) completed by other youth, discussion of a public story about youth response to a recent conflict event, creating, and responding to an original youth survey.

What happened? Where was it? When was it? How did those involved think and feel about the conflict? How did they (you?) handle it? How did it all turn out?

Hypothetical Community Narrative: Using the following story starter, complete your own version of the story.
"___and ___ (from two groups) met a ground-breaking of the new town center building. Everyone at the event had the opportunity to break the earth for the foundation and to place a brick for the building. It was an exciting community event and everyone was pleased that the new building would mark a new future. As they were working to begin the foundation, ___ and ___ had a conversation about how they would like to make a difference in their town so their children could live happily together. All of a sudden, someone came with news that changed everything! What was the news? How did everyone involved think and feel? How did it all turn out?"

These activities systematically vary affordances of narrator stance by shifting the character perspective from the social world of peers to that of adults and to the community, thereby changing the explicit exposure of the narrator self to actual and potential audiences. The young authors are most personally exposed in the peer-focused narratives, while exposed to a lesser extent in the adult-focused narratives where they can assume the stance of observers. The hypothetical community narrative activity offered an opportunity to express contentious issues as expressed through fictional characters. In this way, adolescents are invited to tell others' stories as well as their own. These are all identity expressions.

While a first person stance opens a wide range of possible stories, it also exposes narrators to judgment by the immediate audience (researchers, community center directors, peers) and distal audiences (reflections on the family, society, etc.). While a first person narrative may be easier, more interesting, more self-focused, heart-felt, or authentic, it also requires special consideration about how one will be perceived. In this post-war context, for example, all youth exposed to the media, attending public school, and engaging in public life know that the Balkan countries are being judged for their war-related past and activities like "ethnic cleansing." Youth in Serbia, moreover, know that their former President Slobodan Milosevic and their society by extension is often characterized as the major aggressor, while youth in Bosnia know that their society is perceived as the major victim of ethnic cleansing. Young people's awareness of such distal audiences, along with their awareness of the more immediate ones, could censor war-talk or elicit idealistic narratives.

In contrast, narrating conflict about adults invites adolescents to step back and focus on the generation that experienced the war and to express information they might normally silence if they were to reflect only from first person perspectives. When narrating adult conflict, they may feel freer to express, for example, bitterness of those who experienced the war, without feeling that they might be perceived as personally expressing a "mentality of the past" which many youth indicated they are against. The hypothetical community narrative shifts narrator stance again with an invitation to introduce two characters "from different groups," thereby leaving open a range of possible intergroup conflicts (open for gender, ethnicity, age group, etc.) and by introducing the turning point "someone came with the news that changed everything." This activity offers a unique opportunity which adolescents may or

may not use to complete the story about conflict and to express relations that may be taboo in more autobiographical contexts.

Since adolescents across a wide range of linguistic cultures have developed abilities to use the basic structural conventions and evaluative devices of narrating (Berman & Slobin, 1994), they are likely to become increasingly in control of the social-relational dimensions, such as using fictional narratives to voice their knowledge and experience which audiences may perceive as negative. Such communicative complexity is, I argue, a developmental process that can be exploited with these diverse narrating experiences. These narratives are then data for analyzing adolescents' variations of meaning within and across narratives to mediate experience.

The written narrative mode is relevant for several reasons. Previous research in the United States and internationally indicates that adolescents have the encoding and decoding skills necessary for writing narratives. In addition, the use of computers for many of the workshop activities, including narrative writing, appealed to potential participants and the directors of organizations who recruited them. Finally, writing narratives provides a relatively more comparable context across individuals and sites since this individual activity minimizes explicit interactions.

Narrative Database and Analyses

These 108 youth from BiH (34), Serbia (14), Croatia (37), and the United States (23)[6] wrote 250 narratives in their respective native languages. Participants were, of course, free to respond or not to each activity, with most writing all three narratives, which resulted in 89 narratives of conflicts among peers; 84 narratives of conflicts among adults; and 76 narratives of hypothetical community events.[7] As expected, participants responded to the narrative prompts appropriately with 80% of the narratives structured around social conflicts and from 81% to 36% including character strategies to resolve those conflicts.

Categories to account for diverse conflict and resolution strategies were generated from the data, applied systematically to each narrative, and summed by narrative type and country context. As shown in Table 11.2, conflict issue categories include "social issues and affiliations," "differences of opinion/understanding," "physical issues and aggression," "political-infrastructure issues," "property (including turf and finances)," "character and emotional issues," "fate/no reason/silly things," and statements that the narrator/character does not participate in conflicts. As shown in Table 11.3, the resolution strategies generated from the data

[6]The international situation made it difficult to involve exactly the same number of participants across sites, as recruitment was dependent on representative connections and contexts in each context.

[7]Participants in other settings have, for example, indicated that they found the activities to be interesting, that they were "surprised to get results from other responders to the same survey," and that creating their own survey to be taken by other youth made them feel "powerful." Those youth also offered suggestions for improving one activity, which we have done.

Table 11.2 % Narratives by plot conflict across genres by youth in different countries

	BiH	Serbia	Croatia	United States
Community narratives	N = 25	N = 8	N = 26	N = 18
Social issues and affiliations	0	25	7	5
Differences of opinion/understanding	4	0	0	0
Physical issues and aggression	0	0	4	5
Political-infrastructure issues	36	50	50	47
Property (turf and finances)	25	12	34	17
Character and emotional issues	0	0	0	0
Silly thing/no reason/fate	8	25	7	17
No conflict	20	0	0	5
Peer conflict narratives	N = 33	N = 14	N = 25	N = 18
Social issues and affiliations	37	35	52	50
Differences of opinion/understanding	6	21	24	5
Physical issues and aggression	15	7	8	11
Political-infrastructure issues	6	14	0	16
Property (turf and finances)	9	0	0	0
Character and emotional issues	3	14	0	0
Silly thing/no reason/fate	3	7	0	5
No conflict	18	0	16	11
Adult conflict narratives	N = 26	N = 11	N = 26	N = 18
Social issues and affiliations	21	63	22	33
Differences of opinion/understanding	7	0	11	11
Physical issues and aggression	28	9	14	5
Political-infrastructure issues	0	0	25	11
Property (turf and finances)	0	27	11	16
Character and emotional issues	17	0	3	0
Silly thing/no reason/fate	7	0	0	22
No conflict	21	0	11	5

include “psychological strategies,” “communication strategies,” “other intervention strategies,” physical strategies,” “collective action,” and “no strategy stated.” These conflict issue and resolution categories occur across the narratives as the beginning of this chapter, with the issue of “physical issues and aggression” in Rudy’s narrative, “property” in I.S. narrative, “political-infrastructure” in Feniks’ narrative, and “emotion” in Krusko’s narrative. Resolution strategies indicating attempts to deal with the conflict issue (not necessarily achieving successful resolution) include “other intervention,” “communication,” “psychological strategy” (Feniks’explanation of why the issue cannot be resolved), and “no resolution strategy.”

A second phase of analysis focused on the significance of participants’ stories as indicated by psychological state expressions. Researchers have offered convincing evidence that significance occurs in the evaluative phase of narrative discourse, with linguistic devices such as psychological state verbs among other features. Building on previous studies with narratives of conflict (Bamberg, 2004; Daiute

Table 11.3 % Narratives with different resolution strategies by genre and by country

	BiH	Serbia	Croatia	United States
Community narratives	N = 25	N = 8	N = 26	N = 18
Psychological strategy	4	12	23	11
Communicative strategy	8	12	7	0
Other intervention strategy	12	12	11	17
Physical strategy	0	0	3	11
Collective action	32	18	30	11
Total resolution strategies	56	54	74	50
No strategy stated	32	45	19	47
No conflict stated	16	18	3	11
Peer conflict narratives	N = 33	N = 14	N = 25	N = 18
Psychological strategy	9	64	20	11
Communicative strategy	21	28	12	22
Other intervention strategy	3	7	20	22
Physical strategy	3	0	0	16
Total resolution strategies	36	99	52	71
No strategy stated	44	0	32	44
No conflict stated	18	0	16	11
Adult conflict narratives	*N* = 26	*N* = 11	*N* = 26	*N* = 18
Psychological strategy	0	27	14	0
Communicative strategy	7	18	25	27
Other intervention strategy	25	9	14	38
Physical strategy	3	18	0	5
One party submits	3	9	0	0
Total resolution strategies	38	81	53	70
No strategy stated	39	27	40	22
No conflict	25	0	7	25

et al., 2001; Labov & Waletzky, 1997; Peterson & McCabe, 1983), the significance analysis coded use of psychological state expressions including (as in the narratives at the beginning of the chapter) "affective states" ("appalled," "irritated," "yelling," "cursing," "was torn," "felt he was abandoning," "subconsciously," etc.); cognitive and socio-cognitive states" ("shouldn't forget," "look forward," "solved," "felt guilty," "mentality," "thinks," etc.), "intentions and anticipations" ("I tried," "was quite determined" etc.); and "reported speech." Computations of average number of psychological state expressions per narrative type and country account for the varied numbers of narratives per context.

Hypothetical Community Narrative Activity Captures International Youth Imagination

Youth across country contexts organized their narratives of a hypothetical community scenario with relatively similar plot structures (conflict issues and resolution strategies) and significances (character psychological states). As shown in Table 11.2, young people across the contexts tended to organize their community

narratives around issues of political-infrastructure and issues of property. The second most frequent conflict issue for all but the Serbian context related to property, with fate as another relatively frequent secondary factor, especially for youth in Serbia and the United States. All but four participants structured their community stories around conflicts such as stopping the building of a community center due to political issues like failure to obtain permits, problems in contracts, corrupt leaders claiming their right to the land or issues of finances such as not having enough money and/or obtaining the necessary funds through gifts.

As the other major element of plot structure, patterns of resolution strategies were also relatively common across the community narratives. At least 50% of the narratives across the contexts included resolution strategies to address the expressed conflicts. In addition, these resolution strategies ranged across categories from a high of collective action, except for the penchant of participants in the United States for the "other intervention" strategy.

The analysis of psychological states also indicates a relatively common use of the hypothetical community narrative activity by youth across the country contexts. The number of psychological state expressions per community narratives by country group falls in a closer range (4.5 for BiH narratives, 6.3 for Serbia, 6.7 for Croatia, 6.0 for United States) compared to those for the narratives of peer conflicts (6.6 for BiH, 14.2 for Serbia, 8.4 for Croatia, 5.8 for United States) or adult conflicts (4.1 for BiH, 5.4 for Serbia, 6.8 for Croatia, 3.0 for United States).

Since the community narrative activity involved building on a story starter, participants had more common features to work with than in the two autobiographical contexts, while having completely open options for completing the story. These stories dealt with context-specific obstacles, such as graves in BiH, corruption in Serbia and Croatia, and issues of tedious bureaucratic procedures like securing permits which are prominent annoyances across the Western Balkans with a broader script revolves around collective orientation, action, or outrage against obstacles with some different conclusions and psychodynamic energies (Daiute & Lucic, 2008). This response to the community narrative shows that youth across the contexts had basic abilities to read the story starter, write coherent narratives, and address a range of institutional factors and psychological states not as prominent in the other narrative contexts.

Analyses of the community narratives revealed, in brief, a relatively universal script of inclusive and collective human action to overcome obstacles, a kind of moral tale about people coming together against great odds. The affordances of this narrative activity appear to have engaged sensibilities, like those identified in research on moral development, in particular to include universal attributions of common good in the fact of obstacles and injustices (Turiel, 2002). In the following story, Rudy shifts away from negative interpersonal conflict to express community goals and positive affect for the first time across narrating contexts

> The news was that the mayor appeared and told the people who were present that the city administration donate a certain amount of money to the Center so it could obtain necessary equipment such as computers, video recorders, and other technical devices. Everybody was extremely excited and happy. Eventually, they threw a big party attended by the mayor himself. (By Rudy, BiH)

I.S. from Serbia identifies an institutional obstacle of high taxes to challenge the standards of the local community and their "wonderful," building, thus expression collective community goals, rather than the divisions in her other narratives.

> Administration and local community...
> The building is wonderful, but taxes are high in this area, i.e. the building has been built in the wrong area - it does not meet the standards of the local community. (By I.S., Serbia)

Feniks introduced the issue of funding, which was common for these narratives across contexts, while diversifying from his more typically generous stance in the other narratives to negative emotions of characters feeling "betrayed" and "frustrated."

> The news was that they lost all their sponsors and all the works were stopped. The participants felt betrayed and were frustrated. They all left the construction site hoping for better future. (By Feniks, Croatia)

Krusko crafted her story around a romantic relationship challenged by migration, the tension between possibility and loss, and an uncharacteristic happy ending.

> Emir and Elvir
> The news was that Emir's long-time girlfriend was in Bosnia and she wanted to marry him now or never. He couldn't stay and take part in the community event, he had to move back. Everyone who was there of Bosnian decent was jealous that Emir was moving back, even his best friend Elvir. Emir moved back, lived a humble yet fulfilling life in Sarajevo. (By Krusko, United States)

With similar approaches, a majority of participants used the relative freedom of fiction to deal with big issues, idealized orientations (such as collective community action and returning to Sarajevo), and emotions they did not express in the autobiographical contexts.

Autobiographical Narrative Activities Engage Diverse Psychosocial Processes

Analyses of the conflicts, resolutions, and psychosocial states in narratives of conflicts with peers reveal more differences than similarities across contexts. Considering scholars' consistent observation about adolescents' focus on peer relationships, it is not surprising that youth across the contexts organized peer conflict narratives around social issues and affiliations, as shown in Table 11.2. Nevertheless, beyond the common focus on social issues and affiliations in peer conflict narratives, important differences emerge, suggesting that adolescents' focus on peers is shaped by local circumstances. After social issues and differences of opinion, youth in Serbia tended to focus on political-infrastructure, character/emotional issues, and physical issues and fate. In contrast, a relatively high percentage of participants in Croatia reported no conflicts as the third most frequent category followed by physical issues, while no youth in Serbia said that they and/or their peers never have conflicts. Like youth in Croatia, a relatively high percentage of youth in BiH and

in the United States also claimed that conflicts among peers do not occur. While youth in the Western Balkan contexts differed in the distribution of conflict types across the other categories, Balkan origin youth in United States tended to focus on a relatively high percentage of conflicts around political-infrastructure and physical issues.

Analyses of resolution strategies in peer conflict narratives also indicate interactions with context. As shown in Table 11.3, peer conflict narratives by youth in Serbia are most notably different from those by youth in the other countries because of their relatively high percentage of resolution strategies per narrative. In addition to this relatively high percentage of total resolution strategies, youth in Serbia tended to resolve narrative conflicts among peers with psychological strategies followed by communicative strategies.

> The conflict occurred during the hectic period before the parliamentary elections. A couple of friends and I were a minority regarding political orientation. Apparently, our problem was that we were "too open minded" and "insufficiently conservative". We were challenged with no argumentative support, while we supported our responses with arguments. However, the major issue was the mentality which we have not been able to change so far. (By I.S., Serbia)

Youth in the United States also demonstrated a penchant for narrating resolutions to peer conflicts, with, however, a broader range of strategies than youth in Serbia. More similar to the approach of youth in Croatia, those in the United States resolved peer conflicts with psychological strategies, communicative strategies, other intervention strategies, and physical strategies.

> I had a disagreement with my roommate who was on AIM while I was trying to sleep. She got into a tiny conflict which was shortly resolved because we live together, we cannot be angry at each other. I would have been more upset had I not thought about her point of view. The way I was (taught) is that, respect would be a fundamental value and she seemed to be lacking. I couldn't understand that because my whole life I've lived with Bosnian people who were just like me. I had to change my expectations, lower them in this case. We (my roommate and I) are rooming again, we're worked past it. I've learned not to do certain things which are normal in Bosnia (i.e. ask who she just spoke to on the phone) and she no longer disturbs me when I'm trying to sleep. (By Krusko, 19, United States)

Accentuating the difference between these percentages and those of youth in Serbia, however, is the fact that relatively high percentages of peer conflict narratives by youth in the other contexts did not state conflicts, as illustrated in the following narrative by a youth in BiH.

> During the break at school, while I was waiting in line for sandwiches, a boy from another class put a firecracker in my rucksack which was on my back. I didn't even notice that until other students started to laugh and move away from me. Then I realized that my books were burning, so I threw the rucksack on the ground and ran away because I was scared. I was very angry and scared because I didn't find it to be funny, but rather dangerous. The worst thing was that the other students either ran away of laughed; none of them defended me, nobody said anything to that boy. (By Rudy, 15, BiH).

Analyses of psychosocial states in the peer conflict narratives also revealed major uniqueness by the group in Serbia who included almost twice as many psychological states per narrative than those by youth in the other contexts. In spite of the relatively high frequency of psychological state expressions in peer narratives by youth in Serbia, they included a similar range of types as those in youth in the other contexts. Interestingly, however, the US group is notably different from the other groups in their attribution of psychological states to first versus third person characters in narratives of peer conflicts, with more cognitive/socio-cognitive and reported speech expressions for third person characters than for first person characters, differing from the relatively higher frequencies, especially on cognitive/socio-cognitive expressions.

We can attribute the fact that the most common conflict issue in narratives about conflicts with peers is social to an adolescent concern with such matters, as has been stated in much previous research. As indicated in the analysis of resolution strategies and psychological state expressions, however, issues in social relationships with peers are developed differently across the contexts, with conflicts evolving most prominently into psychological interactions (by youth in Serbia), communication sequences (by youth in the United States and in BiH), and interactions of bystander characters (by youth in the United States and Croatia). Differences in the pattern of peer conflict issues emerging within and across contexts are, in contrast, likely to occur because of the autobiographical nature of this genre, which involves settings and, thus, an anchoring in the circumstances of daily life. Differences across country in the second most-frequent conflict issue, for example, link to the specific contexts where these youth are enacting their relationships. The Serbian and Croatian engagement with opinion and understanding reflects different challenges and goals of post-war recovery, which appears to require, in the case of Serbia, intense reflection, and, in the case of Croatia, a forward-looking attitude. The engagement of youth conflict with political issues in Serbia and the United States is consistent with the relatively isolated positions of youth in those contexts.

Explanations of the major differences in resolution strategies across peer conflict narratives also turn on the position of the society in the world. Symbolic circumstances in Serbia with the burden of being depicted as the major aggressor are consistent with the psychological orientation to conflict, compared to the relative lack of that strategy in the other contexts. The relatively high emphasis on other intervention strategy in the United States is consistent with the position of Bosnian immigrants as "wandering souls" (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). This phenomenon tends to occur among second-generation migrants to the United States where those with diverse family culture and language are isolated, motivating a focus on those individuals and practices in the mainstream, perhaps to learn about them or to explore possibilities for assistance in facing the discrimination young people obviously perceive. These specific explanations may not account for all possibilities, but the emergence of differences in what is salient to peer relationships is an important finding worth ongoing inquiry.

Narratives of conflicts among adults differed dramatically in the nature of conflicts, resolution strategies, and psychosocial states across the countries. As shown in

Table 11.3, Serbian youth's adult conflict narratives concentrated on conflict around social issues and affiliations, while the remaining three groups had more distributed conflict issues across various types. As shown in Table 11.3, most of the narratives included resolution strategies, with typically higher percentages than for no stated strategy. One of the most striking patterns was the relatively high percentage of narratives with psychological resolution strategies by adolescents in Serbia. There was, moreover, a relatively low percentage of collective action strategies in community narratives by the US authors. Interventions by others emerged as prevalent for adolescents in BiH and in the United States in adult conflict narratives. The range in psychological state expressions is less in the adult narratives than in the peer narratives but more than in the community narratives. These patterns of differences in structure and significance across context are evident in the examples at the beginning of this chapter. As characteristic of a majority of narratives by participants in Serbia, the narrative by I.S. revolves around issues of property, "a neighbor appropriate half the street." Damage to homes, cars, and misuses of public space, like parking in someone else's parking space, were common in this context. Also a favorite approach by young authors in Serbia was the psychological strategy presented here as "I think all the neighbors in the building were thinking how bored they were," although this strategy was not as prevalent in the adult narratives as they had been in the peer narratives. Issues in relationships and over property in the Serbian adult conflict narratives were also resolved with physical strategies, sometimes damage to antagonists' property, and communication to work out differences. Different is the pattern in narratives by youth in BiH, as are their circumstances. In contrast to the intense psychosocial state expressions in peer conflict narratives by youth in Serbia, they tended much less to represent adults' consciousness, and thus the significance of events for them or for the narrator him or herself. As in the story by Vahmati, many psychosocial expressions were cognitive/socio-cognitive: "last century mentality," "still thinks he has the power."

As in the characteristic narrative by Rudy, youth in BiH narrated conflicts among adults most prominently physical issues and aggression, "nearly started to fight physically...drivers were yelling and cursing...they prevented the others from moving." Numerous more explicitly violent examples mentioned "guns," "knives," "the impatient driver took a brick, threw it at my neighbor, and hit him." As in the example by Rudy, the preferred resolution strategy was intervention by others: "A younger man interfered and made the two men stop arguing."

As in the opening narrative by Feniks, participants in Croatia focused on issues of politics and the faltering re-building of the infrastructure required for the country's economic and social development. More apt to write explicitly about "war" than Serbian youth, Croatian Feniks situated the war as a conflict among adults, with the attendant blame for failing to make the war worthwhile because of "bad privatization, corrupted politicians, low life standards, etc." Remarkably different from their approach in the peer conflict narratives, participants in Croatia focused on the escalation and explanation of conflicts among adults, leaving some 40% without a resolution strategy. Although not resolving all conflicts, Feniks and his peers tended to emphasize cognitive/socio-cognitive states among adults, as with "forget," "look

forward," "solved," followed by feeling states and to lesser extents intentions and reported speech.

In her narrative at the beginning of this chapter, Krusko, whose immediate family fled BiH when she was child, poignantly depicts a conflict in a family relationship. As with others living in a similar setting, the social issue is not a fight but a caring disagreement, in this case with a resolution strategy that is merely physical, "He moved here," and a characteristic melancholy concluding the story. The story by Krusko is intense in psychosocial state expression, including cognitive/sociocognitive states, "was torn," "being pushy," and affective states, "felt guilty," "still feels bad," "we all do."

These relatively major differences in adult narratives by youth across positions of the Yugoslavian wars are consistent with my proposal that youth can use the affordances of narratives to interact with their environments. These young people used the adult conflict narratives to focus on the past, mostly as lived by adults in the present. Since both past and present differ in important ways, those details came to life in this narrative context. I.S. distances herself from the last century mentality and Feniks distances from those who obsess about the past at the expense of the future. With their emphasis on physical altercations, youth in BiH focus on tensions in their public spaces, while youth in the United States use this context to shift their gaze to nostalgia or the mainstream United States from which they feel alienated.

Diverse Orientations Across Contexts

Participants in this study expressed different knowledge about conflict and orientations to conflict across three narrative tasks from the perspective of their peer group, the adult generation, and the broader community in a hypothetical, realistic scenario. In addition to this within-group diversity, common and diverse patterns emerged in narratives by youth across the positions across the former Yugoslavia. Patterns of results indicated, moreover, that while the hypothetical community narrative elicited a relatively common narrative script of perseverance-against-all-odds, the autobiographical narratives differed in what emerged as salient types of conflict, resolution, and psychosocial orientations. Given these within and across context differences, we can point to adolescents' uses of narrating to mediate self-society factors.

To describe these orientations by country, I compiled results of the preferred narrative structure (conflict issues and resolution strategies) and psychological state expression categories. In keeping with this qualitative approach, I use relative criteria, the most frequent two categories by each group. Narratives by adolescents in Serbia emerge as the most unique. The compilation of narrative action and consciousness categories reveals an orientation of hyper reflectivity, indicated by the combination of focus on conflicts related to social issues, differences of opinion/understanding, focus on political-infrastructure, relatively extensive portrayal of resolution strategies and psychological states.

In terms of the prospects analysis presented in Table 11.1, reflectivity is an appropriate developmental reaction for a generation that has myriad reasons to take stock

of the actions of a position in the war considered notorious, as well as to distance from this past. In addition, youth living in a nation that was bombed by US-led NATO forces 8 years ago would also be reasonably attentive to causes and effects of violence, which affected their lives. While accounts by international and regional organizations maintain reminders of Serbia's role in genocide in BiH, failure to turn in all war criminals, and other negative factors, the country is receiving high marks for constitutional reform, although economic prospects were not good at all during the time of the study. These conflicting indicators may stimulate intense perspective-taking and second-guessing by youth who while loyal to their country in many ways want regional or international recognition. The period since the late 1990 s in Serbian cities has, moreover, been characterized by critique if not distancing of the post-war generation to their elders, especially when they perceived failure to follow through on new methods of government and education (Lazic, 1999). Expressed as "last century mentality" and other metaphors, social relations in narratives by Serbian youth are also self-critical of their own and others' interactions.

Describing the characteristic orientations of the other three groups is more difficult because of the relatively nuanced sets of summary results. Nevertheless, several patterns coordinate the summaries. The compilation of major analytic categories in narratives by adolescents in BiH indicates an orientation of disengagement from conflict. Although the most frequent conflict type in peer narratives by youth in BiH is social issues, as in the other groups, the relative lack of conflict in the plot is the second frequent category in peer and adult narratives. Another notable feature suggesting relative disengagement from conflict in these narratives by youth in BiH is the lack of resolution strategies as the most common quality across peer, adults, and community narratives. Also consistent with the disengagement are the relatively low ratios of psychological state representations per narrative genre.

As indicated by the second most common resolution strategy, the communication strategy, it is not that narratives by BiH youth do not center on social relations but that they do not elaborate actions or reflections on conflict as much as youth in the other areas. The conflicts tend to revolve around physical violence, which may be an ongoing effect of having suffered major attacks to their land by neighboring Serbia and Croatia. In addition, as reflected in the ongoing focus on ethnicity in this heterogeneous country, reified by the Dayton Agreement which organizes government by ethnic groups in order to avoid conflicts, these results may echo not only the position of the country as having experienced more violence locally over an extended period of time. This discourse of disengagement is evident even in the community narratives, which, while most similar to those by youth in the other groups, differs in the relatively large percentage of denials of conflict. A psychosocial response to distance from conflict may be protective in a situation with ongoing threats to stability and progress, because of ambivalence about moving beyond the status of victim, fear of obstacles, or some other impetus to disengage from directly addressing conflict.

The Croatian orientation can be characterized as engaged primarily because of the relatively high percentage of resolution strategies, especially in the community narrative context. That total is comprised of relatively high collective action and communication strategies. Although narratives by youth in Serbia are higher overall,

the engagement with the community narrative context by adolescents in Croatia could, perhaps, reflect the relatively large participation of these youth in community organizations. Interestingly, the patterns of psychological state expression in peer narratives by the youth living in Croatia are skewed toward the "I" perspective, while those by the immigrants to the United States are skewed toward the "other" perspective, as illustrated in the peer narratives from those contexts.

Like youth in Serbia, adolescents in the United States context use narratives in several strikingly unique ways compared to the other groups. One relatively unique characteristic of the US adolescents' narratives is their emphasis on other/bystander psychological states. Several characteristics of narratives by the US youth suggest an other-orientation. Narratives by adolescents in the United States also tended to focus on discrimination, which is captured in the relatively frequent conflicts around political-infrastructure. Also consistent with this other-orientation is the relatively unique penchant among the US participants to resolve conflicts across narrative genres via the intervention of secondary characters. The US narratives also have a nostalgic quality, with many expressing a preference for "Bosnian people" and returning to Bosnia. While probably spared some physical violence of those who remained in Bosnia, the US group experienced the violence of displacement and the attendant exclusion of immigrants.

Communicative Complexity Is a Narrative Development Process

Zooming out from the picture of cross-country difference, noting the differences across narrative genres is important to theory and research on narrative at issue in this book. As discussed above, participants approached the community narrative in similar way, offering us insights about the productive nature of projective activities. At the same time, participants used the other narrating activities in more context-sensitive ways. This shift underscores the argument that narrating is a social discourse and that these youth, like those younger ones in previous research, can use storytelling to mediate self-society relations. Most provocatively for our ongoing theory and research in narrative and developmental psychology is the fact that we observe more universal orientation in the hypothetical activity and more interactive orientations in autobiographical activities, one trained on the past (adult conflict narratives) and the other trained on the present and future (the peer conflict narratives).

This distributed nature of self-expression informs narrative and adolescent theories, in particular about the varied range of information adolescents can bring to bear on a seemingly narrow domain-like conflict and the varied nature of their priorities beyond social relational ones. Consistent with previous research, we find that affordances of narrative genres govern the content of narratives, as evidenced in the different kinds of conflicts and resolution strategies that emerge across the narrative tasks. Differences in how youth across contexts use these affordances to reflect

on experience suggest a mediating role of narrative as a tool for understanding and performing self-society relations. Adolescents living in different cultural-historical positions around a conflict apply those affordances to do psychosocial work relevant to circumstances where they live. Results indicate, in brief, that the relationship between narrator and text is complex rather than unitary and straightforward. The study, thus, offers insights about loosening definitions that equate narrator and narrative toward definitions, research designs, and practices that support adolescents' uses of narrating as a tool for developing critical expression and reflection.

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