J Youth Adolescence (2007) 36:23–29
DOI 10.1007/s10964-006-9157-z

FESTSCHRIFT ESSAY

Suffering, Selfish, Slackers? Myths and Reality About Emerging Adults

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett

Received: 1 October 2006 / Accepted: 15 November 2006 / Published online: 16 December 2006

Abstract Many myths about adolescence have been refuted by research, but similar myths have grown up in recent years around emerging adulthood. This essay addresses three of those myths: the claim that they suffer from a normative "crisis"; the accusations that they are "selfish"; and their alleged reluctance to "grow up" and become adults. For each issue, evidence is presented showing that the myths exaggerate or falsify the true experience of emerging adults.

Keywords Emerging adulthood · Storm and stress · Transition to adulthood · Stereotypes

Among Daniel Offer's many contributions to scholarship on adolescence, perhaps most notable is his research debunking the myths of adolescence—that they miserable, hyperemotional, and at war with their parents and the world. Myths about adolescence originated in the storm and stress idea in German literature, where *sturm und drang* was a term applied to novels depicting excesses of youthful behavior and emotion, such as von Goethe's (1774/1989) *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. G. Stanley Hall (1904) imported the storm and stress myth into scholarship on adolescence in his magnum opus that became the foundation of the field of adolescent development. Although Hall's conception of adolescence was diverse and contained many positive themes (Arnett, 2006), his view of storm and stress as an inherent and universal part of adolescent development became widely known.

However, it was the psychoanalysts who drew the most extreme caricature of adolescent storm and stress and who did the most to promote the myth of adolescent development as inherently tumultuous and pathological. In particular, Anna Freud (1958, 1968) had a dark view of the development of the psyche during adolescence. In her view, adolescence is a time when the oedipal motivations of childhood reassert themselves, now dangerously allied with sexual maturity, leading to an upheaval in the psyche that is a necessary part of development but is nevertheless traumatic for adolescents and everyone around them. Extremes of behavior and emotion in adolescence are perfectly normal, in her view. In fact, it is the adolescent who shows no such upheaval who should be regarded with suspicion. As she famously asserted, "To be normal during the adolescent period is by itself abnormal" (1958, p. 267). The "normal" adolescents who showed no signs of storm and stress must certainly be repressing it, must indeed have "built up excessive defenses against their drive activities and are now crippled by the results" (1968, p. 15).

Anna Freud's myth of adolescence was widely adopted by other psychoanalysts (Blos, 1962), and the psychoanalytic paradigm dominated in adolescent psychology (as elsewhere) for many years. Then, in 1969, came Daniel Offer's (1969) book *The Psychological World of the Teenager* to challenge and ultimately overthrow the psychoanalytic myths of adolescents. Offer's book was based mainly on research on non-clinical samples, in contrast to the psychoanalysts' reliance on clinical cases, and it presented a portrait of adolescence that was markedly different from the psychoanalytic view. Far from being "crippled" psychologically,

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett is Research Professor in the Department of Psychology at Clark University. He is the editor of Journal of Adolescent Research and author of *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties* (2004, Oxford University Press). He was a postdoctoral fellow under Daniel Offer at Northwestern University Medical School from 1989–1992.

J. J. Arnett (✉)
Department of Psychology, Clark University,
950 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610
e-mail: arnett@jeffreyarnett.com

the adolescents described by Offer generally felt good about themselves, contented with their parents, comfortable with their bodies and their sexuality, and hopeful about the future. The norm among Offer's adolescents was not "abnormal" but quite healthy, free from any serious psychopathology. Offer did not deny that some adolescents have problems. However, he found that notable problems were experienced by only about one-fourth of adolescents.

Today, few academic psychologists endorse the psychoanalytic myth that adolescents are wracked by storm and stress and wrestling with oedipal demons. On the contrary, the mainstream view in adolescent psychology today is precisely what Offer first articulated almost 40 years ago. Furthermore, in recent years a "positive youth development" movement has begun that not only denies the storm and stress caricature of adolescence but emphasizes the health, optimism, and resilience that adolescents exhibit (Larson, 2002).

However, these changes do not mean that the myths of adolescence are dead and gone. On the contrary, the persistence of myths of adolescence among the general public has been notable, even after at least two decades in which Daniel Offer's view of the healthy normal adolescent has prevailed in the academic literature (Buchanan and Holmbeck, 1998; Offer and Schonert-Reichl, 1992). This is partly because even though most adolescents do not exhibit serious problems, certain types of problems, such as conflict with parents, are more common during adolescence than at other ages (Arnett, 1999). It is also due in part to media sensationalism in portraying adolescents. The media frequently present stories of extreme cases of adolescent behavior, such as adolescents who kill their classmates or have many sexual partners, and imply that such behavior is a simmering potential in all adolescents (Strange, 2007).

My own work has been mainly on the years after adolescence, the period from the late teens through about the mid-twenties that I have termed *emerging adulthood* (Arnett, 1998, 2000, 2004; Arnett and Taber, 1994; Arnett and Tanner, 2006). In researching, writing, reading, and talking about emerging adults, I have frequently found that here, too, are numerous myths about what most of them are like. Like Dan Offer did for adolescents, I have devoted part of my work to refuting the false portrayals of emerging adulthood and seeking to present a more research-based and more valid view of their lives.

In this essay, I will examine some of the myths about emerging adulthood, the reasons for them, and the data that refute them. I have chosen three prominent myths that I have seen stated repeatedly in academic circles and/or popular media. The issues involving emerging adults are in some ways similar to and in some ways different from the issues that apply to adolescents. For emerging adults, three key myths concern their overall well-being, their "selfishness," and their alleged unwillingness to "grow up."

Are they suffering? Well-being in emerging adulthood

One claim made frequently about emerging adults is that they are a miserable lot, wracked with anxiety and unhappiness, intimidated to the point of paralysis about their grim prospects for entering the adult world. According to this view, the years from age 18 to 25 are a dark and dreary period of the life course. Emerging adults are typically confused and glum, and overwhelmed by what the world seems to require from them.

Perhaps the best-known popular statement of this view is the book *Quarterlife Crisis* (Robbins and Wilner, 2001). This book was written by two emerging adult women, and there is much in it that is on target. They describe with accuracy and insight the ambivalence with which many emerging adults view their entry into adult responsibilities (Arnett, 2004). There is truth, too, in their observation that the uncertainty and instability of the age period make it unsettling for many people. However, there is considerable hyperbole in their claim that the emerging adult years are a time of agony. They describe emerging adults as suffering from "overwhelming senses of helplessness and cluelessness, of indecision and apprehension" (p. 4), and claim that it is common for them to experience "hopelessness" (p. 5) during this "often traumatic" (p. 11) age period. They describe the experience of a young woman who was "sobbing every other day, frantic with worry . . . doubting myself into a frenzy" as "hardly abnormal" (p. 89).

Although the term "quarterlife crisis" has entered the mainstream of popular culture, there is an older, better term for what the authors of that book describe: Erikson's (1950, 1968) "identity crisis." Over a half century ago, Erikson observed that the primary challenge of adolescence is the identity crisis, in which young people face the challenge of evaluating their abilities, interests, and childhood influences, then using that knowledge to explore possible futures and eventually make enduring choices in love and work. What has changed since Erikson postulated the identity crisis is that it now takes place mainly in emerging adulthood, not adolescence (Arnett, 2004, 2006; Côté, 2000, 2006). The first tentative steps toward an adult identity may take place in adolescence, but identity explorations become more prominent and serious in emerging adulthood. By and large, emerging adults respond to the challenges of identity development not by collapsing into a quivering mass of fear but by making their way gradually toward laying the foundations for an adult life in love and work, with some anxiety but without trauma.

It is not only in popular media that it has been asserted that the emerging adult years are a time of suffering. Some academics, too, have portrayed the late teens through the twenties as a period that is exceptionally difficult and unhappy. Many sociologists view the transition to adulthood in our time as full of terrors and trauma (e.g., Bynner, 2005). The title of one book states it well: *Transitions to adulthood in a changing economy: No work, no family, no future?* (Booth and Crouter, 1999).

Some psychologists share this view. In the subtitle of one recent book, social psychologist Jean Twenge (2006) asserts that today's young people are "more confident, assertive, entitled—and more miserable than ever before." The evidence she presents for the first part of this thesis is quite persuasive in showing that today's emerging adults are more confident and assertive than in the past, and that they have high expectations for their lives ("entitled," as she puts it). However, the evidence for the claim that they are simultaneously "more miserable than ever before" is more questionable. She asserts that the incidence of major depression increased through the 20th century, but this is *lifetime* rate of major depression, not major depression in youth. She presents evidence from her meta-analysis showing that anxiety among college students has increased since the 1950s, but it has been widely documented that modern life feels more stressful to people of all ages, not just the young (Schwartz, 2004). She presents abundant evidence that young people face adult prospects of high housing prices, costly health care, and elusive child care—all of it true, but *none* of it shown here or anywhere else to result in anxiety or depression among adolescents or emerging adults.

What does the evidence actually show about the well-being of emerging adults? In fact, the evidence shows emerging adults overall to be highly contented with themselves and their lives, and remarkably optimistic. In one national survey, 96% of 18–29 year-old Americans agreed with the statement "I am very certain that someday I will get to where I want to be in life" (Hornblower, 1997). Overall well-being rises steadily from the late teens through the mid-twenties. The national Monitoring the Future surveys have followed American emerging adults longitudinally from their senior year in high school through their mid-twenties. Figure 1 shows the pattern from age 18 through 26, as average well-being rises with each year, reaching an average of over 4 on a 5-point scale by ages 25–26 (Schulenberg and Zarrett, 2006). A recent Canadian study shows a highly similar pattern of rising well-being, along with declining depressive affect (Galambos *et al*., 2006). If the majority of emerging adults are miserable, they certainly are hiding it well.

This is not to portray emerging adulthood as entirely a time of pleasure-filled glory days, free of problems. Like every other period of life, emerging adulthood contains its distinctive developmental challenges and difficulties. As noted, there is validity to the "quarterlife crisis" insight that many emerging adults experience anxiety over the instability and identity challenges of their lives, even as they also celebrate their freedom and the wide range of possibilities before them (Arnett, 2004). Their optimism frequently co-exists with an undercurrent of trepidation.

Furthermore, even as emerging adulthood is mostly enjoyable for most people, there are some emerging adults who have particular difficulty handling the requirements of the age period. Emerging adulthood is exceptionally unstructured, the time of life when people are least likely to have their lives structured by social institutions. Children have their lives structured by their families and school, adults have their lives structured by family roles and work commitments. In contrast, emerging adults have mostly left their families of origin and not yet established new families, and they have not yet committed themselves to stable long-term work. Most of them thrive on this freedom, as indicated by their high levels of well-being, but some find it overwhelming. Schulenberg and Zarrett (2006) describe this paradox in detail. For most emerging adults, well-being increases, depressive affect decreases, and a wide variety of problems decrease. However, emerging adulthood is also a period when major depression spikes sharply. Thus the variance in mental health functioning expands during emerging adulthood, improving for most people even as it declines precipitously for a small proportion.

Even for emerging adults who are contented and optimistic about their lives, it is important to note that their contentment and optimism does not extend to the world around them. On the contrary, emerging adults are largely skeptical and even cynical about political and religious institutions, and they are less civically involved and more disengaged than older generations (Putnam, 2000). They tend to have "high hopes in a grim world" (Arnett, 1997), believing that they will be able to create a good and satisfying life for themselves and those they love even as the world deteriorates around them. The failure to distinguish between their hopes for their own lives and their (limited) hopes for the world contributes to the myth that they are unhappy.

Are they selfish? Or self-focused?

Another myth about emerging adults is that they are selfish. In this view, the main reason emerging adults wait until at least their late twenties to enter enduring adult responsibilities is that they prefer to spend their time and money solely on themselves. They live a self-indulgent, materialistic lifestyle and care little about the world around them. This view is found in the United States, but it is perhaps especially prevalent in countries that are experiencing extremely low birth rates in recent decades, so low that their populations are

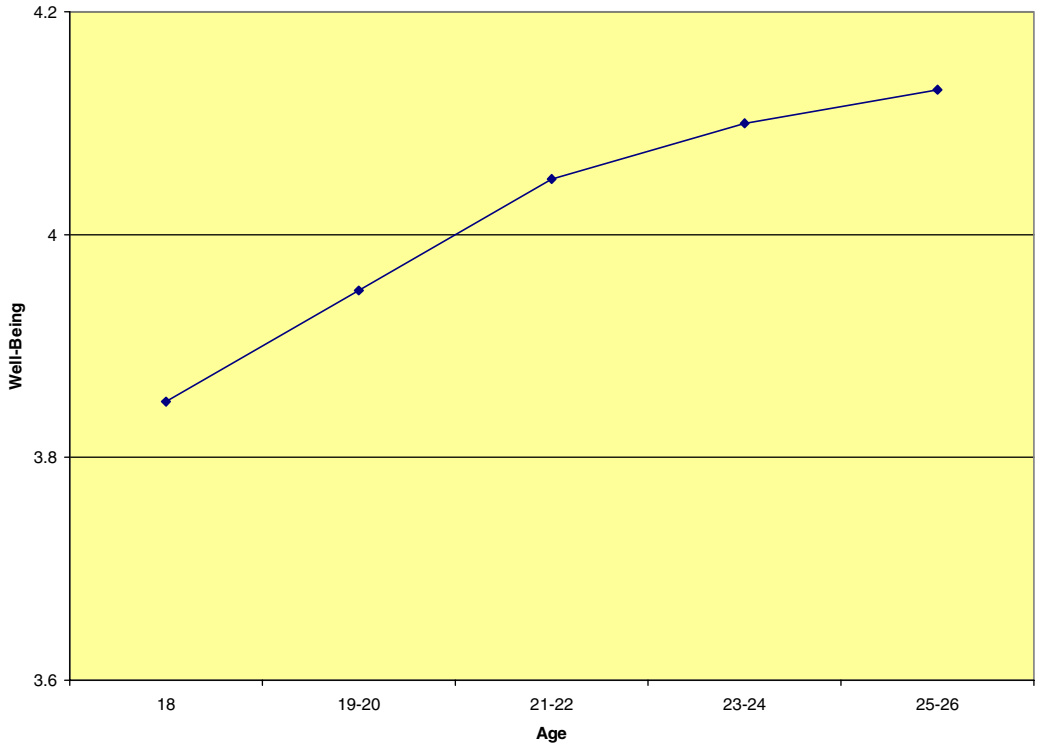

Fig. 1 Trend in well-being from age 18 to 26. Source: Schulenberg and Zarrett (2006)

expected to decline in the decades to come (Douglass, 2005). In Japan, unmarried young people in their twenties and thirties are sometimes referred to with the derisive term "parasite singles."

It does seem to be true that today's emerging adults are less interested than other recent generations in organized political activity. As Robert Putnam (2000) showed in *Bowling Alone*, today's American 18–29 year-olds report considerably less civic engagement than their parents or grandparents did when they were young, on a wide variety of items, from reading the newspaper daily to attending public meetings to serving as an officer in a local organization. However, the trend away from civic engagement has been occurring in American society for over a half century and was not invented by today's emerging adults. Putnam observes that "Although X'ers [today's emerging adults] have often been blamed by their elders (especially the boomers) for the troubles of contemporary American society—especially the emphasis on materialism and individualism—the evidence I have already presented makes clear that this indictment is misplaced. The erosion of American social capital began before any X'er was born, so the X'ers cannot reasonably be blamed for these adverse trends . . . The X Generation reflects in many respects a continuation of the generational course begun just after World War II" (p. 259).

More importantly, although traditional civic engagement among emerging adults is relatively low, they are more likely than ever before to engage in volunteer work. The proportion of college freshmen reporting that they had done volunteer work frequently or occasionally in the past year rose from 66% in 1989 to 82% in 2001 (Astin *et al*., 2002). Over 8,000 persons a year serve in the Peace Corps (Peace Corps, 2005) and 70,000 a year serve in AmeriCorps (AmeriCorps, 2005), and the vast majority of the volunteers in both groups are emerging adults. These facts are difficult to square with the portrayal of emerging adults as selfish.

Perhaps the criticism of emerging adults as selfish stems in part from a misunderstanding of where they are developmentally. Most American emerging adults leave home by age 19 (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1999), and for the next seven years (on average) they live with neither their family of origin nor a marriage partner. This makes emerging adulthood an exceptionally *self-focused* time of life, in the sense that it is a time of life when people have the most opportunity to focus on their self-development, including their educational and occupational preparation for adult life. Many emerging adults take advantage of their self-focused freedom to travel, to live somewhere they have always wanted to live, and to obtain experiences they believe they will not have the opportunity to obtain once they enter the commitments that structure adult life (Arnett, 2004).

It is hard to see how this warrants the epithet "selfish." On the contrary, there is considerable wisdom in emerging adults' recognition that they are in a period of life that grants

them exceptional freedom and that there are many things they can do during their self-focused time of emerging adulthood that will be inaccessible to them later. Nearly all of them plan eventually to make the commitments to others that structure adult life for most people (Arnett, 2004), and three-fourths of them are married and have a child by age 30 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006). Far from being selfish, emerging adults tend to be considerably less egocentric and better at seeing others' points of view than adolescents are (Arnett, 2004; Labouvie-Vief, 2006). Furthermore, they view becoming less self-oriented and more considerate of others as an essential part of becoming fully adult (Arnett, 2003). They reject selfishness in themselves and in others.

Are they slackers? Do they refuse to grow up?

There is little doubt that it takes longer to reach full adulthood today than it did in the past. This is verifiable demographically, in terms of traditional transitions such as finishing education, becoming financially independent from parents, marriage, and parenthood (Aquilino, 2006; Arnett, 2004). It also seems confirmed subjectively by emerging adults' reports that during the 18–25 age period most of them feel not like adolescents and not like adults but somewhere in between, on the way to adulthood but not there yet. My proposal of the term emerging adulthood was predicated on the assertion that reaching adulthood takes so long today that it is necessary to recognize that a new period of the life course has developed in between the end of adolescence and the attainment of young adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2006).

Does this mean that emerging adults resist the responsibilities of adult life, preferring to perpetuate a child-like state of irresponsible play? This is the myth promulgated in popular culture, such the 2005 TIME magazine story that depicted an emerging adult man sitting in a sandbox and declared, "They Just Won't Grow Up." Physician and advice writer Mel Levine (2005) warns apocalyptically that "starting up into adulthood has never been more daunting than it is at present . . . The end result is that many adolescents seek an extension of their high school and/or college years. They just don't want to pull away from their teens . . . The effects on work-life readiness may be catastrophic" (p. 19). In the recent movie *Failure to Launch*, the main character, an emerging adult man, shows so little inclination to move along toward adult responsibilities that his parents hire an attractive young woman to lure him out of their household and into a responsible adult life.

One reason for these views is the speed of the social and demographic changes that have taken place in the lives of young people in recent decades. For many of today's emerging adults, their parents and certainly their grandparents remember that "in their day" reaching age 25 meant being well-settled in adult life, with a stable job expected to last for decades to come, a marriage, at least one child, and a mortgage. Many older adults look askance at today's unsettled emerging adults nowhere near to making such commitments, compare them to where they were themselves at that age, and find them wanting.

But does the delay in entering adult responsibilities mean that emerging adults are actively resisting the idea of becoming adult? This seems unfair in light of current economic realities. The economy in industrialized countries has changed dramatically in recent decades, away from a manufacturing base and toward valuing knowledge and information skills. Consequently, occupations increasingly require postsecondary education or training. More young Americans than ever—over 60%—obtain postsecondary education, not because they fear stable work but because they recognize that higher education is necessary in order to obtain the best jobs available in the information-based economy (Hamilton and Hamilton, 2006). For those who do not obtain higher education, many of them spend their twenties fruitlessly seeking a job that will enable them to support themselves adequately (much less support a joint household with a spouse and one or more children). With high-paying manufacturing jobs mostly gone to developing countries or eliminated by new technologies, the economic prospects of emerging adults who have not obtained higher education are grim during their twenties, and certainly do not lend themselves to the establishment of a stable adult life.

Still, emerging adults' slow, gradual entry into adult responsibilities cannot be explained entirely or even mostly by economic factors. Most emerging adults have feelings of ambivalence about adulthood that are unrelated to their economic situation (Arnett, 2004). They regard adulthood as attractive in some ways, in the security and stability it seems to promise and the increased status it confers. However, they also regard adult responsibilities as a mixed blessing. It is satisfying to be able to stand on your own, make your own decisions, and run your own life, but at the same time, adult responsibilities are onerous—the daily grind of going to work, paying your own bills, washing your own clothes, making your own meals, and so on. Furthermore, to many emerging adults becoming an adult means the end of possibilities, the end of spontaneity, the compromise of their dreams (Arnett, 1998, 2004).

Is it true after all, then, that "they won't grow up"? Not in the sense that they wish to remain in a child-like state of self-indulgent play. On the contrary, their views reflect a shrewd grasp of the realities of adult life. Are they not right to recognize that adulthood, whatever its rewards, involves constraints and limitations that their lives during emerging adulthood do not have? At least, it seems evident that their ambivalence about adulthood is reasonable, and does not merit contempt or derision.

Few do, after all, fail to "launch." By age 30, for better or worse, three-fourths have entered marriage and parenthood, nearly all have entered stable employment, nearly all have become financially independent, and hardly any live with their parents (Arnett, 2004). Thus all the criticism and hand-wringing about their alleged refusal to grow up seems overblown.

Conclusion

The myth of adolescence as a time of universal storm and stress has faded in recent decades, thanks in no small part to Daniel Offer's pioneering research demonstrating that the stereotype is inaccurate. Today, emerging adulthood is an age period about which there are wild misstatements made frequently both in popular media and in academic circles.

Like the myth of adolescent storm and stress, the myths of emerging adulthood are built around a kernel of truth but have become exaggerated into gross falsehoods. Emerging adulthood is often a time of instability and identity crises, even if it is rarely a time of despondency or collapse. Emerging adults are often self-focused, but it is inaccurate and unfair to call them selfish. Emerging adults often have mixed feelings about reaching adulthood, not because they wish to remain childish but because they have discerned that becoming an adult has costs as well as benefits. Today these subtleties are often lost when emerging adults are discussed, but it is possible to hope that in the decades to come a growing research base on emerging adulthood will serve to displace the myths of emerging adulthood as they have been displaced (or at least diminished) for adolescence.

References

AmeriCorps (2005) About Americorps. Available: http://www.americorps.gov/about/overview/index.asp. Retrieved on September 29, 2005

Aquilino WS (2006) Family relationships and support systems in emerging adulthood. In Arnett JJ, Tanner J (eds) Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, pp 193–218

Arnett JJ (1997) Young people's conceptions of the transition to adulthood. Youth Soc 29:1–23

Arnett JJ (1998) Learning to stand alone: The contemporary American transition to adulthood in cultural and historical context. Hum Dev 41:295–315

Arnett JJ (1999) Adolescent storm and stress, reconsidered. Am Psychol 54:317–326

Arnett JJ (2000) Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. Am Psychol 55:469–480

Arnett JJ (2003) Conceptions of the transition to adulthood among emerging adults in American ethnic groups. New Dir Child Adolesc Dev 100:63–75

Arnett JJ (2004) Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties. Oxford University Press, New York

Arnett JJ (2006) G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence*: Brilliance and nonsense. Hist Psychol 9:186–197

Arnett JJ, Taber S (1994) Adolescence terminable and interminable: When does adolescence end? J Youth Adolesc 23:517–537

Arnett JJ, Tanner JL (eds) (2006) Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century. APA Books, Washington, DC

Astin AW, Osequera L, Sax LJ, Korn WS (2002) The American freshman: Thirty-five year trends. UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, Los Angeles

Blos P (1962) On adolescence: A psychoanalytic interpretation. Free Press, New York

Booth A, Crouter A (1999) Transitions to adulthood in a changing economy: No work, no family, no future? Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ

Buchanan CM, Holmbeck GN (1998) Measuring beliefs about adolescent personality and behavior. J Youth Adolesc 27:609–629

Bynner J (2005) Rethinking the youth phase of the life course: The case for emerging adulthood. J Youth Stud 367–384

Côté J (2000) Arrested adulthood: The changing nature of maturity and identity in the late modern world. New York University Press, New York

Côté J (2006) Emerging adulthood as an institutionalized moratorium: Risks and benefits to identity formation. In Arnett JJ, Tanner JL (eds) Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century. American Psychological Association Press, Washington, DC, pp 85–116

Douglass CB (2005) Barren states: The population "implosion" in Europe. Berg, New York

Erikson EH (1950) Childhood and society. Norton, New York

Erikson EH (1968) Identity: Youth and crisis. Norton, New York

Freud A (1958) Adolescence. Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 15:255–278. International Universities Press, Inc., New York

Freud A (1968) Adolescence. In Winder AE, Angus D (eds) Adolescence: Contemporary studies. American Book, New York, pp 13–24

Freud A (1969) Adolescence as a developmental disturbance. In Caplan G, Lebovici S (eds) Adolescence: Psychosocial perspectives. Basic Books, New York, pp 5–10

Galambos NL, Barker ET, Krahn HJ (2006) Depression, anger, and self-esteem in emerging adulthood: Seven-year trajectories. Dev Psychol

Goldscheider F, Goldscheider C (1999) The changing transition to adulthood: Leaving and returning home. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA

Hall GS (1904) Adolescence: Its psychology and its relation to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion, and education, vol. 1 & 2. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Hamilton S, Hamilton MA (2006) School, work, and emerging adulthood. In Arnett JJ, Tanner JL (eds) Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century. APA Books, Washington, DC

Hornblower M (1997) Great Xpectations. Time 58–68

Labouvie-Vief G (2006) Emerging structures of adult thought. In Arnett JJ, Tanner JL (eds) Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century. APA Books, Washington, DC

Larson R (2000) Towards a psychology of positive youth development. Am Psychol 55:170–183

Levine M (2005) Ready or not, here life comes. Simon & Schuster, New York

von Goethe JW (1774/1989) The sorrows of young Werther, by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Translated by M. Hulse, with an Introduction and Notes. Penguin, London, England

Offer D (1969) The psychological world of the teenager. Basic Books, New York

Offer D, Schonert-Reichl KA (1992) Debunking the myths of adolescence: Findings from recent research. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry 31:1003–1014

Peace Corps (2005) About the Peace Corps. Available: http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell = learn.whyvol. Retrieved on September 16, 2005

Putnam RD (2000) Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community. Simon & Schuster, New York

Schulenberg JE, Zarrett NR (2006) Mental health during emerging adulthood: Continuity and discontinuity in courses, causes, and functions. In Arnett JJ, Tanner JL (eds) Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century. APA Books, Washington, DC

Schwartz B (2004) The paradox of choice: Why more is less. Ecco, New York

Strange JJ (2007) Adolescents, media portrayals of. In Arnett JJ (ed) Encyclopedia of children, adolescents, and the media. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA

Twenge JM (2006) Generation Me: Why today's young Americans are more confident, assertive, and entitled—and more miserable than ever before. Free Press, New York

U.S. Bureau of the Census (2005) Statistical abstracts of the United States. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC