ILL pe
CAN YOU SUPPLY ? YES NO COND FUTUREDATE

  :ILL: 7941519   :Borrower: UUO   :ReqDate: 20040820 :NeedBefore: 20040919
   :Status: IN PROCESS 20040824   :RecDate: :RenewalReq:
   :OCLC: 24906828   :Source: OCLCILL :DueDate: :NewDueDate:
   :Lender: UUM,*UUS,AZN,AZS,IQU
  :CALLNO: BF723.S62 C44 1992
  :TITLE: Children's development within social context /
  :IMPRINT: Hillsdale, N.J. : L. Erlbaum, 1992.
  :ARTICLE: Lightfoot, C.: Constructing self and peer culture: A narrative
perspective on adolescent risk taking.
  :VOL: :NO: :DATE: 1992
  :VERIFIED: <TN:26294>OCLC [Format: Book]   :PAGES: 229-245
  :PATRON: Amsel, Eric

  :SHIP TO: ILL
        2901 University Circle
        Weber State University
        Ogden,UT 84408-2901

  :BILL TO: FEIN #876000535
  :SHIP VIA: ARIEL/FIRST CLASS
  :FAX: FAX (801)626-8521***NEW ARIEL**137.190.51.43 :MAXCOST: 5.00IFM :COPYRT COMPLIANCE: CCL
  :BILLING NOTES: FREE LENDING
  :BORROWING NOTES: **BCR/AMIGOS CODE SIGNER**CHARGES? MUST HAVE PATRON NAME
AND ILL # TO PAY INVOICE-THANKS!
  :LENDING CHARGES:
  :LENDING RESTRICTIONS: :SHIPPED: :SHIP INSURANCE:
  :LENDING NOTES:
  :RETURN TO:
  :RETURN VIA:

9

CONSTRUCTING SELF AND PEER CULTURE: A NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON ADOLESCENT RISK TAKING

Cynthia Lightfoot
State University of New York at Plattsburgh

As early as 1910, Addams proposed that adolescent exploration and experimentation may be manifested in risk-taking activities. Like many contemporary psychologists, she was concerned with adolescent failings—delinquency, drunkenness, and sexual promiscuity. Likewise, she blamed many problem behaviors on cognitive-emotional immaturities. However, she anticipated recent trends that have attempted to view risk taking as a natural by-product of adolescents' zeal for novel experiences. The source of risk taking, she argued, is also the source of youthful enthusiasm, experimentation, and the quest for adventure.

Most modern-day approaches to adolescent risk taking portray the young experimenter as a troublemaker. Perhaps this explains the current state of risk research in which problem behaviors are abstracted from the natural course and context of adolescent development. Recently, however, efforts have been made to consider the developmental form and function of risk behaviors. The purpose of the work reported here is to extend these efforts by exploring risk taking in light of the social-psychological ecology of developing individuals. In particular, a narrative perspective is used to characterize risk taking as a culture-creating device employed for the purpose of organizing self–other relationships. This perspective calls for a conceptualization of peer pressure that acknowledges the socially constituted significance of shared risks in defining group identity.

Current Approaches: Survey Research Into Personality and Lifestyle Correlates

Adolescents are reputed to be excessively risky and reckless. According to reports of problem behavior across the life span, the reputation is well earned (Fishburne, Abelson, & Cisin, 1980; Kandel & Logan, 1984; Rutter & Giller, 1983). Consequences of risk taking include teen pregnancy, drug addiction, and automobile accidents—all recognized as major social problems. Growing concern over the transmission of the HIV virus and other sexually transmitted diseases within this age group also has contributed to the groundswell of interest in researching and understanding adolescent risk behaviors. Most of the research in this area has involved large-scale surveys meant to tap individuals' involvement in risk behaviors, and identify associated personality and lifestyle factors.

One of the most widely researched personality correlates of adolescent risk behavior is sensation seeking. Indeed, Zuckerman, Eysenck, and Eysenck's (1978) finding that sensation seeking—the general willingness to engage in exciting or high-risk activities—peaks between the ages of 16 and 19 years fueled several efforts to gauge the relationship between adolescent risk taking and sensation seeking. Risky driving and accident involvement (Beirness & Simpson, 1987), and contraceptive attitudes and behaviors (Arnett, 1989) all have been correlated with various subscales of Zuckerman's instrument. Summala (1987) has organized findings from several studies of young drivers around the issue of sensation-seeking propensities of adolescents, and argued that the relatively higher rates of automobile accidents for this age group are due to motivational factors rather than driving skill deficits.

Summala's (1987) conclusion coincides with that of other investigators who claim that during adolescence, individuals adopt a lifestyle oriented toward sensation seeking and risk taking (e.g., Beirness & Simpson, 1987; Jessor, 1987; Jessor, Chase, & Donovan, 1980). However, as pointed out by Lastovicka (1987) and Molina and Chassin (1989), claiming that adolescents adopt a risky lifestyle affords little in the way of explaining the phenomenon. The few efforts that have been made to explain risk behaviors focus primarily on social learning processes. Part of the impetus for this focus comes from studies of alcohol safety courses that show increases in knowledge about alcohol risk and safety, but no significant changes in attitudes or driving-while-intoxicated (DWI) behaviors (e.g., McKnight, Preusser, Psotka, Katz, & Edwards, 1979). Findings of ethnic and gender differences also implicate social norms and expectations as potential mediators of risk behavior (e.g., Klitzner, Rossiter, Gruenewald, & Ballnsky, 1987; Millstein & Irwin, 1987).

Although many have invoked social learning processes, DiBlasio (1986) has been the most articulate spokesperson for social learning constructs—

differential association, imitation, and reinforcement. He argued that through differential association, adolescents are exposed to and identify with various groups that influence the development of normative definitions of each member, including personal attitudes and beliefs about rules, laws, and values that guide the individual in making choices to act in law-abiding or violating ways. His survey of 1,082 16- and 17-year-olds indicated that differential peer association was the strongest predictor of DWI. Klitzner et al. (1987) also found a strong relationship between DWI and peer drinking practices, and Jessor et al. (1980) found that friends' approval and the availability of potent models were the strongest predictors of a number of problem behaviors.

It is now widely acknowledged that one's friends exert a powerful influence on one's behavior, and survey research into personality and lifestyle correlates is slowly building a case for the role of the peer group in mediating risk behaviors. However, the argument that adolescents take risks because they affiliate with other adolescents who take risks is ultimately tautological. What seems called for, if risk researchers are to develop explanations for their descriptive data, is a careful exploration of relations between peer socialization processes and risk taking.

Peer Groups as Frames of Reference

Developmentalists interested in adolescent peer socialization processes have taken leads from classic studies in social psychology and sociology. The Robbers Cave Experiment of Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, and Sherif (1961), for example, has had a tremendous impact on conceptualizations of the formation of peer-group norms. And Moreno's (1934) and Dunphy's (1963) inroads to the sociometry and structure of groups laid a foundation for devising methodological tools with which to describe group characteristics and organization. The conceptual position of Sherif and his colleagues (Sherif & Sherif, 1953, 1964; Sherif et al., 1961) was that social groups constitute frames of reference for individuals who act within them. Group norms, or standards of conduct that delimit the actions of members, serve as anchor points in structuring the perceptual field. From this perspective, the group is less an objective collection of individuals, than a psychological organization of each member's experiences: Joint activity and participation in social groups leads to the generation and instantiation of group norms that structure and give meaning to experiences.

In a theoretical paper entitled "Reference Groups as Perspectives," Shibutani (1955) elaborated Sherif's ideas and proposed that reference groups arise through the internalization of norms. In his words, "they constitute the structure of expectations imparted to some audience for whom one organizes his conduct" (p. 565). He argued that reference groups are a product of social interactions and communication. People approach one another from partic-

ular perspectives which are confirmed, reinforced, denied, and thus transformed in the course of interpersonal transactions. It is through social participation, then, that perspectives become shared and internalized.

All social groupings, regardless of size, composition, structure, or overlap, may become reference groups through members' participation in common communication channels. Reference-group theory, according to Shibutani (1955), is particularly crucial for understanding individuals in modern mass societies—those marked by a diversity and multiplicity of communication channels, and opportunities for participation:

In the analysis of the behavior of men in mass societies the crucial problem is that of ascertaining how a person defines the situation, which perspective he uses in arriving at such a definition, and who constitutes the audience whose responses provide the necessary confirmation and support for his position. This calls for focusing attention upon the expectations the actor imputes to others, the communication channels in which he participates, and relations with those with whom he identifies himself. (p. 569)

The major focus of reference-group theory is on the subjective psychological aspects of group life—how the individual organizes social interactions such that norms are internalized and the group becomes a frame of reference for organizing experiences.

Historically, interest in the socializing influences of adolescent groups has paralleled interest in adolescence itself (Ausubel, 1954; Schwartz, 1987). It is therefore surprising that developmental psychology only lately has begun to explore how individuals organize and interpret their experiences in light of the norms and expectations held by their particular social groups. In fact, much of what is known about the functioning of adolescent groups comes from sociological investigations. A major target of these studies has been adolescent deviance and delinquency. In the main, they support the primary thesis of reference-group theory: Individuals structure experience from the perspectives of the groups in which they participate. Sociological studies indicate that norms of deviance and aggression are shared between group members, and provide a basis for interaction, affiliation, and even friendship (Giordano, Cernovich, & Pugh, 1986). Studies of adolescent drug and alcohol use confirm these findings (Dembo, Schmeidler, & Burgos, 1979; Huba, Wingard, & Bentler, 1979; Kandel, 1973). Thus, individual and collective norms regarding drug use may determine the selection of particular individuals as friends, and also the maintenance and stability of drug and alcohol use within groups (e.g., Britt & Campbell, 1977; Kandel, 1978). Again, these findings speak directly to reference-group theory, and suggest that individuals, through participation in social networks, internalize norms and standards of conduct, and use them for organizing their own actions and experiences.

The gap between sociological and psychological approaches to adolescent

deviance and risk taking appears to be closing. This is most evident in expressions of concern about research and theory that fail to account for the contributions of group norms and social expectations in defining the symbolic significance of risks taken by individuals. Lastovicka, Murry, Joachimsthaler, Bhalla, and Scheurich (1987), for example, conducted a factor analytic study that identified five different types of risk takers: delinquents, party goers, sensation seekers, machoists, and dissatisfied. They speculated that risk behaviors are motivated not only by rational cost/benefit analysis, but also by the symbolic value of risk taking in enhancing and maintaining one's concept of self as, for example, a macho person or a sensation seeker. The innovation of their perspective, in the context of conventional risk research, is their emphasis on the relationship between individuals and their social groups. As they pointed out, risky behaviors are not effective symbols unless they are shared by other members of one's group. Thus, understanding adolescent risk taking may lie in understanding the collective acceptance of the meaning of risk behaviors. The perspective described next provides a means of specifying the relationship between risk behaviors and norms of conduct held by peer-group members.

Contributions from Narrative Psychology. Recent anthropological and psychological studies of narrative indicate that it has an important role to play in social constructions of self (Gergen & Gergen, 1983; Holland & Quinn, 1987; Rosaldo, 1986; Sarbin, 1986; White, 1988). The thrust of this work is that people weave life experiences into coherent stories, or narratives, in ways that reconstruct images of themselves and the groups or communities with which they affiliate. Self-narrative, or personal storytelling, is considered integral to identity formation, and thought to play an important role in constructing a sense of personal and cultural continuity—it provides an avenue for establishing connectedness and coherence across human actions and life events, and permits a sense of movement through time (Crites, 1986; Sarbin, 1986; Hallowell, 1955; Howard, 1985).

The bulk of psychological work in the area has treated narratives as a type of internal cognitive schema. Thus, narrative has been described as an organizing principle (Sarbin, 1986), an assimilatory structure (Mancuso, 1986), and a heuristic process (Robinson & Hawpe, 1986). The common denominator is that narration constitutes a means of imposing structure and meaning on the flow of experience. Robinson and Hawpe (1986), for example, argued that narrative is a form of causal reasoning whereby individuals, in reflecting on personal experiences, define temporal boundaries and construct causal relations between events; that is, they subjugate events to a narrative plot. Narrative theory also has been a medium for cultivating James' distinction between "I" and "me" (Mancuso, 1986; Mancuso & Sarbin, 1983). It is the recollecting "I," the storyteller, rather than the narrative figure "me," that

imposes coherency on actions and events, and appropriates them for building selfhood. Crites (1986) pursued a similar line of reasoning when he argued that the storyteller imposes continuity on life events by organizing them from a single point of view. Such aesthetic constructions of self lead to a sense of identity over time.

In spite of the emphasis on internal cognitive schema and reasoning processes, psychologists by no means have neglected social-contextual contributions to self-narrations. Stories of one's life and experiences are, after all, public, if not collaborative, events. Social context is thought to provide a forum for testing one's internal model (or personal story) against those of others, or for coordinating one's individual role with roles played by other actors (e.g., Sarbin, 1986). It is through this meeting of minds, or coordination of roles, that shared meaning and mutual understanding are thought to be negotiated.

Anthropological studies of narrative proceed along similar lines, but differ in emphasis. Whereas psychologists stress the constitution of personal identities, anthropologists are interested in the construction of collective identities and culture. This is inherent in Miller's (1988) notion of the socially expansive nature of personal stories (see also Howard, 1985). Personal experiences, made public in discourse, become shared experiences, and mediate self-other relationships. She found, for example, that children will incorporate stories told by other children into stories of their own experience, and that caregivers will intervene and shape children's narratives. Miller argued that a process of identification is reflected in shared or overlapping narratives, which suggests an emotional investment in the other person or group. Equally important, however, are self-other oppositions created in narrative discourse. This theme has been elaborated explicitly in ethnographic analyses of folklore, hunting and fishing stories, stories of war, and other contacts with "outsiders" (e.g., Basso, 1979; Camaroff, 1985; White, 1989). Here, narrative is claimed to promote a sense of shared history and community by way of mediating in-group/out-group boundary relations. Hunting and battle exploits, for example, provide content for stories that define group identity, and set it apart from the identities of other groups.

The crux of the narrative perspective is that stories of personal experience are social constructions—they reflect and transform relationships between self and others. According to White (1988), they do this in two ways and, thus, can be described as doubly refractive. First, they provide a tool for defining one's self in relation to a collective, so they reflect social or *synchronic* relations. Second, they provide a means for organizing one's understanding of self in relation to a past, so they also reflect historical or *diachronic relations*. White claimed that synchronic and diachronic relations are coordinated dialectically. That is, social interactions are nested onto and transform an understanding of a history of interactions. For example, the way we interpret an interaction with a friend depends, in part, on how we understand

or organize the history of our relationship. Furthermore, our interpretation of the particular interaction may transform our understanding of the overall history. This new understanding then is brought forward, constrains interpretations of social interactions, and so forth.

The narrative perspective provides interesting insights into adolescents' social adventures. Specifically, it can be argued that risks shared between adolescents are functionally equivalent to the hunting and battle exploits analyzed by anthropologists. They, too, provide content for narratives that organize in-group/out-group boundary relations and definitions of self. That is, taking risks with one's friends creates a body of shared knowledge, symbolic meanings, or group culture tht may be used to define or redefine boundaries of group membership. White's (1988) analysis of synchronic and diachronic mediation is also relevant: As events and experiences become incorporated into the collective culture, as they attain symbolic meaning for the group's identity and become part of narrated history, they also delimit the significance of future events and experiences.

Understanding that shared risks provide material for fashioning relationships between self and other has implications for conceptualizations of peer pressure. From this perspective, peer pressure is less a push to conform than a desire to participate in experiences that are seen as relevant, or potentially relevant, to group identity. The extent to which it matters that one participate (i.e., conform) in a specific group adventure, and the extent to which the adventure has significance for group identity, depends on the history of one's relationship with the group. Close friends are identified according to a rich narrative of shared experiences that may absorb the shock of isolated instances of nonconformity. The same instances experienced in the context of an acquaintance relationship that lacks a well-articulated history, however, may profoundly and adversely affect the future of the relationship. In the same vein, shared risks may have a lesser impact on close friends compared to acquaintances.

The idea that the impact of behavior varies according to the closeness of the relationship is consistent with Petrovsky's (1985) disparaging comments about typical conformity studies undertaken in small-group psychology. He argued that conformity to group pressure may be a transient phenomenon mediated by the developmental status of the group. From this vantage point, the focus shifts from a pressure to conform to the perceived importance of participation. In other words, peer pressure needs to be evaluated in light of the existing relationship—the shared values and norms of conduct that define one's self in relation to a group. This was examined in the study described next.

ADOLESCENTS' REFLECTIONS ON PEER PRESSURE

An interview procedure was developed in which adolescents were presented with hypothetical adventures, were asked to speculate about the interpersonal consequences of risks shared between close friends versus acquain-

tances, and about how the consequences might vary according to the degree of risk involved. Analyses focused specifically on adolescents' beliefs regarding the importance of shared risks for creating group culture.

Subjects and Scenarios

Thirty subjects between the ages of 16 and 18 years participated in the study (18 boys and 12 girls). They were interviewed toward the end of summer vacation or a few months into the fall semester when most were about to begin, or had begun their junior year in a high school serving a middle-class neighborhood. All were recruited by word of mouth in a cluster-sampling procedure. That is, certain teenagers were interviewed, and were asked for the names and telephone numbers of their friends. The friends also were interviewed until several discrete friendship groups had been defined. In general, both teenagers and parents were enthusiastic about the study.

Each subject was interviewed twice. Subjects determined the location of the interviews, and there was considerable variation: homes, schools, public libraries, parks, shopping malls, fast-food restaurants. The typical pattern was to conduct the first interview in the subject's home, and the second interview in a local teenage hangout. The first interview lasted usually 1 hour, the second, 1½ to 2 hours. The data presented here were taken from two parts of the second interview.

Part 1: Close Friend Versus Acquaintance Scenario

In Part 1, subjects were read a scenario about a teenager who was offered a marijuana cigarette at a music concert. Subjects were asked about the interpersonal consequences of accepting and declining the drug, and about how the consequences might vary for different relationships (close friend or acquaintance). The scenario read as follows:

This is a story about a girl (guy) named Erica (Eric) who won four tickets from a local radio station to see a big-name rock band perform at the Smith Center. She asked three friends to go with her, and they were all really excited because the concert had been sold out for weeks. They met at Erica's the night of the concert because her parents said she could use the car. After the car was parked in the stadium parking lot, one of the friends pulled a joint out of her sock. Her older sister (brother) had given it to her to smoke before the concert. The friend lit the joint, and passed it to Erica. None of the friends had ever smoked pot before, and Erica felt a little unsure. Would Erica be more likely, less likely, or equally likely to smoke the pot with her best friends compared to friends who weren't as close? Why? If Erica smokes the pot with her best friends, will

that affect how the friends think and feel about each other, or not necessarily? Why? If Erica doesn't smoke the pot with her best friends, will that affect how the friends think and feel about each other, or not necessarily? Why?

Part 2: Relative Risk Scenarios

In Part 2, subjects were asked to compare the interpersonal consequences of three situations that varied in terms of relative risk. The relative risk scenarios read as follows:

I want you to think about two situations. In one, a group of friends decided to skip school and go to the beach on a Saturday. Are the friends likely to feel closer in one situation or another, or not necessarily? Why? Now consider a third situation in which the friends went to a neighborhood barbecue with their families. How does this situation compare with the other two in terms of how the friends feel about each other? Why?

Interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed verbatim. Analyses were based on the written transcriptions.

Summary of Results

Part 1: Close Friend Versus Acquaintance Scenario.

In response to the marijuana-smoking scenario, 27 subjects (86%) claimed that the story character would be more likely to smoke with acquaintances compared to close friends. The reasons offered were remarkably consistent: "It's a chance to impress them"; "To become part of their group"; "You want them to form an image of you that's like the image they have of themselves"; "It's easy for friends who aren't close to form a bad opinion of you." In contrast, close friends were described as more forgiving. Said one: "Close friends look into the person, not the person's actions." A few teens mentioned that close friends might even respect Erica's nonconforming show of independence.

Nonetheless, the decision to smoke or not smoke, even in the company of close friends, was thought to be a decision of consequence. When asked "If Erica smokes the pot with her best friends, will that affect how the friends think and feel about each other, or not necessarily?", 24 (80%) said that it would bring them closer together. Again, there was considerable consistency in the reasons provided. Most subjects talked about the importance of sharing a novel experience. Several mentioned the memories created by such an experience, and of the enjoyment derived from talking about it later. Of those who claimed that the relationship would not be altered by smoking marijuana together, most (4 of 6) agreed that it would help maintain the relationship.

"What about the consequences of deciding not to smoke?" When the adolescents were asked, "If Erica doesn't smoke the pot with her friends, will that affect how the friends think and feel about each other, or not necessarily?", 18 (60%) agreed that it would, at least temporarily. Most of the reasons hinged on the idea that Erica would be on the outside of a shared experience. Still, this was thought to be of little consequence in the long run, providing it did not happen too often. Likewise, of the remaining 12 (40%) who claimed that her decision would have no effect on the friendship, 6 did so on the grounds that Erica had a good excuse for declining—she had to drive. Several suggested that the responsibility of driving should rotate among the friends, allowing equal participation at future marijuana-smoking events.

Data presented thus far indicate that adolescents perceive participation in risk activities—in this case, smoking marijuana—as affecting the development of interpersonal relationships. Sharing adventures brings people, close friends and acquaintances, closer together. Furthermore, the consequences of participating or not participating are seen to vary according to the status of the relationship. Acquaintance relationships, in contrast to close friend relationships, are considered more volatile, and more susceptible to the influence of shared risks.

Part 2: Relative Risk Scenarios. In response to the two beach scenarios, the majority of subjects (27, or 90%) claimed that the friends would feel closer if they skipped school and went to the beach, compared to going on a Saturday. Reasons fell into three categories. One category, representing 30% (n = 8) of the responses, stressed secrecy, privacy, and freedom: "You have a secret that you share"; "No one else is around so you can do what you want." A second category, representing another 26% (n = 7), included responses that emphasized how the novelty of the situation would create memories that would be talked about later. Responses in the third category, 44% (n = 12), made reference to passing a test, surviving an ordeal, or showing one's commitment to the group. Examples include: "You feel like you've made it through something together"; "You're rebellious together; you beat the establishment together"; "It shows what lengths you'll go to to be with the group."

Regarding the neighborhood barbecue comparison, the vast majority, 90% (n = 27), claimed that attending the barbecue would have no effect on the friends' relationship. Of these, 70% (n = 19) mentioned the lack of privacy or freedom: "Parents have a way of making everyone feel inhibited"; "You have to act like your parents expect you to act so you can't be as free"; "Parents are gross and you can't talk seriously in front of them"; "It's not of your own will—your parents made you go." The remaining 30% (n = 8) indicated that a neighborhood barbecue would have no effect on how the friends think and feel about each other because there would be no sense of having sur-

vived an ordeal—no excitement, fear of getting caught, or feeling of rebelliousness. Comically, three subjects (10% overall) disagreed with the majority, and claimed that a neighborhood barbecue is itself an ordeal that would, if survived, bring the friends closer together. Overall, the interview data support the idea that shared risks have a special role to play in creating group culture and interpersonal histories.

Risk Taking and the Acquisition of Peer Culture

D. W. Winnicott (1965) remarked once that adults should "hide among themselves what they come to understand of adolescence," that it would be "absurd" to write a book for adolescents on the subject of adolescence because it is a period of life in which one is caught up in personal discovery. A major theme to emerge in the course of this study concerns the importance that adolescents attach to secrecy and privacy. Certainly this is relevant to fears of getting caught or into trouble, but the private lives of adolescents appear to have deeper motives. One young woman expressed it this way:

It's hard for me to have a group of friends and my mom there. She works with young kids and she's really good at reading people, and I have a problem with her trying to be my friends' friend. I like my mom, but she tries to talk to my friends like a friend. She wants to find out more about them and I feel like she is always watching me. Not to be nosey so much—just because she's interested in my life. It really bothers me.

A father of one of the subjects made an interesting comment related to this issue. He was describing his experience with his son during a week in which his wife and other children were vacationing out of town, and remarked that "living with a teenager is like living alone." Consistent with the statement earlier—"I like my mom, but . . ."—for all appearances this father-son relationship was close and comfortable. Nonetheless, there were decidedly separate, and secret, spheres of activity and interest.

Data presented here indicate that adolescents perceive risk taking as a mechanism for creating private experiences, or shared knowledge significant for group relations. Thus, as suggested by the narrative perspective, risk taking functions to maintain and facilitate in-group/out-group boundaries. The findings are consistent with White's (1988) thesis on the dialectic of synchronic and diachronic relations: Perceived group history constrains interpretations of specific social interactions, and their significance for definitions of membership. The distinction between the storytelling "I" and narrative figure "me" also can be extended to encompass the data: The narrator directs and is transformed by the actor.

The dialectic between synchrony and diachrony, and between actor and

narrator, was apparent in adolescents' descriptions about the different implications of smoking marijuana with close friends compared to acquaintances. Results complement Youniss and Smollar's (1985) findings that adolescents, in contrast to younger children, value the individuality of close friends. But it seems that adolescents' tolerance for nonconforming expressions of selfhood may be limited to stable, close friend relationships. In less stable relationships, in the process of making friends for example, nonconformity may be viewed in a different light, and may have different implications for the relationship. This would suggest a reconceptualization of peer pressure; it is less an externally located push to conform, than a socially constructed desire to participate in culture-creating experiences. As told by one male adolescent, the difference is dramatic:

There's all this crap about being accepted into a group and struggling and making an effort to make friends and not being comfortable about your own self-worth as a human being. You're trying very hard to show everyone what a great person you are, and the best way to do that is if everyone else is drinking therefore they think that's the thing to do, then you might do the same thing to prove to them that you have the same values that they do and therefore you're okay. At the same time, the idea of peer pressure is a lot of bunk. What I heard about peer pressure all the way through school is that someone is going to walk up to me and say "Here, drink this and you'll be cool." It wasn't like that at all. You go somewhere and everyone else would be having a good time—now why everyone else is doing it and they seem to be having a good time, wouldn't I do this?" In that sense, the preparation of the powers that be, the lessons that they tried to drill into me, they were completely off. They had no idea what we are up against.

Shared adventures, then, provide content for the creation of shared knowledge and cultural meanings; they delineate boundaries between in-group and out-group; they are stories of life that provide material for the construction of life stories.

TOWARD A CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this chapter was to consider adolescent risk taking in light of normal developmental processes. In this regard the term *risk taking* is an unfortunate one. Risk implies a threat of loss, damage, or danger. But by all accounts, there is much to be gained by the adventurous individual, including self- and peer-group identity. Thrill seeking is another misnomer: "Imagine how few mountains would be climbed," asked Scheibe (1986), "if the story of climbing the mountain could be told to no one" (p. 146). The lan-

guage we employ to describe what adolescents do together behind the backs of adults belies a particular theoretical orientation that locates the source of these behaviors within individuals who are assumed implicitly to act independently of social groups and culture. Social-learning nomenclature can be used to acknowledge social forces, but it excludes individuals' active contributions to their own development. The position advanced here is that adolescent risk taking needs to be conceptualized in light of the social groups that adolescents know and function in; for this, the language of narrative may be a more appropriate remedy.

Cultural Construction of Self

From the perspective of narrative theory presented here, *culture* is a social-psychological construction that emerges from group life. The organization of life events into narrative form engenders a sense of coherency between self and others. As a tool that mediates synchronic and diachronic relations (White, 1988), narrative constitutes a means of organizing one's self both interpersonally and historically. A similar theme is expressed in analyses of the supporting roles played by actor and narrator in the acquisition of selfhood. Indeed, work undertaken from the narrative perspective converges on a central question for social scientists: How do interpersonal experiences acquire cultural significance and thereby direct and motivate people's actions (Holland, in press)? Vygotsky's (1960/1979) theory of psychological development is noteworthy in this respect.

Vygotsky's primary concern was to provide an account of the development of higher mental functions (1960/1979). These functions consist of a psychological reconstruction or internalization of relationships that initially were played out interpersonally. A crucial feature of higher mental functions is their provision of mental tools that mediate between individuals and their environments; that is they order, organize, and arrange mental life in such a way as to provide interpretive guidelines for knowing and understanding the world. Vygotsky argued that mental tools, in their organizational capacity, are functionally equivalent to technical tools used to organize and manipulate the physical world. Holland and Valsiner (1988) referred to such mental tools as *mediating devices*—cultural symbols and systems of meaning that are used to control and interpret one's own actions in relation to objects and persons in the environment. First encountered as organizers of social interactions, they are internalized over time to become organizers of the psyche. Elaborating Vygotsky's mental/physical tool analogy, they wrote that "thanks to their production of, and facility with, tools and symbols, humans can not only modify the environment physically, but they can also modify its stimulus value for their own mental states" (p. 248). Examples of mediating devices include mnemonic strategies, cultural emblems and artifacts, and, of course, narratives.

The Role of Adventure in Narrating Lives

Scheibe (1986) has argued that adventures provide particularly potent material for narrative constructions of self. Risks and thrills, he argued, are essential for building and maintaining satisfactory life stories. They are a fount of change and novelty by virtue of their uncertain outcomes and consequences, but a major source of appeal extends beyond the thrill of the moment. Recall his provocative statement: "Imagine how few mountains would be climbed if the story of climbing the mountain could be told to no one" (p. 146). Gergen and Gergen (1983) made a similar point with their concept of *dramatic engagement*. They argued that precipitous events, either positive or negative, are necessary ingredients for continued emotional investment in a narrative.

The idea that adventure, or more broadly, novelty, is instrumental in furthering selfhood was articulated at the turn of the century by James Mark Baldwin (1906). According to Baldwin, selfhood is acquired by method of experimentation (Persistent Imitation) with self-schema. Self-schema are "tentative and prospective" in character, and function for the purpose of inducing novel constructions and adjustments by which "the whole of the truly general meaning is constituted" (Baldwin, 1906, p. 216). The novel adjustments generated by experimentation lead finally, through a process of generalization, to the subjective, reflective self, and the recognition of other subjective, reflective selves.

Crites (1986) alluded to the distinction between experimental and general knowledge by referencing Kierkegaard's dictum that life is lived forward, but understood backwards. Narratives of the past are the storyteller's domain. Projective stories, on the other hand, call for a different narrative strategy, as the future is indeterminant, or in Baldwin's (1906) terms, "tentative and prospective." Although Baldwin and Crites posit different psychological processes or narrative strategies to account for retrospective, general knowledge and prospective, experimental knowledge, they agree that the two operate in tandem. In Crites' words, "the past is recollected out of an interest in the future" such that self-knowledge is mobilized in pursuit of uncertain future knowledge. Likewise for Baldwin, general knowledge sets the stage for the operation of self-schema which, in turn, introduce novelties and adjustments to the general self-system.

The link between Baldwin (1906) and modern narrative theory is twofold. First is the shared vision of a self that becomes increasingly abstract (i.e., subjective and intrapersonal) and increasingly embedded in its social context (i.e., objective and interpersonal). This is attributed to the essential dialectic between prospective, interpersonal, experimental actions, and retrospective, internalized, general systems of meaning. Second, there is a mutual recognition of the importance of novelty and adventure in reconstruct-

ing self and culture: Self-schema that simply reproduce themselves in the manner of closed (e.g., mechanical) systems are stagnant. The adolescents interviewed agreed. One said, "I don't want to be sitting in my rocking chair when I'm 60 and say, 'I remember the time when I went to the movies with my friends.'" Another said, "If you plod along and do the same boring old thing your whole damn life you'll die a boring old fart." Hellen Keller put it more gently: Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.

REFERENCES

Addams, S. (1910). *The spirit of youth and the city streets*. New York: Macmillan.

Arnett, J. (1989). *Contraceptive use, sensation seeking, and adolescent egocentrism.* Unpublished manuscript, Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, GA.

Ausubel, D. (1954). *Theory and problems of adolescent development*. New York: Grune & Stratton.

Baldwin, J. M. (1906). *Thought and things*. New York: Macmillan.

Basso, K. (1979). *Portraits of "The Whiteman": Linguistic play and cultural symbols among the western Apache*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Beirness, D., & Simpson, H. (1987). Lifestyle correlates of risky driving and accident involvement among youth. *Alcohol, Drugs, and Driving, 4*, 193–204.

Britt, D. W., & Campbell, E. (1977). Assessing the linkage of norms, environments and deviance. *Social Forces, 56*, 532–550.

Camaroff, J. (1985). *Body of power, spirit of resistance: The culture and history of a South African people*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Crites, S. (1986). Storytime: Recollecting the past and projecting the future. In T. R. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative psychology* (pp. 152–173). New York: Praeger.

Dembo, R., Schmeider, J., & Burgos, W. (1979). Factors in the drug involvement of inner-city junior high school youths: A discriminant analysis. *International Journal of Social Psychology, 25*, 92–103.

DiBlasio, F. (1986). Drinking adolescents on the roads. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 15*, 173–188.

Dunphy, D. C. (1963). The social structure of urban adolescent peer groups. *Sociometry, 26*, 230–246.

Fishburne, P., Abelson, H., & Cisin, I. (1980). *The national survey on drug abuse: Main findings*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Gergen, K., & Gergen, M. (1983). Narratives of the self. In T. Sarbin & K. Scheibe (Eds.), *Studies in social identity* (pp. 254–273). New York: Praeger.

Giordano, P. C., Cernovich, S. A., & Pugh, M. D. (1986). Friendships and delinquency. *American Journal of Sociology, 91*, 1170–1202.

Hallowell, A. I. (1955). *Culture and experience*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Holland, D. (in press). How cultural models become a desire: A case study of American romance. In R. D'Andrade & C. Strauss (Eds.), *Human motives and cultural models*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Holland, D., & Quinn, N. (1987). *Cultural models in language and thought*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Holland, D., & Valsiner, J. (1988). Cognition, symbols, and Vygotsky's developmental psychology. *Ethos, 16*, 247–272.

Howard, A. (1985). Ethnopsychology and the prospects for a cultural psychology. In G. M. White & J. Kirkpatrick (Eds.), *Person, self and experience: Exploring Pacific ethnopsychologies* (pp. 401–420). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Huba, G. J., Wingard, J. A., & Bentler, P. M. (1979). Beginning adolescent drug use and peer and adult interaction patterns. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 47,* 265–276.

Jessor, R. (1987). Risky driving and adolescent problem behavior: An extension of problem-behavior theory. *Alcohol, Drugs and Driving, 3,* 1–11.

Jessor, R., Chase, J., & Donovan, J. (1980). Psycho-social correlates of marijuana use and problem drinking in a national sample of adolescents. *American Journal of Public Health, 70,* 604–613.

Kandel, D. (1973). Adolescent marijuana use: Role of parents and peers. *Science, 181,* 1067–1070.

Kandel, D. (1978). Homophyly, selection, and socialization in adolescent friendships. *American Journal of Sociology, 84,* 427–436.

Kandel, D., & Logan, R. (1984). Patterns of drug use from adolescence to young adulthood. *American Journal of Public Health, 74,* 660–666.

Klitzner, M., Rossiter, C., Gruenewald, P., & Bellassky, M. (1987). Determinants of youth attitudes and skills towards which drinking/driving prevention programs should be directed. Report to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Contract No. DTNH 22-84-C-07248.

Lastovicka, J. (1987). Speculations on the social psychology of young male drinking-driving. *Alcohol, Drugs, and Driving, 4,* 225–232.

Lastovicka, J., Murry, J., Joechimsthaler, E., Bhalla, G., & Scheurich, J. (1987) A lifestyle typology to model young male drinking and driving. *Journal of Consumer Research, 14,* 157–263.

Mancuso, J. (1986). The acquisition and use of narrative grammar structure. In T. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct* (pp. 91–109). New York: Praeger.

Mancuso, J. C., & Sarbin, T. R. (1983). The self-narrative in the enactment of roles. In T. R. Sarbin & K. E. Scheibe (Eds.), *Studies in social identity* (pp. 233–253). New York: Praeger.

McKnight, A., Preusser, D., Psotka, J., Katz, D., & Edwards, J. (1979). *Youth alcohol safety education criteria development.* Alexandria, VA: National Public Services Research Institute.

Miller, P. J. (1988). *Personal stories as resource for the culture-acquiring child.* Paper presented at the 87th annual meeting of the AAA, Phoenix.

Millstein, S., & Irwin, C. (1987). Accident-related behaviors in adolescents: A biopsychosocial view. *Alcohol, Drugs, and Driving, 4,* 21–29.

Molina, B., & Chassi, L. (1989). *Development of a measure of personality risk for adolescent substance use.* Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Kansas City, MO.

Moreno, J. (1934). *Who shall survive: A new approach to the problem of human interrelations.* Washington, DC: Nervous & Mental Diseases Publishing Co.

Petrovsky, A. (1985). *Studies in psychology: The collective and the individual.* Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Robinson, J. A. & Hawpe, L. (1986). Narrative thinking as a heuristic process. In T. R. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative psychology* (pp. 111–125). New York: Praeger.

Rosaldo, R. (1986). Ilongot hunting as story and experience. In V. Turner & E. Bruner (Eds.), *The anthropology of experience* (pp. 97–138). Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Rutter, M., & Giller, H. (1983). *Juvenile delinquency: Trends and perspectives.* New York: Penguin.

Sarbin, T. R. (1986). The narrative as a root metaphor for psychology. In T. R. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative psychology* (pp. 3–21). New York: Praeger.

Scheibe, K. (1986). Self-narratives and adventure. In T. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative psychology* (pp. 129–151). New York: Praeger.

Schwartz, G. (1987). *Beyond conformity and rebellion: Youth and authority in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sherif, M., & Sherif, C. (1953). *Groups in harmony and tension.* New York: Harper & Row.

Sherif, M., & Sherif, C. (1964). *Reference groups.* New York: Harper & Row.

Sherif, M., Harvey, O., White, B., Hood, W., & Sherif, C. (1961). *Inter-group conflict and cooperation: The Robbers Cave experiment.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Shibutani, T. (1955). Reference groups as perspectives. *American Journal of Sociology, 60,* 562–569.

Summala, H. (1987). Young driver accidents: Risk-taking or failure of skills? *Alcohol, Drugs and Driving, 3,* 79–91.

Vygotsky, L. (1979). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 144–188). Armonk, NY: M. Sharpe. (Original work published in 1960)

White, G. (1988). *Narrating history, constructing selves.* Paper presented at the 87th annual meeting of the AAA, Phoenix.

White, G. (1989). Histories of contact, narratives of self. In G. White & L. Lindstrom (Eds.), *The Pacific theater: Island representations of World War II* (pp. 43–72). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). *The family and individual development.* New York: Tavistock.

Youniss, J., & Smollar, J. (1985). *Adolescent relations with mothers, fathers, and friends.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zuckerman, M., Eysenck, S., & Eysenck, H. (1978). Sensation-seeking in England and America: Cross-cultural, age and sex comparisons. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 46,* 139–149.