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3 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BELONGING: REFORMULATING ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

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Adolescent Identity Development: A Historic Sketch

Erik Erikson, Peter Blos, and many other psychoanalytic contributors have provided us with enormously creative and influential insights into the adolescent years. So important was the evolving understanding of adolescent identity formation that it became the nexus of Erikson's theory of the entire life cycle. And, so successful have been the contributions of Erikson and the entire generation of psychoanalytic thinkers that, in the past 50 years, adolescent development has become synonymous with the task of forming a unique, self-chosen identity (e.g., Erikson 1950, 1968). It has also become established wisdom that adolescents need to transform childhood identifications with significant others (e.g., parents, grandparents, teachers) into a new and more elaborate unity we have come to call identity. That this process entails a painful set of crises and losses and represents a "second separation-individuation phase" (e.g., Blos, 1962; see also Mahler, Pine, and Bergman, 1975) has also become part of the accepted canon of psychoanalysis and an accepted wisdom of popular psychology.

But are adolescents still dealing with the same issues faced by their counterparts 30, 40, or even 50 years ago, when these theories were first introduced? Are youth still preoccupied with defining who they are and what they want to stand for? If so, have the significant political and cultural shifts of the past decades made any impact on how we understand or should understand adolescents today? To attempt to answer these questions, we can benefit from the historical context in

which these ideas about adolescent identity development first germinated.

Identity theory was a curious product of a number of worlds. One world was shaped by prescribed norms of life in the 1950s; there still was a clear sequence when one studied, got married, had children, retired, and so forth. Another world was shaped by the rebellion and social upheaval of the 1960s. In a way, identity theory of the 1950s was culturally ahead of its time. Erikson introduced his grand synthesis, *Childhood and Society*, in the middle of this century (1950), before these ideas were refined through observation of and dialogue with many young people during the decade of flower power, black power, and anti-Vietnam protests.

Psychoanalytic identity theory had its roots in an even earlier world. It derived many elements from the European (especially German) experience of the youth movement between the two World Wars and the even earlier Romantic tradition of the adolescent "wanderlust." Both of these traditions profoundly shaped Erik Homburger's life (before he gave himself his new name in his new country—the quintessential identity statement). They also deeply influenced his friend, Peter Blos, who had introduced him to the world of psychoanalysis in Vienna.

Erikson and Blos brought from Europe to the United States a tremendous cultural and experiential wealth but also the social turmoil that had entered every family between the two wars. This social crisis added responsibility to the young to define their future. The Jewish youngsters, many of whom later became the psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts who define our present-day understanding of adolescence, had to make monumental decisions: When should they emigrate? How should they define themselves in the face of being officially viewed in the most negative terms possible? Should they be Zionists, communists, or liberals? Should they prepare for departure to Palestine, move to the United States, or flee to another country or continent? Or should they wait it out in Germany or Austria? These decisions were often fateful. They were, of course not only about identity; often they were also quite situational (Whom did one know in what country? What visa could one still get?). Nevertheless, there was that important identity component (Who was one? What was one's relationship to religion and to the great ideologies of the century?). The shape of one's identity, in other words, was not only an adolescent issue of experimentation but a fateful process that enhanced or decreased the chances for survival.

This European turmoil, which included a far greater time span than the Nazi years, was the most important experiential backdrop against which the psychoanalysts developed their theories of adolescence. It is worth exploring separately how the immigration experience of Anna Freud and others in England shaped a path of understanding adolescent development different from the American path of the psychoanalytic "family" (e.g., A. Freud, 1936). In the United States, the synthetic and adaptive nature of the ego shaped a long phase of psychoanalytic thinking and provided the theoretical foundation on which identity formation was built.

One can only guess how much the Euro-American analysts had to work against the very nature of their own experience to posit such a unified and synthetic ego and identity. Most immigrants live in two experiential worlds and see the world through a multitude of lenses (see Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 1995). They know most intimately how impossible it is to develop a truly integrated identity. Of course, even under these conditions, important work to bridge these worlds is performed and makes a concept of an ego or self quite important. But equally important (and far less developed in the theoretical literature) are the fluctuations of experience—the lack of integration that comes from living in multiple worlds.

Erikson knew much of this, but he was always the revolutionary (with a new way of "looking at things") who wanted to remain in the fold. He attempted to overcome many of Sigmund Freud's notions (e.g., S. Freud, 1915) while trying to remain a loyal Freudian (e.g., he overcame the preoccupation with early childhood and instead focused on the entire life cycle). Identity formation represented a bold theoretical declaration of independence: The central point in the life span had shifted from the preoedipal and oedipal time to a youth era in which choice, morality, ideology, and future orientation were central. It also represented a shift away from the psychoanalytic psychology of the family and the parents to a psychology of the generation and the peer group. It further represented a shift away from the "timeless" unconscious time to historic time, what Erikson called the historic moment. And, it represented a shift away from destiny and reflection to choice and action. In the process of making these essential shifts, Erikson and some of his psychoanalytic ego psychology colleagues transformed Freud's theory of nonresolution of human drives and conflicts into an adaptive theory of social and ethical solutions, exemplified by religious men like Luther and Gandhi.

Erikson's contribution was so sweeping and his integration abilities (shaped by his and Joan Erikson's artistic predilections) so great that all the distinctions I just introduced apply only partially. He knew and wrote about the power of early childhood, he saw conflict reemerge at every level of development (the "versus" in his stages), and he certainly saw the limitations history and biology imposed on individual choice. Still, we find in his work a great transformation—one that has yet to be fully incorporated into the field of psychoanalysis.

THE IDENTITY CONCEPT CHALLENGED

Especially because his transformation of psychodynamic principles included a new understanding of the role of culture and history in human development, we need to ask ourselves whether Erikson's and his generation's ideas of adolescent development are still valid. Influenced by these theories, the general public, or at least the media, still seems to accept the notions of adolescence as a time for young people to find themselves, to choose among different possible selves, and to seek a space in which to experiment and take risks. Autonomy is still the great buzzword for parents, teachers, and adolescents discussing homework, dating, or work. But the reality of youth today, I believe, is represented less and less by these constructs, and so it is time to realign our theoretical focus.

In fact, even in the past, the adolescent moratorium often required some money in the bank as well as some educational capital in the home. Youngsters who joined the work force right out of school, who were not given a college education, or who were drafted into the army had very different experiences. For them, the time of questioning, experimenting, and finding themselves seemed socially removed. Building a life and a family came much earlier, and the process of identity formation most likely followed a very different rhythm. This was found to be true as well when researchers began to focus on race and ethnicity and noticed many different paths of identity development during the adolescent years (e.g., Cohler, Stott, and Musick, 1995; Ogbu, 1985; Appiah, 1996).

Similarly, many feminist theorists (e.g., Gilligan, 1982, 1996; Jordan, *in press*) have resisted the notion that identity formation is needed for the creation of true intimacy in adulthood. For them, the search for intimacy is simultaneously the road toward a jointly established identity.

If that is so, then forming an identity is less an adolescent task than an adult one and less a task focused on individual choice than on interpersonal and communal connections.¹

Another critique, empirically supported by a survey, comes from Offer, the Chicago-based developmental psychiatrist, and his colleagues (Offer and Schonert-Reichl, 1992). Offer rejects the notion of the adolescent identity crisis as normative and tries to shift it into the realm of serious adolescent psychopathology. His work indicates that the great majority of adolescents continue to be identified with their parents and follow their parents' political and life-style preferences and goals. Crisis and identity formation in antagonism to one's earlier identifications are the exception, he claims, not the rule.

There is always the danger of different methods producing different outcomes. Erikson treated and observed young patients and would have been appropriately hesitant to accept survey data as the fountain of wisdom regarding the adolescent identity experience. Identity formation is a deep process that can occur even if acceptance of the parents' values is reported on the surface. And what are the long-term consequences of an unquestioned childhood in adulthood?

Even if we agree with Offer's conclusions that today's adolescents define themselves less against their parents and their pasts, we lose a great deal by pathologizing the large minority of young people who are struggling to find themselves. How can Offer be so sure that they are in the throes of serious psychopathology? Indeed, he still owes us the longitudinal research necessary to distinguish between crises that are resolved in the process of transitioning into adulthood and crises that represent a beginning of a chronic state of depression, delinquency, and so forth. What distinguishes these paths? In the midst of adolescent turmoil, it still remains difficult, if not impossible, to make these distinctions in a meaningful way.

These challenges to identity theory and research—the social class argument, the gender differences perspective, and the medical model point of view—are contributing to a search for a new perspective. Such a search is well under way and has become part of a larger shift to the relational perspective now widely accepted in psychoanalysis (see Noam, Higgins, and Goethals, 1982), infancy and attachment research

¹Some Erikson scholars have responded to this critique by suggesting that this concept of identity development includes a strong relational component (Horst, 1995).

(e.g., Ainsworth, 1982), and feminist psychology. It is also part of a new "historic moment" when cultural identity politics plays an increased role in defining identity (e.g., Appiah, 1997) and when psychologists are placing greater emphasis on social and cultural context in identity development (e.g., Penuel and Wertsch, 1995; Vigil, 1988).

Furthermore, a general consensus about the phases of the life cycle has broken down because there are today so many acceptable life cycles, so many pathways of development (e.g., Noam and Fischer, 1996). Choice is not anymore adolescent choice alone but continued life-style choice throughout development: childbearing, with marriage and without, at fifteen, 25, 35, or even 45 years of age; gay or heterosexual coupling; remaining in one career or making frequent changes and geographic reallocations; and so forth. And yet, most of our teaching about adolescent development and most of our clinical tools are still strongly influenced by the theories of identity formation that began to evolve about 50 years ago, when the life cycle that defined all was mostly white, American, middle-class, and suburban.

FROM TODAY'S PERSPECTIVE: A MISSING DEVELOPMENTAL EPOCH IN THE LIFE CYCLE

The adolescents Erikson studied were moving into a world in which commitment and ideological stance were at the fore, as were the questions "Who am I?" and "What do I stand for?" We stand today on the shoulders of Erikson and many others of his generation. In the most general of terms, today's adolescents are still identity-seeking, but new themes have evolved that motivate and define them maybe even more profoundly than the issues of choice and stance. One central new theme of the adolescent experience I want to label a sense of belonging—identity less self-chosen and individualistic and more a form of group identification. So powerful is this desire/motivation that it needs to be not only described as a modern (many would call it postmodern) phenomenon but introduced as a developmental epoch that has been missing in Erikson's brilliant description of the life cycle. In this section, I will discuss this developmental process.

The Mutual-Inclusive Self: Belonging Versus Rejection

Although I believe that we have benefited greatly from the perspective that all clinical and developmental matters—and all learning, for

that matter—are fundamentally relational (see also Noam and Fischer, 1996), we need to focus on a life-cycle era in which the experiential and existential theme of "belonging" becomes so powerful that it overshadows most other concerns. This is a period that we need to locate between the latency age and Erikson's adolescent/early-adult period.

Erikson's epigenetic model of the life cycle went directly from the latency tasks of acquiring concrete knowledge and skills to the adolescent tasks of questioning identifications, taking a perspective on the past, and developing a new sense of self. Most textbooks have accepted this sequence, and so have most clinicians using developmental theory. But this is not really how we progress from the early school years to the college years—the time frame that is covered by these two developmental stages. We do not move from latency-age industry to identity formation with a sequence of steps that include some mixtures of negative identity, moratorium, and identity crisis.

Let us remind ourselves of Erikson's (1968) definition of the latency period: "Competence, then, is the free exercise of dexterity and intelligence in the completion of tasks, unimpaired by infantile inferiority. It is the basis for co-operative participation in technologies and relies, in turn, on the logic of tools and skills" (p. 124). Here we see a strong cognitive and skill orientation that shapes this developmental era.

Erikson's description of the next stage, adolescence, includes not only finding oneself, but "in puberty and adolescence all sameness and continuities relied on earlier are more or less questioned again" (1950, p. 261). This period is also defined by a new set of motivations, abilities, and virtues:

a high sense of duty, accuracy, and veracity in the rendering of reality; the sentiment of truthfulness, as in sincerity and conviction; the quality of genuineness, as in authenticity; the trait of loyalty of "being true"; fairness to the rules of the game; and finally all that is implied in devotion—a freely given but binding vow, with the fateful implication of a curse befalling traitors [1968, p. 125].

But most of these virtues are actually only found in late adolescents and adults. Authenticity requires a knowledge of the self; truthfulness requires something one stands for. Similarly, a "binding of the vow"

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has a strong component of choice and commitment. We know that these are the hallmarks of Erikson's ideas of adolescent fidelity and identity.

But for many adolescents I have treated or taught, interviewed or researched, the question is less "Who am I?" or "What am I committed to?" and more "Where do I belong?" "What am I part of?" "Who accepts me?" "Who likes me?" "Who provides me with self-esteem?" These adolescents want to know that they are popular, wear the right clothes, and listen to "cool" music.

To recapitulate, Erikson painted a picture of the life cycle that went from latency industry stage to a late adolescent identity development stage. In between these two developmental worlds are not only different phases (i.e., early, middle, and late adolescence researched in great detail by developmental psychologists) but a fundamental set of adolescent experiences that deserves the status of a developmental level. I have termed this developmental level, which emerges in early adolescence, as mutual-inclusive and have researched it as it relates to normal development and psychopathology (e.g., Noam, 1988a; Noam et al., 1990; Noam and Borst, 1994). If we want to stay with Erikson's terminology, we could call this the belonging-versus-rejection stage—a label that will become clearer when I list some of the ingredients that typically mark this developmental world:

- Self strongly defined by group.
- Self defined through others' eyes.
- Sense of belonging essential to well-being.
- Hypervigilance about being liked and accepted.
- Great conflicts over divergent opinions of significant people; avoidance of anger, confrontation, and differentiation.
- Identity, collective and interpersonal, humorously referred to as "wego" instead of "ego."
- Conflicts arising out of being a different person with different friends or trying to be close to parents and close to friends when they do not accept each other.
- Prone to feeling anxiety, guilt, depression; increased risk for suicidality.

Again, being the keen observers of adolescence that Erikson, Blos, and others really were, they knew about these dimensions. For example, in his description of identity development in the life cycle, Erikson did

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not completely ignore the importance of relationships (Horst, 1995; Seligman and Shanok, 1998). But they emphasized a different set of psychological processes, a "second separation and individuation process," when we emphasize here a new level of inclusion and connection, an identification of self with the needs and wishes of others. This new level of identification is often misunderstood as part of a primitive, even borderline self—a block in the way of establishing autonomy, inner security of self, and productive boundaries. But this level of identification is not primitive at all (although it usually has echoes from the past and regressive potentials). It relies heavily on the new psychological abilities to understand the world from the perspective of others and to view the self from that point of view.

These cognitive capacities, which usually set in around ages eleven to thirteen (often referred to as "early formal operations"), have been observed and researched in a variety of developmental theory traditions that build on Piaget, Kohlberg, Loevinger, and others (for a review, see Noam, Kohlberg, and Snarey, 1983). Despite their great significance for an in-depth understanding of development, they have not received sufficient attention in psychoanalytic circles. But I am not suggesting a simple import of Piagetian principles. Instead, the work I am introducing here has also reshaped Piagetian developmental principles by integrating analytic ones:

- Developmental forward movement is usually accompanied by regressions and developmental repetitions.
- Each developmental accomplishment can create a new set of developmental vulnerabilities.
- Developmental risks and psychopathology are not necessarily signs of delay or arrest but can be signs of developmental complexity.
- Development is not a linear or stepwise progression but a transforming developmental movement forward and a simultaneous (and often related) return to earlier productive periods as well as unresolved conflicts.

It is important to note that this period of the mutual-inclusive self, when the yearnings for belonging and acceptance are at the apex of importance, is not bound to only one age in a person's life. Many people never move to a developmental world that matches Erikson's

identity development. When age and stage are inseparable, as they are in Erikson's model—each stage is an age, a set of psychological tasks, and a psychological organization—remaining in this developmental mode of identification rather than “self-choice” becomes a negative attribute. As everyone seen through the lens of his theory has to develop identity in youth, we are left to call the person who resists this movement someone who “forecloses” identity (Erikson, 1968). But why limit ourselves to a negative formulation when in fact so many positive attributes define this era of mutual-inclusive psychological self-definition, which can last a lifetime? (This is not just as a Bosnian “prolonged adolescence” but an adult version of mutual inclusiveness.)

If it is true that this developmental focus or level can last a lifetime, then we need to do more than insert a new stage into Erikson's model (although doing so represents an important first step). Joan and Erik Erikson, with whom I had the great privilege to discuss many of these issues over the years, began to use Joan's weavings to exemplify the theory of the life cycle. What became very clear from this visual representation of their model was that all developmental issues of the life cycle always preexist and exist long after the specific stage disappears. In the weaving, the stages are represented by key colors, and these colors are made up of a specific combination of horizontal (psycho) and vertical (biological-makeup and life-history) threads. (For a visualization and description, see Hulsizer et al., 1981.)

Thus, we focus here on identification and belonging as key adolescent issues, not just childhood leftovers that become issues for the entire life cycle (the threads continue to live on beyond that phase). To understand these yearnings of belonging in adolescence is to understand throughout different phases of life. Without a clear understanding, we have tended either to devalue these complex psychological processes as remnants of the past or subsumed them as part and parcel of adolescent identity development. Before addressing these issues further, I will briefly introduce Rosa and an early part of her twice-a-week psychotherapy.

Clinical Example: Rosa. I began to see Rosa, a Hispanic sophomore at a college in the northeast United States, after she had been hospitalized in the student infirmary for serious suicidal ideation, a suicide attempt, and increasingly intrusive thoughts (her father's voice: “You should kill yourself! You are worthless like I am!”).

Rosa had grown up in a large immigrant family with three brothers and three sisters in an urban center under poverty conditions. Her father was an alcoholic, in and out of jobs; her mother took good care of the children but was constantly overwhelmed and at times depressed.

An avid reader and a good writer, Rosa had excelled throughout her twelve years of school. In fact, she was the only family member who had done well academically. Although she was proud of her admittance to a good college, leaving home left her feeling displaced, and she experienced the separation from her family as a tremendous loss. She was an adolescent without a home, but she felt college to be a cool place. Soon after her arrival, she ended up on academic probation. Although she was clearly able to perform well, her conflicts interfered with her ability to finish papers and pass exams.

Rosa's recovery took many years, punctuated by long periods of separation, when she needed to be away. Treatment provided a window into the relationship among trauma, culture, and identity development, as it became apparent that Rosa had been sexually abused during her childhood. What I focus on in this short vignette, though, is her tremendous longing to belong. Although Rosa's family wanted her to succeed academically, they were also threatened by her new world. They never came to visit and gave Rosa the impression that she had lost the powerful, though highly dysfunctional, foundation of her life.

Meanwhile, at college, she felt that she did not fit in. She tried to develop intimacy through short-lived sexual relationships, which left her feeling extremely vulnerable, even self-loathing. Additionally, she felt more identified with the janitors and other workers than with the students and professors. The conflict of living between two worlds and belonging to neither—a topic of much discussion during our sessions—became so pronounced that she decided to take a leave of absence.

Rosa had actually decided on a very creative strategy for the next six months. She was going to cross the United States setting up events for the college's alumni association—that is, she was going to be a worker! This represented an important compromise of dealing with her various sets of identification. Rosa could simultaneously belong to the college and conform with her family by becoming a worker rather than a student while being away from her family. This plan had important implications for her treatment, too.

Rosa needed to break off therapy. I remember the dramatic moment when she came to my office with flowers to announce that she was leaving for an indefinite amount of time, maybe even forever. She did

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not want me to consider her "terminated," though. "Keep the file open," she said teasingly, "I will stay in touch." It was essential for the future success of the treatment that I allowed this to happen (against the urging of the clinic staff, worried about liability). Part of the need to belong is to continue to belong during separations. Rosa needed the affirmation that she had a home base while exploring the world. It was also a blessing that the college had a very liberal policy for leave-taking.

One could say that Rosa was in the middle of developing a new identity. But she really was most concerned about finding a way to remain connected to the different relationships that defined her. She sought contexts of affirmation that would not make her lose other contexts of belonging. In the process, she suffered from not belonging anywhere. She could understand this conflict, but her solutions were less insight oriented and more focused on rearranging the context in which she lived. She was also working hard not to lose any part of herself, but she was not particularly interested in transforming her identifications into a new unity that could hold all of these different relationships in a new way. Most important to her was the capacity to belong to multiple worlds, to live with them, and to be able to travel between them. In the course of her treatment, after she returned from her sabbatical, she became increasingly able to experience these multiple worlds and to belong to them in new ways. We will now return to some theoretical reflections.

Identification and Identity

This positive focus on identifications and on the essential nature of relationships has been with us for a long time, even though it had not been attended to much theoretically. For Harry Stack Sullivan, the transition to adolescence is a time of a powerful new experience, the "chumship" through which children experience friendship by being like one another. Most of development, for Sullivan, is a struggle to overcome loneliness while avoiding interpersonal engulfment. Erikson (1959) was far more suspicious of "identifications," even when they created interpersonal closeness, and saw them as less productive than self-chosen identities:

The limited usefulness of the *mechanism of identification* becomes at once obvious if we consider the fact that none of the identifica-

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tions of childhood (which in our patients stand out in such morbid elaboration and mutual contradiction) could, if merely added up, result in a functioning personality. . . . As every cure attests, "more desirable" identifications tend to be quietly subordinated to a new, a unique Gestalt which is more than the sum of its parts. The fact is that identification as a mechanism is of limited usefulness [p. 112].

But the themes that seem to represent our times—the search for belonging and community as well as the politics of identity and multiculturalism—have become increasingly important for our vision of the life span (found, as mentioned earlier, in different variations in the attachment literature, object relations psychoanalysis, self psychology, and feminist theory). Cognitive, autonomous, self-selected identity is increasingly under attack; contextual, fluctuating, relational identifications are increasingly "in" (e.g., Lifton, 1993; McAdams, 1997). Once our focus becomes the interpersonal field, the relational matrix, or a coconstructed reality, what exactly is this "crown jewel of internalization"—the unit we have learned to call identity?

For present-day identity and relational theorists, we are all destined to live out a multitude of group identifications that can never really be synthesized. Cultural psychologists and modern research into the immigrant experience have also shaped this kind of view. Thus, I posit that the developmental telos is not necessarily to integrate and synthesize various experiences and self states but to let different parts of the self live in different, often contradictory and "unintegrateable" relationship contexts. As we have seen in the case of Rosa, the task is not necessarily integration, because the worlds are often not integrateable, but toleration of contradiction and inherent disorganization and support of a new sense of belonging.

From this vantage point, a psychology of identifications can in fact be developmentally equally complex as one focuses on identity formation. Identifications with persons and groups allow a certain fluidity, an emotional openness—letting the world of the "other" impress itself on the self. To yearn for belonging is to be able to risk relationship and loss. The gross exaggeration of this yearning is masochism, loss of self and perspective, and a level of social conformity that can easily be exploited.

But identity development can lead to a brutal act of integration—a way to demand from the self and others to cohere and to shape noncon-

gruent experiences so they fit. This would not be called a flexible form of identity, but who ever said that identity is necessarily open and evolving instead of rigid and totalitarian? The benefit is a higher order sorting capacity—a way to stand back and make all personal and group identifications adjust to a chosen blueprint of what is considered most and least important. The self is strengthened by this formed identity and can often better deal with inevitable rejections and losses; one can view them as a necessary aspect of “being oneself.” But how often is one blindsided? How difficult it is to draw the line between identity and the false self?

Interestingly, this focus on multiple experiences, multiple worlds, and multiple realities brings us back to traditional psychoanalysis when adaptation and integration took a back seat. The unconscious is always creating a different reality and can never be truly integrated with the waking self. It can be partially understood, but it can never be controlled (the weak ego-rider on the powerful id-horse).

We go in and out of our childhood, adolescent, and adult worlds. The goal is not to integrate but to ensure that childhood conflicts don’t dominate adult functioning. But within such a formula, there is a great deal of room for continuous fluctuations and regressions—movements in and out of different experiential and relational worlds, real and imagined.

Maybe we should not only elevate identifications to a new level of developmental acceptance, but we should also redefine identity as a far more relational and contextual construct (see also Penuel and Wertsch, 1995). We should meld the principles of group identification and relational contextualism with identity as choice, commitment, and autonomy. They belong together, complement one another, and are different aspects of our everyday lives.

Understanding Adolescent Development as a Way to Evolve New Clinical Tools

More than ever—with managed care here to stay—we need the strongest possible developmental theories. Why? As we see our young patients for increasingly short times, we have to rely more heavily on the inherent restorative capacities that they bring to their psychological distress. One important support can be provided through a greater understanding of how to encourage developmental abilities that are

often dormant under the weight of psychological distress, an insecure future, and an unworked-out relationship to the past.

Adolescent mental health is fundamentally a clinical developmental activity (e.g., Bowlby, 1982; Winnicott, 1965; Wolf, 1988). Anna Freud had taught the clinical principle that the psychoanalytic approach to children is fundamentally developmental. Understanding the developmental motion, movement, and rhythm is essential to help youth find their way. Adult psychotherapy is only beginning to fully grasp that treating adult disorders not only involves reconstructing and revisiting past trauma but also follows the specific rhythms of adult development (e.g., Vaillant, 1997; Noam, Chandler, and LaLonde, 1995). What are the clinical implications of focusing on this mutual-inclusive adolescent world? I will briefly address this issue in this last section of this paper.

At this developmental level, the therapist is prone to overestimate the capacities for insight because all of the developmental capacities for such an approach appear to be in place (see also Noam, 1998). But when we listen carefully to what these adolescents have to tell us, we do not, as in the case of Rosa, encounter identity development in the making. The adolescent can certainly experience a great deal of crisis but does not take a perspective on his identifications to transform them into a new identity. Instead, identifications are sought and lived—the self is mutual, at home with idealized friends and adults. Group conformity is at its height, and so is the constant fear of losing the “relationship base,” of being abandoned by parents, teachers, and friends. It is this fear of losing those who define the self—and of not fitting in and of being rejected—that is a core feature of this adolescent.

The ability of these youngsters to frame experiences in psychological terms—to describe feeling states and detailed interactions with important others—encourages most therapists to explore patterns and motivations, autonomous self-observation, and critical judgment about self and relationships. These explorations usually lead to surprisingly superficial descriptions that frustrate both therapist and client. Surprised by this “lack of self,” the therapist may interpret this state as an early and primitive manifestation of a separation-individuation problem. The patient consequently feels incompetent and senses that he is not living up to expectations. Feeling inadequate leads to feeling hopeless, and the patient is thereby silenced. The silence, in turn, often makes the therapist and client feel quite uncomfortable, which increases the potential for low self-esteem and depression.

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There is no therapeutic model that clearly fits this adolescent, which is surprising in light of the fact that so many adolescents who enter therapy function at this level. One reason might be that we did not know about this developmental gestalt (see also Noam, 1985, 1988b).

Existing therapy methods that use supportive strategies run the risk of underchallenging the patient. The relationship can easily become stale as the adolescent waits for some challenge or some guidance in framing the problems in new ways.

Insight-oriented therapy, on the other hand, requires an observation of systematic patterns of the self that is not available to adolescents in this developmental world. Following a set of goals that is experienced as self-chosen—and questioning existing conventions and creating new ones—requires a differentiation between the part of the self steeped in prescribed pathways and conventions and the part that is reflecting, doubting, and questioning. The therapist can be sure that she has an ally in the patient who can cognitively contain, at least under supportive conditions, both sides of the self. For that reason, more traditional psychodynamic therapy can be applied with people who have these capacities—but not so at the mutual-inclusive level.

Between these two therapy forms—supportive and insight oriented—we need to establish new, developmentally guided methods. The adolescent at the mutual-inclusive level is apt to observe one set of processes with great care—the fluctuations in the relationship, the feelings of inclusion and protection, the sense of abandonment and despair. These adolescents respond vigilantly to the wishes and desires of others and lack anger and self-assertion. Help is needed to deal with these strengths and vulnerabilities. As was the case with Rosa, therapy is not and will not be viewed as a manifestation of inner conflicts and life themes. But therapist and client can focus on the pattern of their relationship and of others. They can wonder together about the lack of anger when the self has been violated and share, almost as friends, the adolescent's victories and disappointments. Table 1 describes dimensions of clinical work relevant to this developmental world.

I remember one adolescent patient who always asked me about my opinions, what I considered normal and pathological, and what I would do in a given situation. At the time, I pursued a position of not answering these questions and noticed the girl becoming more and more disappointed and removed. I explained the reasons but to no avail. She wanted to end therapy. Out of desperation, I began to answer more and more questions, and our relationship became unstuck. I felt powerful

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TABLE 1
CLINICAL-DEVELOPMENTAL INTERVENTIONS WITH ADOLESCENTS:
IDENTITY-SEEKING SELF-COMPLEXITY LEVEL

Treatment Focus	Insight-oriented therapy supporting the emerging capacities to "choose" a self from among many different possibilities.
Setting	- Individual treatment often effective as the therapist can become an ally in reviewing the past relationships and be a sounding board in creating life goals and plans. - Including the context (friends, family, etc.) can be useful, but focus has to be not only on being part of relationships but also on the need for differentiation.
Support	Person needs to be supported through the inevitable confusions of wanting to be close to others and be like them while trying to come to terms with being different and standing up for a life project that might not be in line with others' expectations.
Insight	- Taking a perspective on the dilemma of needing approval from significant others while listening to an inner direction. - Coming to terms with the fact that pursuing one's identity can mean making unpopular decisions and being excluded. - Focus on potential for being overly differentiated and becoming "ideologically pure" but isolated.
Typical Therapeutic Binds	- Difficulty in handling conflicts that arise from experimenting with identity (e.g., risk-taking to prove that one is different from family, searching out experiences of self through drugs, ideological struggles with authorities, etc.). - Leaving important relationships for the sake of "finding oneself," including the therapeutic relationship, without adequately thinking through the consequences of isolation and lack of support.

and effective, and she felt pleased and acknowledged. Only I noticed that we did not move forward and that many of my answers cemented her insecurities. As a supervisor, I see many young clinicians fall into this same trap.

Since then, I have learned to find a different path. I turn the questions into a joint exploration. I try not to overchallenge or underchallenge the patient. The adolescent's insecurities are often related to a long history of insecure attachments and should not be repeated in the

therapy. A strategy must be found that locates the power of finding solutions neither in the patient nor in the therapist but in their relationship. It is not that the therapist has to find his answers, which pulls for the identity-seeking position not yet reached, and it is not that the therapist will answer for the patient, which supports the nonassertive and dependent attitude that the therapy tries to address. Instead, therapist and patient together will find solutions that are, at least in part, located in their relationship.

In conclusion, expanding our focus on adolescent identifications and changing our notions of identity will help provide better treatments. We are at an exciting point: A new era in our understanding of adolescents is combining with a new theoretical view focused increasingly on context, relationships, and multiple worlds. It is also a critical time for creating new psychoanalytic tools for adolescent psychotherapy.

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