

MEMORY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF EXPERIENCE IN FICTIONAL
NARRATIVES ABOUT MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

by

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Abstract

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Dissertation Abstract:

A narrative analysis of twelve short stories by an internationally acclaimed group of writers was performed in order to shed light on the nature of memory, in particular, which experiences of middle childhood are remembered by adults, how they are transformed, and what might account for that transformation. Short stories written for adults that took their protagonists' memories of the transition from childhood to adulthood as their explicit subject were chosen for analysis. The narrative analysis showed that the changing relationship with the parents and the emergence of an independent self were the predominant themes in the twelve stories. How the parents and the self are remembered in adulthood was conceptualized as the result of the protagonists' capacity to accomplish the work of internalization and mourning of the parental imagoes. It was proposed that faith that the parents can survive the child's attacks and destruction is a basic pre-condition for the capacity to mourn the parents, childhood dependence on them, and the child-self. It was shown that in the stories, the work of mourning was accomplished through elaboration of fantasy, and especially, through the expression of conflicting desires. While these fantasies were often destabilizing and overwhelming for the story protagonists, it appears that the exploratory drive and the illusions of narrative coherence

and past knowledge served important containment and holding functions without which the work of mourning could not proceed. The study concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In Eudora Welty's (1994) short story *A Memory* she describes a seemingly insignificant moment from her childhood. She spends a day lying on the beach, lost in reverie about a boy with whom she is in love, the relationship largely existing in her fantasy life as she has done little more than accidentally touch his wrist while going up a school staircase. Her attention shifts outward to a family playing in the sand. Although they do nothing out of the ordinary, she is almost physically disgusted by them. She is mesmerized by their bodies, their rough play, how they fold together and touch each other. She tries not to watch them, but even with her eyes closed, she seems to hear "the thud and the fat impact of all their ugly bodies upon one another" (Welty, 1994, p. 79). She tries to reenter her reverie: "I sank into familiarity, but the story of my love, the long narrative of the incident on the stairs had vanished" (Welty, 1994, p. 79). After the family leaves, her impressions of them stay with her, and she feels "victimized" by their presence, realizing that she will never be able to recreate her pleasant fantasy without the admixture of the raw sexuality and aggression which was the essence of her experience on the beach.

This story offers a striking meditation on memory. Welty takes a childhood memory of a day at the beach and retroactively structures it in such a way as to give her life and her sense of self meaning and continuity. In the process, we witness the interior process of growing up and the indelible changes that it brings. This story is a vivid illustration of the psychoanalytic understanding of memory: the way that past perceptions, thoughts, actions, and fantasies are remembered and re-experienced is motivated by the present and is continually altered by the changes in our psychic structures and the accrual of symbolic meaning (Blum, 2005; Freud, 1899,

1937; Fonagy, 1999, 2003; Loewald, 1972, 1973; Schachtel, 1959; Rizzuto, 2003; Shapiro, 1993, 2005). The complexity of memory as a continuous process of self-definition makes it difficult to study. As with many questions about the functioning of the mind, our knowledge of memory is limited to theoretical propositions and neurocognitive studies, which illuminate memory processes in flashes, but are not yet enough to substantiate any comprehensive theory of memory (Fonagy, 1999, 2003; Shevrin, 2002).

This study originated in a paper written with Dr. Lissa Weinstein that analyzed Julio Cortázar's short story "Bestiary" (1985) (Shustorovich & Weinstein, 2010) and made the argument that in latency the child's experience of attachment as a behavioral system is inseparable from the wishes and anxieties reflected in the universal fantasies of latency described in the psychoanalytic literature. The family romance, beating, primal scene, and other fantasies of latency shed light on how children cope with issues of separation and independence, ambivalence toward the parents, mortality and sexuality.

Curious about this time of tremendous cognitive and emotional reorganization and how it is captured by other writers, we went on to compare fiction about middle childhood written for children and adults. We found that while fiction for children aims to help contain the central conflicts of middle childhood, fiction for adults is more varied and complex. While some elements of the fictional narratives capture children's experiences with striking clarity, a number of them are transformed. For example, some writers import adult knowledge and perspective into their narratives, while others describe the unconscious, disorganizing aspects of the middle childhood experience (Weinstein & Shustorovich, 2011). This study examines how fictional narratives about middle childhood for adults are constructed: it asks how childhood experiences

are transformed by the memory lens in different narratives and explores what might be the functions of these transformations.

In order to expand and concretize the largely metaphorical understanding of memory achieved in psychoanalysis, this study focuses on short stories about middle childhood that illuminate the constructive and transformative nature of memory by explicitly taking the protagonists' memories of their transition from childhood as their subject. A time-honored source of psychoanalytic understanding, creative writing reflects what is universal in the workings of our minds by drawing on uniquely talented individual's capacities to articulate the depth and quality of their experiences and how they have come to understand them. We read writers like Welty because they offer us a chance to access and reorganize our own unarticulated experience. The best show us the workings of our minds if not explicitly by what they say, then implicitly by how they say it.

If memory is a creation of the present moment that is *of* our past, rather than *from* our past, then how does it relate to our experiences? What of our experience is remembered and how is it transformed? In Welty's story, the burgeoning of sexuality and the expansion of the child's world beyond the family alters the experience of love, and with it, how a first love is remembered. A narrative analysis (Reissman, 2008) of the story offers a chance to describe this particular transformation and what role it plays in the protagonist's altered view of herself and others. By turning to other stories about the transition from childhood and examining their thematic and structural elements, this study seeks to create a rich and detailed picture of how experience is transformed by the act of remembrance and to offer hypotheses about what guides this transformation.

In illuminating the moment of emergence from childhood, creative writers are consciously and unconsciously grappling with the construction of a unitary self, the motive force of remembering: what it means to grow up; what of their childhood selves remains in the adult they have become; how the self is constituted through narrative. Some of our most gifted writers have written stories whose dramatic focus is the moment of transition from childhood (for example, James Joyce, Phillip Roth, J. D. Salinger). While not necessarily written in the first person, many of these stories are based on the authors' vivid childhood memories. The ages of their protagonists are not always stated, but developmentally they tend to fall in middle childhood, a time of tremendous cognitive-emotional reorganization and the emergence of a unitary and self-reflective sense of self independent from the protected world of the family.

Because what is universal about the actual lived experience of middle childhood forms the basis of these stories, a detailed examination of middle childhood will be the starting point for this study. While the writers' actual childhood sensations, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings are not knowable, we can assume that in broad strokes they conform to the normative experiences of middle childhood, which have been described in the experimental and psychoanalytic literature. Awareness of the cognitive and emotional developments, central conflicts, fantasies, and patterns of interactions typical during this developmental period will allow us to be fully attuned to the meaning and significance of the thematic and structural elements of the narratives located in middle childhood. A developmental perspective is also necessary if we are to elucidate what symbolic meanings have accrued since childhood and how experience has been transformed in the adult retelling of it. Thus, the literature review will aim to provide an extensive and nuanced understanding of middle childhood by integrating empirical and clinical knowledge about this developmental period. This information will ground the

narrative analysis of an international group of frequently anthologized stories about what it means to be leaving childhood behind.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study deals with topics of enormous breadth and richness in psychoanalysis: the nature of memory, its relation to changes in psychic structure and the dynamic transformation of self-narrative, which impacts the view of the self and interactions with others, as well as the nature of creative expression, the truths it uncovers, and the effect it has on its audience. There is no way to do justice to these topics and undertake the detailed examination of middle childhood which will serve as the basis for the proposed analysis of short stories that recall this time-period in development. Thus, this chapter will begin with a very brief and selective discussion of the place of fiction in psychoanalytic theorizing and the psychoanalytic view of memory and how it relates to psychic structures. The goal of this discussion will be to clarify the scope and the underlying theoretical assumptions of this study. The rest of the chapter will offer a detailed examination of the cognitive and emotional changes of middle childhood, which will be divided into two broad sections.

The first section will offer an empirical view of children's behavior, thoughts, and feelings gleaned from research conducted by developmental psychologists. This section will first review the cognitive advances of middle childhood and how they impact children's social and emotional understanding of themselves and others. Changes in children's relationship with their parents will be examined next. The review will focus on the dilemmas posed by children's growing independence and continued need for their parents. This section will conclude with an examination of the multiple functions peers come to play in children's lives, as well as the role of joint fantasy and play in helping children cope with their competitiveness, aggression, and sexuality.

The second section will examine the dynamic transformations of middle childhood based on the theoretical, clinical, and research contributions of psychoanalysis. This section will first focus on the origins and vicissitudes of superego formation, which subsumes the cognitive, social, and emotional changes of middle childhood. How internal conflicts generated by the superego come to be addressed by the ego will be examined next. This portion of the review will emphasize the flexibility and variability of children's maturing defenses, which give rise to regression and fragmentation, as well as to the consolidation of new structures. The next part of this section will focus on the ongoing Oedipal struggles that underlie children's ambivalence toward their parents in latency, and on the containment function of peer interactions, which help children work through their libidinal and aggressive impulses so that they do not interfere with their functioning at school and at home. The final part of the psychodynamic section will elaborate on the conscious and unconscious uses of fantasies that structure children's internal relationship with their parents during latency. This part will focus on the universal nature of these fantasies and their adaptability and multi-functionality.

A nuanced understanding of middle childhood through the integration of the research and psychodynamic perspectives will be the goal of the literature review. Based on this understanding, this study will explore which experiences of middle childhood become the focus of adult recollections, how they are reconstructed in fictional narratives by gifted writers, and what might be inferred from this example of selection and transformation of experience about the nature of memory and the construction of the self. The final part of this review will present methods and key questions that will guide the selection and analysis of short stories that take the transition from childhood as their subject.

Theoretical Assumptions

The Use of Fiction

This study assumes that acclaimed works of fiction are a valid source of psychoanalytic knowledge because they portray psychological processes that are otherwise difficult to observe and describe. Freud (1907) argued that analyzing the products of creative writers' imagination is just as valid as studying cases of real illness. Writers know far more than psychologists, he wrote, for they draw on sources not yet opened up for science. While psychologists observe the workings of others' minds, creative writers open up to their unconscious processes and express them in their art. They need not have any conscious knowledge of the psychic truths that they incorporate in their writing.

Only a select few products of creative imagination have this inherent validity. The ones that do derive it from the effect they have on their readers. Freud (1911) wrote that the writer molds his fantasies into truths "of a new kind, which are valued by men as precious reflections of reality" (p. 224). Ernst Kris (1952; 1953/1975) argued that we find these works so precious because they not only transport, but also transform us. Fiction, because of its borrowed nature, is allowed to speak the unspeakable. It not only depicts life and its inherent conflicts but resolves them. Every creation can be viewed as an emergence from conflict, and as such it shows the reader the way.

Thus, the reader joins the writer in both, reaching into the depths of his unarticulated experience and in mastery. The reaching "down" is acceptable because it is a form of controlled regression, under the "firm and unabated control of the ego" (Kris, 1953/1975, p. 487). Mastery comes about as a result of the controlled regression of the ego. In that moment, Kris wrote, the ego has reasserted its function: to be creative or re-creative.

Loewald (1975) made a similar point, arguing that the “unreal,” fantasy aspect of narrative art allows more freedom for the adult to “play” with his own experience, and thus not only offers some relief from “the exigencies of life, it also allows one to see beyond those exigencies and not to be overwhelmed by their constraints in actual living” (p. 294). Thus, for Loewald (1975), the function of narrative art is to take us out of the reality of our lives so that we may better deal with it when we re-emerge from the immersion in a play or a book. For him, one of the defining features of psychological health is the communication and interplay between fantasy and reality; the awareness that drama and actuality share reality, and that one gains meaning from the other.

The capacity to create transformative work is the result of the writer’s interrogation and apprehension of her own experience. Susan Sontag (Charters, 2007) writes “what I write about is other than me. As what I write is smarter than I am. Because I can rewrite it. My books know what I once knew—fitfully, intermittently.” For her, a book that feels necessary is a “faithful recorder of a real world (not just the commotion inside one head)...” (p. 1548). For many authors, most famously, for Marcel Proust, the act of writing is motivated by the desire to discover one’s past (Charters, 2007).

Transformed into narrative art, writer’s memories acquire universality while remaining unique and particular (Aberbach, 1983; Schachtel, 1959). For example, Aberbach (1983), writing about screen memories as the sources of creative imagination of writers such as Wordsworth, Lawrence, Joyce, and Kafka points out that these writers appear “more conscious of the way childhood memories have altered with time and accumulated symbolic meaning” (p. 59) He quotes Wordsworth, writing of his childhood:

“I cannot say what portion is the truth / The naked recollection of that time, / And what may rather have been call’d to life/By after-meditation (The Prelude III 645-8)” (p. 59).

Of course, for Freud (1908a) creative writing was inseparable from the processes of memory and fantasy. In his formulation, when a present experience awakens a memory of the childhood past it finds fulfillment in the creative work. The resulting fantasy, the continuation or substitution for the play of childhood, will carry traces of both, the current impetus and the childhood experience, thus linking past, present, and future.

The Nature of Memory

This study is concerned with the nature of memory as a process of self-definition: how do we make a coherent whole out of the accumulation of individual moments of our lives, apprehended at different levels of consciousness and assimilated by a mental apparatus that is itself continuously transformed? The most basic assumption of this study is that memory is a construction – as Freud (1899) wrote,

“It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all from our childhood: memories relating to our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, emerge; they were formed at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in the selection of the memories themselves” (p. 322).

The same holds true for the recovery of memories: the present needs, desires, fears, and expectations impact how we reconstruct and organize past experiences in the present. For that matter, there is no “pure” experience of the here and now, for perception is an active process, increasingly structured by prior experiences, and transformed by development of our mental apparatus (Schachtel, 1959). On the neuro-cognitive level the only way to understand memory is as a complex set of inter-related and inter-connecting mental activities whose properties are not static, but are continually altered with the brain’s development. We know little of how the sum

total of these mental actions comes together to form relatively stable representations of our past experiences.

For now, our knowledge of memory is limited to molar studies that map brain activity and models of memory functions that rely on computer-based metaphoric language of encoding, storage, linking, and retrieval and the division of memory functions into declarative and procedural systems (Fonagy, 1999, 2003; Shevrin, 2002). For example, researchers are investigating how intentions, expectations, and even unconscious motivations affect how memories are retrieved and what form they take (Shevrin et al., 1992; 1996). At the same time, there is evidence that actual memories can be distinguished from false ones, not only by monitoring neural activity, but also by using narrative markers such as degree of clarity (vs. over-elaboration) and access to sensory detail (Fabiani et al., 2000; Mather et al., 1997; Schooler et al., 1986).

While the information we have is not enough to substantiate any overarching theory of memory, there is empirical support for the psychoanalytic view of memory (Shevrin, 2002). Research has shown that memory is not a unitary function, but is comprised of “multiple systems that have different logic (i.e. different experiential correlates and availability to consciousness) and neuroanatomy” (Kandel & Squire, 2001; see Nelson et. al., 2006 for review). This is evident in amnesic cases, for example, where one system of memory is well retained, while another is lost (Squire, 1997). Events are not stored in memory, ready for replay. Rather, each attempt at recall is a reconstruction of the event, shaped by present circumstances, active schemas and emotional context (Schacter, 1996).

Schacter’s (1996) research has shown that events are frequently forgotten or inaccurately remembered because information is either inaccessible or unavailable as a function of predictable

decay of memory traces over time, differential deployment of attention during the event based on what was salient at the time, and blocking of memory traces from consciousness at a given moment because of the emotional, interpersonal, or physical context of retrieval. People are also prone to misattribution, failing to distinguish between what was witnessed, read, or fantasized (Thompson, 1988) and suggestibility, accepting leading questions or statements during attempt at recall, as studies of eye witness testimony have shown (Loftus, 1996). Bias also shapes how events are encoded and recalled by altering them based on one's expectations and beliefs (see Alba & Hasher, 1983 for review).

Thus, the definition of memory employed in this study will derive from the psychoanalytic understanding of memory processes which stresses the motivational, constructive, and transformational aspects of memory. For most contemporary psychoanalytic writers (Blum, 2005; Fonagy, 1999, 2003; Rizzuto, 2005; Shapiro, 1993) both, the developmental transformations of meaning and function and the exigencies of the present moment influence how the past is remembered and re-experienced.¹ Loewald's (1972) work formed one of the foundations for this conceptualization of memory. He described memory as a mental activity, whose primary function is that of linking. Its role can be analytic: articulating an event, such that its unity is seen in all of its component, textured parts held together by inner connections, or synthetic, in which parts of events are linked together.

¹ While their primary concern is how memory functions in analysis and whether it has any causal role in treatment (see, for example, debates between Blum and Fonagy in Fonagy (2003)), this study focuses on how memorial activity forms links under non-pathogenic conditions: what experiences are represented and how they are transformed in order to construct the self-narrative.

For Loewald (1972) the unity of identity is ensured by memorial activity, which links the individual's past, present, and future. He called the resulting sense of self the personal myth; "myth" not because it is in any sense false, but because any historical truth "is a reconstruction or construction which restructures in novel ways what already at the time when it actually happened had been a mental construction, a memorial structure unconsciously built by the time agents of the mind" (p. 410).

Thus, memorial processes are transformed by cognitive and emotional reorganizations in the process of maturation. Memory is continuously recreated as the psychic apparatus undergoes increasingly higher levels of integration and differentiation. This process has been described in psychoanalytic theorizing as structure formation and structural change. It is also at the heart of the psychoanalytic understanding of middle childhood, which is primarily defined by superego formation and by the maturing of the functions of the ego.

Psychic Structures

As Meissner (2000a; b) reminds us, psychic structures are theoretical constructions used by psychoanalytic thinkers to organize and classify related functions of the self. Their origins and vicissitudes have been described in metaphorical language, most often in spatial terms (see Meissner, 2000a for examples), and while these metaphors have advanced our knowledge, they can also obscure our understanding of the mind. For instance, the id, ego, and superego are often anthropologized and described as possessing their own motivations and as the sources of a person's actions (Meissner, 2000a). Conflict is also frequently described as solely occurring between these parts of the self, as opposed to originating in the conflicting motivations of the unitary self (Kris, 1987; Meissner, 2000a).

To avoid these pitfalls, this study uses Pine's (1970) definition of psychic structures as selected patterns of behavior that have been successful in solving problems. What makes them structures, as opposed to singular actions, is that we develop interrelated arrays of behavior that have some order and permanence, while remaining in flux. For Pine (1970), development consists of a widening range of possible behaviors as we learn and practice new solutions to the problems of daily living.

Meissner (2000a) after reviewing psychoanalytic literature on structure formation and structural change similarly argues that the only non-metaphoric definition of structural development is that of increasing differentiation, organization, and integration of the capacities and functions that are part of our biological endowment and that respond to genetic and environmental influences. Thus, when we say that memory is continuously altered by changes in psychic structures, what we mean is that our past perceptions, thoughts, actions, and fantasies have been reorganized because our cognitive and emotional capacities undergo integration and differentiation which leads to novel ways of functioning and perceiving the self.

The mechanism by which structures are formed is equally difficult to conceptualize. Loewald (1960/1980; 1962a; 1962b; 1973a; 1973b) is among the majority of psychoanalytic thinkers (Hartmann et al, 1947; Schafer, 1968; Tyson, 1991, for example; see Meissner, 2000a for a detailed discussion) starting with Freud (1933) that ascribe structure formation to different forms of internalization. The essence of the concept of internalization is that object-representations are transformed into aspects of self-structure. Super-ego development, when external values, attitudes, and prohibitions are modified and become part of the self, has been used as the primary example of the process of internalization that leads to structure formation (Loewald, 1962a, 1962b, 1973a; Meissner, 2000a, 2000b). In the language of structural theory,

how one's parents are remembered reflects how they were internalized in the course of superego formation and how the superego has been altered in the course of adolescence and adulthood. The foregoing review of middle childhood will use the language and concepts of the tri-part model while maintaining awareness of their metaphoric nature. An attempt will be made to unpack their meaning and put them in dialogue with the empirical literature which describes the same phenomena in different terms and at a different level of aggregation and abstraction.

Research on Middle Childhood

Middle childhood can be conceptualized as a period marked by divergent conflict (Kris, 1987) where the child's dilemma lies in the tension between progression and regression, the desire for independence coexisting with a pull back to safety. In addition to, and perhaps exacerbated by divergent conflicts, middle childhood is a period of fragmentation and fluidity during which the cognitive lens through which experience is viewed and organized is itself transformed. This review will focus on what is known about how children experience their divergent and convergent conflicts and what it is like for them to undergo such a profound cognitive reorganization. We can then compare the actual abilities, skills, interests, patterns of relating and coping with stress of children in their middle years with how these are described in the adult reconstructions of childhood experience.

While grand theories of cognitive development have been replaced with theories that emphasize gradual and nonlinear changes in memory, reasoning, and conceptual structure, (e.g. DeLoache, Miller, & Pierroutsakos, 1998; Kuhn, 1998; Schneider & Bjorkland, 1998), there is agreement that between the ages of five and twelve children develop qualitatively new cognitive skills, such as self-reflection, meta-cognition, explicit, rather than implicit understanding, and the

ability to use multiple categories simultaneously. These cognitive developments proceed in constant interaction with the child's physical and social environment (Huston & Ripke, 2006).

Their newly acquired cognitive skills allow children to integrate their perceptions, needs, and expectations with those of others and as a result, they begin to understand the social world and the multiple roles they play in it. Children also develop self-monitoring, self-presentation, and self-control strategies and skills that increasingly enable them to regulate their behavior and affects (Saarni et. al., 2006; Mayseless, 2005; Markus & Nurius, 1984). Children's growing independence irrevocably alters their relationships with parents. Despite the fact that changes are largely initiated by their own maturation, most children feel pushed out into the world and less cared for by their parents, and mourn their former closeness and dependence. While peer relationships can provide support, loyalty, and trust, they also present significant challenges as children learn to navigate their social world. During middle childhood, fantasy and play become central to mastering communication, cooperation, and organizational skills. The symbolic and verbal content of the games children play also helps them work through the major conflicts of middle childhood: separation, differentiation, sexuality, and aggression.

Cognitive Advances in Middle Childhood

Shapiro and Perry (1976) described the universal shift in children's relationship with adults around the age of six or seven. Prior to the twentieth century, in most cultures, children have been considered able to leave home at this age and to begin to take on adult roles and responsibilities. Significant discontinuities in neurological and perceptual development that occur around the age of six and seven underlie this historical trend. Children's temporal and spatial orientation increases markedly, as does the capacity for reasoning, insight, and inference. Children become capable of internally consistent, logical, and objective thought. The developing

capacity for recursive thought, for considering multiple perspectives, and greater memory retention, processing speed, and efficiency allow children to move towards abstract, systematic, and more flexible reasoning. Metacognition develops as children can increasingly reflect on their own cognitive processes, emotional states, and motivations (Raikes & Thompson, 2005). Stability of mental processes and new cognitive structure means that inhibition, control, and postponement of action are now possible.

These cognitive advances allow children to better understand themselves, others, and how social relationships are constructed. Research shows that in middle childhood, children's self-descriptions become more stable and more comprehensive (Damon & Hart, 1988; Raikes & Thompson, 2005). They become capable of conceiving of themselves as experiencing two distinct emotions at the same time, and of holding and integrating multiple and not always congruent views of the self (Fischer & Bullock, 1984; Harter, 1999). Starting at the age of six children understand mixed emotions (Steele & Steele, 2005), and toward the end of middle childhood, children understand and acknowledge ambivalence in their attachment relationships, describing loving their parents and being angry at them at the same time (Harter & Whitesell, 1989). How the children in adult narratives view themselves and feel about important others will be some of the central questions guiding our narrative analysis. We will also focus on whether or not the difficult tasks of integrating conflicting views of the self and ambivalence about others are remembered and if so, how they are represented.

By middle childhood, children distinguish psychological traits, such as nice vs. mean, active vs. inactive, outgoing vs. shy and make predictions about people's actions based on them (Heyman & Gelman, 1999). Around the age of seven, children begin to define their performance at least in part by comparison with others (Fischer & Bullock, 1984; Harter, 1999). Social

comparisons provide children with feedback about their characteristics, skills, and abilities (Pomerantz, et. al., 1995). Older children can identify their strengths and weaknesses in social, academic, and other areas of functioning (Harter, 1999). Indeed, in middle childhood evaluation of others achieves high levels of accuracy and agreement with ratings by other children and adults. However, self-evaluation, a more difficult cognitive task, is less accurate, as judged by degree of agreement with teachers' and peers' ratings (Malloy et. al., 1996). The narrative analysis will examine if and how this newfound awareness of one's rung among peers is represented in adults' memories about this period. We might also ask how certain and self-aware adults remember themselves to be?

Between the age of five and twelve children become increasingly more skilled at adopting the perspective of another, which enables them to better understand reasons for others' behavior, to predict the behavior of other children, as well as to deceive others and to detect others' deceptions (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Watson & Valtin, 1997; Droege & Stipek, 1993). The increasing insight about self and other leads to greater capacity for self-control and self-regulation. Impulsive behavior declines steadily from early to middle childhood (Maccoby, 1984). Physical aggression also wanes, as verbal aggression increases. Children are increasingly able to determine appropriate conditions for displaying anger and aggression. As they become more verbally sophisticated, children become more likely to hurt each other indirectly, through "social-relational" aggression, especially because more subtle behaviors are less likely to be noted and punished by adults (Underwood, 2002). Middle childhood is a time of initiation into the complex social dance that adults are engaged in across many contexts of their lives. We might ask if the struggle to learn all the steps is represented in the stories and how it is remembered.

As they internalize cultural prohibitions on expressing negative emotions, children work hard to maintain emotional control and become skilled at hiding their feelings. Children report that they control their emotions in accordance with a complex set of considerations which are based on their expectations of the response of those around them. For example, they might display negative feelings if there is a parent nearby who they expect will comfort them, but hide them if they fear being ridiculed by their peers. Gender differences also emerge in emotional displays, girls showing more negative emotions than boys do (Saarni et. al., 2006). Greater knowledge and understanding exposes children to more intense experiences of exclusion and humiliation in middle childhood. We might expect adults to come back to these first experiences and attempt to rework them through the process of writing.

The wide-ranging and rapid cognitive reorganization typical of middle childhood makes this developmental period more difficult to research, but more importantly, impacts children's experience of their own minds. For example, in middle childhood, the sophistication of children's thought processes runs ahead of their ability to explain them. While investigating the development of children's social understanding Dunn and Slomkowski (1992) noted the wide discrepancy between what children are observed to do and their own reflective accounts. While the procedural ability to distinguish fact from opinion and act on it is present from the age of six, the ability to consciously reflect on the subjectivity of different opinions does not arise until children are past the age of ten (Banerjee et. al., 2007). Similarly, on a distributive justice task, nine-year old children recognized solutions that took relationship and need into account as more fair, but when asked to problem solve independently, were unable to integrate these complex considerations into their decision-making process (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1994).

It also appears that understanding of social reality comes well before the skills required to put it into practice. Pomerantz and colleagues (1995) observed children's classroom behavior and interviewed them about social comparison over the course of three years. As children progressed from kindergarten to fourth grade, they were observed to exchange overt forms of social comparison (e.g. "My picture is better than yours") for more subtle ones, such as inquiring about another child's progress during independent work time. In interviews, kindergarteners were unable to explain their interest in others' performance. However, starting in the first grade, children were able to articulate the desire to know where they stand and their strategies for getting the information in the face of social sanction of overt forms of social comparison. Interestingly, in interviews a substantive portion of second graders showed that they were already aware that subtle inquiries about their peers' progress were useful to gather information, but these children were not observed to begin making them until the fourth grade.

This research demonstrates the complexity and unevenness of the process of cognitive development. A general question about the process of memory suggests itself from these findings: in addition to past events, feelings, fantasies, and the like, is the process of cognitive transformation part of how we constitute the self? In the stories, is the passage from procedural and implicit to explicit, reflective, and actionable understanding represented? Does it reflect the actual cognitive changes of middle childhood or is it only the contrast between children's and adults' levels of comprehension and functioning?

Because children around the age of seven are in the midst of cognitive reorganization, they are also particularly likely to shift between levels of cognitive functioning, and to be most vulnerable to emotional and contextual variables. For example, researchers have found that children's level of performance is significantly affected by the research context. Droege and

Stipek (1993) demonstrated that children make more mature judgments on social-cognitive tasks if they believe that they will actually interact with the child they are being shown on video. Moreover, children display much greater skill and sophistication in real-life conflicts with siblings and parents than in experiments created by psychologists (Dunn & Slomkowski, 1992).

Researchers have also unwittingly demonstrated that children's emotional experience significantly contributes to the variability in their performance. Bering and his colleagues (2005) set out to explore whether religious schooling affects children's conceptions of death by presenting a puppet show about a mouse that gets eaten by an alligator. They then asked whether the mouse can still see, eat, feel hunger or cold, be angry or sad or lonely, etc. They discovered that all children, between the ages of five and twelve, were more likely to attribute desire, emotion, and thought than biological, physical, and perceptual experiences to the dead mouse, although the proportion of "cessation" responses increased with age. Children of all ages were most likely to think that even after death, the mouse was still angry at his brother, loved his mother, and wanted to come home. The authors also noted in passing that children responded to the "mother" questions quicker than to any others (Bering et. al., 2005). It appears that it was not merely that children believed that desires and emotions continue after death, but that they were unable to contemplate the question dispassionately when it came so close to their own fears, loves, losses, and jealousies.

In another study that inadvertently highlights the way in which children's affective experience may impact their performance, Heyman and Gelman (1999) used the "switched at birth task" to assess children's beliefs about psychological traits: after telling a story about families whose children were switched at birth, the researchers asked questions designed to elicit nature vs. nurture beliefs of kindergarteners through fifth graders. When the younger children's

responses did not fit any discernible pattern, the researchers tested for priming effects, but entirely overlooked the possibility that the loaded nature of the story itself preoccupied the children.²

Along similar lines, when Bernstein & Cowan (1981) asked children ranging from three to twelve years old “how people get babies,” they classified the responses into three categories of increasing cognitive sophistication on the subject. The children between the ages of seven and eight fell evenly into all three categories. The researchers noted that all of the seven year old boys who were at the lowest level of comprehension showed signs of embarrassment during the interview, such as giggling and refusing to answer questions.

These findings confirm clinical insights that will be discussed in the second part of this review about the propensity for regression and the fragility of secondary process functioning of latency age children (Bornstein, 1951; A. Freud, 1965; Sarnoff, 1976, 1987). They also raise questions about whether and how we recall being undone by questions of sexuality, birth, and death, and how these experiences are refracted in the adult lens.

Changes in the Parent-Child Relationship

Children’s growing cognitive maturity, in particular, their mentalization capacity as well as the ability to regulate their emotions and communicate about them alter their relationships with parents. With the start of schooling, children spend a lot more time away from their parents and are asked to become much more independent. This shift does not always correspond to

² Structured interviews which fail to make room for children’s “associative” and “superficial” responses disregard an important aspect of the cognitive and emotional experience of middle childhood. For example, moral explanations in which children view illness as punishment are much more likely to come up in spontaneous accounts of illness than in structured interviews (Bibace & Walsh, 1981). Anna Freud (1952) also pointed out that children’s reaction to illnesses, medical procedures, and resulting separations from parents depend in part on the fantasies that lend them meaning.

children's needs and wants, as parents remain central attachment figures in middle childhood. However, attachment researchers have shown that in middle childhood the attachment system becomes more diversified and differentiated as children form close affectionate bonds with adults other than their parents, and use them to fulfill the safe haven and secure-base functions previously performed only by their caregivers. The developing cognitive-emotional flexibility allows children to increasingly differentiate between attachment figures and to call on them in different situations to help with more types of distress (Maysel, 2005).

While the activation of the attachment system, conceived of as a response to danger or to the caregiver's absence, declines in frequency and intensity during middle childhood, children cope with other types of stress, such as feelings of shame and guilt, peer rejection, and worries about academic failures (Maysel, 2005). The attachment perspective helps focus our inquiry into how the expansion of our emotional world beyond the family is reconstructed. For example, we can examine the attachment figures portrayed in the stories and what functions they serve, when and how the attachment system is activated, and how this relates to what we know of attachment in middle childhood.

Although nested in the particulars of the American after-school experience, Belle's (1999) study demonstrates the nature of children's continued attachment to their parents in middle childhood and some of the coping mechanisms employed in the absence of an attachment figure. When Belle (1999) interviewed working parents and their elementary school children about after-school arrangements, children reported more time alone, less happiness with the arrangements, and less adherence to them than parents believed. In one-on-one, open-ended interviews, the younger children expressed a longing for more time with their parents. Even for fifth and sixth graders, parents were the most often named source of affection, reliable alliance,

enhancement of worth, and help. Mothers were reported to be primary sources of intimacy and nurturance in the school years and into adolescence.

When asked about their experience of being home alone, many children described feeling lonely and afraid, but often did not convey this to their parents. While boys reported fears of robbers, girls also described fears of kidnappers. Belle (1999) also noted that self-regulation was an important challenge for children who were on their own after school. They used television, pets, and even stuffed animals to cope with boredom, fear, and loneliness. The quality of sibling and peer relationships also made a significant difference in children's after-school experience. We might ask if the continuation of emotional intimacy and the longing for nurturance and physical security of being with parents represented in the narratives that look back on the transition from childhood. Are the memories of fear and loneliness and how we coped with them transformed as a result of subsequent moves towards greater independence?

Researchers have also found that parents and children show less overt affection during middle childhood than during earlier periods (McNally et. al., 1991). At the same time, parents report little change in their enjoyment of parenting, regard for their children, or respect for their opinions and preferences between the time when their children are three and twelve. The children's perception is different. During middle childhood, and especially toward the later part of it, they report that parents have become less accepting of them (Armentrout & Burger, 1972). Alessandri and Wozniak (1987) found that ten to eleven year old children perceived their parents' beliefs about them less accurately than fifteen to sixteen year old children did. Following up with the same ten to eleven year old children two years later showed that at twelve and thirteen, their perceptions matched their parents' beliefs about them much better (Alessandri & Wozniak, 1989).

The reasons for this shift are multifold. The second part of this review will describe how the process of internalization of the parental authority, increasing self-evaluation and self-awareness, and children's feelings about separation from their parents affect children's perception of parents' beliefs. Physiological changes are also important. Children enter puberty between the ages of ten and eleven, and the associated fluctuations in hormone levels have been found to be associated with increased aggression in boys, depression in girls, and moodiness, irritability and impulsivity for both sexes. Changes in dopamine and serotonin levels in the limbic system also make young adolescents more emotional and vulnerable to stress (Richardson, 2005).

Research shows that these physical and emotional changes may impact the parent-child relationship. When children experience physical changes of puberty they feel more distant from their parents and experience more conflict with them. In particular, there are fewer expressions of positive affect and more expressions of negative affect between parents and their children (Richardson, 2005). Ogletree, Jones, and Coyl (2002) found that displays of physical affection between fathers and son dropped when sons reached puberty, although other measures of parental involvement remained stable. The onset of puberty is a concrete expression of the end of childhood that takes on layers of symbolic meaning on the way to adult sexuality. How physical transformations and their emotional sequelae are understood and reconstructed in adult narratives will be another central question of the narrative analysis.

In what has become a classic study, Watson and Valtin (1997) set out to explore the development of children's understanding of secrets between the ages of five and twelve, but their research illustrates beautifully children's evolving relationship with parents as internal structures are built and fortified, and peers come to play a larger role in their lives. Asked if they would tell

their mother about a friend who stole money from her mother's purse, most of the five and six year old children in the study said that they would tell, because their mother would need to correct the wrongdoing. About half of the eight year olds said that they would tell their mother, primarily to avoid punishment, although some who would not, cited the importance of maintaining the peer relationship. Most of the ten and twelve year old children said that they would not tell because of the importance of friendship or mutual trust.

Both children who decided to tell and not to tell, showed clear evidence of tension between the demands of parental authority and morality on the one hand and peer expectations on the other. A similar pattern emerged when children were asked if they would tell on a friend who started a fire. In the stealing story, the experimenters included an ambiguous response by the mother to the tattling child, such as "Oh, Jane!" While five and six year olds attributed her response to the act of stealing, many eight year olds and most of the older children saw it as reproof of tattling. Thus, they knew that mother could appreciate both peer and adult norms, and integrate the two perspectives and intentions. Watson and Valtin (1997) found that virtually no children would tell the mother a secret about a birthday surprise, with younger ones focusing on the rule that you don't reveal a surprise party, and older ones on the mother's perspective, not wanting to spoil her surprise.

Most children told the experimenters that they would tell their mother if they had wet their pants at school. Younger children tended to focus on practical reasons: she would help deal with the consequences, whereas older children focused on the relationship: she would understand and comfort, and can be trusted not to tell anyone else. Thus, while there is a clear shift from parental to peer influence between the ages of five and twelve, it is not a straightforward transition. While at five years old a child will tell mother everything, by ten or twelve, she will

not even alert her to a potentially dangerous situation when it involves a peer. The children appear initially motivated by fear of punishment, most prominent around the age of eight, and eventually by loyalty and trust, which predominates by ten and twelve. This is the essence of the transition from a rigid to a more flexible superego, which relies less and less on external controls. This research gives us some benchmarks for children's behavior and reasoning as they progress through middle childhood. It also illustrates the growing importance of the peer relationship, and the changes in the attachment system, as we witness the continuity and transformation of the nature of the dependence on the mother.

Emerging Relationship with Peers

The turn towards peers signals the beginning of independent social relationships which are outside of the world of adults. While in preschool children define friendships in terms of shared activities, in the elementary school years children describe them in terms of loyalty and trust, later adding sympathy and self-disclosure. The changes in children's use of friendships are intimately linked with changes in cognition, particularly with refinement of social understanding and perspective taking. Children are increasingly able to differentiate friendships from other relationships, for example, with siblings and parents (Hartup, 2006). While children's attachment needs are still primarily fulfilled by their caregivers, when children want companionship, they now almost always turn to their peers (Kerns et al., 2006).

Friendships can also serve a self-regulatory function. Sullivan (1953) wrote that during middle childhood, friendship is the last chance troubled children have of favorable change because they are able to talk about what they have learned to hide during the previous years. Researchers have also shown that for children as young as eight years old relationships with friends can serve a compensatory function by providing warmth, intimacy, and support lacking

in the family (Booth-Laforce et al., 2005). When writers reconsider middle childhood, do they assign consistent roles to peer relationships? How do these roles compare with those played by parents and other adults? In looking back, is there a distinction between attachment needs and companionship? Does the resulting picture conform to what we know about how children interact in middle childhood? If there are obvious distortions, what might account for them?

The positive aspects of peer interactions: cooperation, friendship, support, loyalty, and trust are inseparable from competition, aggression, cruelty, and in-and-out-grouping. It is well-known that children can be stunningly cruel to each other during middle childhood (Fine, 1981; Hartup, 2006; Underwood, 2002). Fine (1981) conducted a three-year participant-observer study of boys between the ages of nine and twelve. He observed a delicate social dance around issues of competition, aggression, and particularly fighting. The children's interactions were carefully choreographed and controlled, social hierarchy determining much of the outcome. Children were cruel to each other most often in the presence of friends. Fine (1981) concluded that normative aggression at this age is not uncontrolled. Children are learning to use social comparison and insults, and testing the boundaries of appropriate behavior is part of the process.

Fine (1981) also found that close friendships were used as a setting for exploring modes of expressing sexual curiosity and aggression, which were often inseparable, especially as the older boys teased, insulted, and bothered girls to get attention from them (Fine, 1981). The boys derived much pleasure from exchanging sexual information, which carried not only anatomical detail, but also powerful cultural messages about the male and female roles in relationships. Fine (1981) noted that the boys were practicing ways of talking about sex, girls, school, etc. that they needed to perfect in order to perform well with peers. Close friendships appeared to function as safe environments in which children could use their newly developing cognitive skills to learn

how social meaning is constructed, refine their evaluations of others' expectations and intentions, and acquire the flexibility to take on different roles and meet the needs of others, which appear to be the keys to successful relationships (Fine, 1981).

Fine (1981) offers a developmental researcher's view on the learning process by which children come to regulate their social interactions and form and maintain relationships. It gives meaning and purpose to what might appear to be senseless cruelty and violence of peer interactions of this time period. In looking back, do we tend to do the same? How are the physical and emotional missteps, punches and bruises presented in the stories? Is there a consistent way in which they are understood and contextualized?

Girls appear less aggressive and less overtly concerned with sexual issues than boys during middle childhood, but this is more a function of form rather than substance. Girls tend to interact in smaller groups, and to be more oriented toward affiliation rather than competition and dominance than boys (Leaper, 1998). However, "social-relational" aggression and power struggles between girls are commonplace (Underwood, 2002), and one need only to listen to rhymes accompanying the ever-popular pastime of skipping rope to discover the wide array of sexual, envious, hostile, and murderous preoccupations of girls in middle childhood (Goldings, 1974; Kaplan, 1965).

The symbolic and verbal content of the games that generations of children play address the most salient themes of middle childhood. For example, in middle childhood, hide-and-seek, which is a transformation of the peekaboo game of infancy, helps children cope with the disappearance and reappearance of loved ones. "Home" is still the safety zone to which you return, but the game is played outside with peers and is governed by complicated group-based rules, thus integrating competitive strivings and incorporating new motor and cognitive skills

(Glenn, 1991). Similarly, the “jinx” games played by both sexes, which render one child mute if he says the same word or phrase spontaneously as another, until he is released by a third child, emerge out of children’s need to ritualize the process of differentiation, separation-individuation, and consolidation of autonomy (Oremland, 1973).

Group activities also allow children to express and work through their internal conflicts in unconscious, socially sanctioned ways. For example, team games and sports allow children to displace aggression from their oedipal rivals (Buxbaum, 1991). The observance of strict rules allows for the sublimation of aggression and for independence from external superego figures (Buxbaum, 1991; Peller, 1954). Players remain equals, and belonging to a team fulfills a fantasy of belonging to a group of brothers, so the child does not have to face dangerous authority on his own. Because the rules are codified and passed on from one generation to the next, defenses are supported: the underlying fantasies remain unconscious and the oedipal struggle is allowed to recede into the background. Painful rivalry with father or siblings is replaced by competition for the sake of competition, in which often observance of rules is more important than winning or losing and there is always a chance to play again (Peller, 1954).

Children also use shared fantasies to work through their conflicts, anxieties, and preoccupations. For example, jokes and rhymes are passed down through generations of children almost unaltered. Their form permits their openly sexual and aggressive content: codified and ritualized, they surface only when the child is in a same-sex group of peers, so no one is alone with the sensuality and excitement they arouse (Clowes, 1996; Goldings, 1974; Peller, 1954). Clowes (1996) examined farmer’s daughter jokes, popular with latency age boys, which consist of a prohibition against sex with a farmer’s daughter, transgression of the prohibition, and its

consequences³. Each variation of the joke represents a regressive fantasy which allows boys to express their oedipal longings, sexuality, and fear of punishment. Themes of separation from the family, death and castration, confusion of gender identity, prohibition, satisfaction, and punishment of incestuous desires all find expression (Clowes, 1996).

Rhymes that accompany jumping rope serve an equivalent function for girls (Furman, 1991; Goldings, 1974; Kaplan, 1965). They openly express pre-oedipal and oedipal conflicts, as well as concerns about sexuality, body changes, and growing up. While in the rhymes of the younger girls, baby brothers, and boys in general are rejected, maimed and killed, in the rhymes of the older girls heterosexual sex is often portrayed in the context of exhibitionism and penetration, and tends to be infused with aggression. Death and public humiliation are frequently the punishments for sexual activity, which is most frequently described in oral and anal terms. Aside from sexuality, curiosity and fear of death also find expression (Goldings, 1974).

There is a striking openness with which children's preoccupations are expressed in rhymes, jokes, and games compared to what children are willing to reveal to adults. It will be interesting to see if there is an equivalent separation between children's and adults' worlds in the narratives we examine, and in what guise the protagonists experience their sexuality, aggression, desire, and curiosity. Play reaches its apex in middle childhood as children establish joint fictional worlds and coordinate motivations, actions, emotions, and even perceptions within these worlds (Peterson & Flanders, 2005).

³ A typical joke runs as follows: A traveler needs a place to stay for the night and stops at a farmhouse. The farmer allows him to stay, stipulating that he must not sleep with his daughter. The traveler sleeps with the daughter anyway and the act is discovered by the farmer. Then the traveler either triumphs in the oedipal struggle, finding a way to get away with it and humiliate the farmer/father or he is punished by the farmer/father. The punishment is either a graphic act of castration or an erotic contact with the farmer/father at the potential moment of castration (Clowes, 1996).

Play ends with the move into adolescence, but it is superseded by daydreams (Freud, 1908a; Peller, 1954, 1959; Sarnoff, 1987). Creative writers, Freud (1908a) points out, are most adept at continuing the play of childhood in the form of fantasy, which they mold into narrative art. Thus, we may want to look at how writers remember the play of childhood; what meanings they assigned to play and whether it is a particular source of continuity in the process of the construction of the self.

The dreams, daydreams, and fantasies of the stories' protagonists will be one of the central objects of this study. The essence of a psychoanalytic understanding of the formation of the self is that who we come to be is influenced not only by our neurobiology and real interaction with care-givers, but also by unconscious fantasies, which are closely tied to our bodily experiences, and as expressions of unconscious motivations, come to organize our perceptions, thoughts, and actions (Meissner, 2000a). The following section will examine the hypothesized sources of unconscious motivations and the rich fantasy life of latency-age children.

Psychoanalytic Perspective

Psychoanalytic theorists have long noted the transformative nature of the cognitive advances of middle childhood (Bornstein, 1951; Erikson, 1950; A. Freud, 1945; Sarnoff, 1987; Shapiro & Perry, 1976; Sullivan, 1953) and the resulting achievement of the "orientation in living:" (Sullivan, 1953, p. 243) the ability to formulate interpersonal needs, foresee obstacles, both internal and external, to their satisfaction, and the capacity to deal with those obstacles, including postponing satisfaction. They have described these developmental changes of middle childhood in terms of superego formation, maturation of ego functions, and advances in object relations (Bornstein, 1951, 1953a, 1953b; Buxbaum, 1991; Freud, 1905, 1924, 1926, 1933; A. Freud, 1945, 1965; Furman, 1991; Jacobson, 1964; Loewald, 1962a, 1962b; Schafer, 1960;

Sarnoff, 1976, 1987; Williams, 1972). While psychoanalytic literature uses a different set of terms to describe the cognitive-emotional changes of middle childhood, most psychoanalytic hypotheses can be integrated with the developmental and social research findings, and have the advantage of an integrated, overarching perspective that the more molar studies lack.

Freud (1905) first drew attention to the importance of middle childhood for subsequent development. During this period, oedipal desire is repressed and the child starts “fresh with the sensual current,” (p. 200) free to form new relationships. He named the period “latency” because the child’s emerging capacity for dynamic defenses allows for the diversion of the sexual impulse into learning and other productive activities. For psychoanalytic theorists (Bornstein, 1951, 1953a, 1953b; Buxbaum, 1991; Freud, 1905, 1924, 1926, 1933; A. Freud, 1945, 1965; Furman, 1991; Jacobson, 1964; Loewald, 1962a, 1962b; Schafer, 1960; Sarnoff, 1976, 1987; Williams, 1972), the central change of the latency period involves the development of the superego, which comes to oversee the child’s actions and generates inter-systemic conflict, which is managed by a new set of defenses.

Rather than a birth of a qualitatively new structure that creates an independent self, we will understand superego formation in terms of integration and differentiation of pre-existing cognitive capacities which allows for qualitatively different ways of functioning (Meissner, 2000a,b; Loewald, 1972). The essential change of the “crisis at the age of seven” as Vygotsky (1987) put it, is the child’s capacity to express and generalize internal states. The development of the “intellectual orientation to experiences” (p. 291) means that the child’s needs, motives, values, relations with the environment, in other words, his consciousness and the entire character of the child’s experience is restructured (Vygotsky, 1987).

Superego formation irrevocably alters the child's view of the self and others. Cognitive affective internalizations, rather than the external availability of the objects come to dictate children's relationships with their parents, characterized by disappointment and hatred, as well as affection and longing. Children work through their ambivalence using the shared fantasies of group sports, games, rhymes and jokes described in the previous section. Private fantasies also enable children to maintain their independence and to preserve their relationships by safely expressing forbidden feelings and wishes.

Superego Formation

In describing superego formation, the psychoanalytic perspective offers a holistic view of the emergence of a coherent identity, self-evaluation according to external and internal standards, as well as the capacity for self-regulation and independent functioning that was described in the research section. The superego is an "identification with the parental agency," (Freud, 1933) constructed of an amalgam of the child's identifications with the images of the parents, the child's affective responses to these images, and the cultural contributions of the parental values. The impetus for the creation of the superego is a change in the child's relationship with the parents. To resolve the Oedipus complex, the child must renounce libidinal desires for the parents and turn them into affection (Freud, 1905). The child does so by intensifying his existing identifications with the parents. The shape these identifications take is affected not only by the child's parents and her relationship with them, but also by the quality and strength of the child's libidinal and aggressive oedipal feelings as well as her narcissistic strivings, reflected in the omnipotence attributed to the parents (Freud, 1933; Loewald, 1962a).

Diamond and Yeomans (2007) offer a corrective to the narrowly classical view of superego development that incorporates what we know of cognitive advances of middle

childhood. They highlight that many psychoanalytic theorists (Britton, 1989, 2004; Fonagy et al., 2002; Kohut, 1971, 1977; Loewald, 1977; Searles, 1959) believe that the Oedipus complex is renounced not just out of fear of punishment, but “as a result of the deepening of the child’s sense of reality and specifically of the development of more reality-bound representations of self and others that are less subject to the patterning by libidinal influences and associated fantasies” (p. 208). Loewald (1962a) wrote that as the superego develops, the infantile projections of perfection and omnipotence are gradually modified in accordance with the real limitations of both, the child and the parents. This allows for a lessening of the internal demands for perfection and for a more balanced external relationship with the parents. Jacobson (1964) also pointed out that the process of depersonalizing the superego helps the child remove the rules, criticisms, and fears of the superego from the parents as people, and as libidinal pressure lessens, affectionate bonds with the parents grow⁴.

Just as we ask if the process of cognitive reorganization is remembered, we might ask if the process of internalization of parental authority reflected in the narratives of adults. Is there a shift in the representations of the parents in the course of the narrative? Is there a concomitant shift in how the self is represented? Do the self and other representations conform to what we know of children’s mentalization capacities or are they transformed by adult reflections?

⁴ These developments are worth keeping in mind when researchers study self-evaluation in middle childhood. Not merely a cognitive task, self-perception is affected by the vicissitudes of superego development, as well as by the actual superego contents, which are internally, relationally, socially, and culturally determined. Children’s increasing ability to look beyond their personal experience when considering questions of morality and fairness, described in the research section, are also worth considering. Declines in egocentrism and other cognitive gains are at work here, but the process of depersonalization of the superego no doubt aides in this transition, as does the partial displacement of the child’s identifications from the parents to new authority figures, such as teachers and cultural figures (Benson & Harrison, 1991; Freud, 1933; Jacobson, 1964; Sarnoff, 1987).

Under normative conditions, when children internalize the authority of the parents they take on not only their hostile and prohibitive aspects, but also their guiding, correcting, caring, and protective functions (Schafer, 1960).⁵ Having an internal substitute for parental authority advances the ego to a position of activity, and as such offers a buffer from the external world and the uncertainty of the real relationship with authority (Schafer, 1960). As attention shifts to compliance with internal standards, external success or failure becomes less crucial to narcissistic equilibrium and the superego enables people to withstand, to some extent, psychic or even physical injuries (Jacobson, 1964). It becomes the source of internal safety (Jacobson, 1964) and resilience (Schafer, 1960).

Contemporary research supports this view, Lagattuta (2005) found that like for adults, for children between the ages of five and seven, following internal prohibitions was associated with more positive emotions than obeying external rules. The internalization of parental authority is also nicely illustrated by Harter and Whitesell's (1989) research on children's understanding of pride and shame. At the ages of four and five, children could not describe the feelings of pride or shame or what might cause them, although they knew that one was positive, and the other negative. When asked about being proud or ashamed of *themselves*, children between the ages of six and seven described their *parents'* hypothesized reactions to their actions. Only by the age of eight could children describe their own feelings of pride or shame. When asked if these feelings emerge in private or social context, the reply of a nine-year old speaks to the incremental process

⁵ The largely unconscious process of identification with authority figures also promotes the transmission and acceptance of ethical, social, physical and intellectual group standards (Freud, 1933; Jacobson, 1964; Sarnoff, 1987). Thinking in terms of identification may be helpful in making sense of the research that shows that children acquire an implicit understanding of social mores and processes even though they are not explicitly taught or stated, and that there is a lag between implicit understanding and the capacity to articulate and act on this knowledge.

of superego development , “Well I might be able to be ashamed of myself in my parents didn’t know, but it would sure help me to be ashamed if they were there!” (p. 96) Children also reported feeling better once they confessed their misdeeds to significant others.

This study will examine whether superego formation as such is represented in the stories. How are the development of an internal sense of right and wrong, new experiences of pride and shame, the dawning awareness of separateness depicted? The clinical and theoretical literature on latency has a particular lens on this experience: growing awareness and independence comes at a price of increased internal conflict and requires a whole host of new defenses to manage it (Bornstein, 1951; 1953; A. Freud, 1945, 1965; Furman, 1991; Sarnoff, 1987; Schafer, 1960; Williams, 1972). Does the internal world of the child depicted by creative writers conform to this view of gain and loss; conflict and defense? How is the fabric of emotional experience of middle childhood portrayed, and what elements are altered?

Maturation of Ego Functions

Anna Freud (1945) wrote that the latency child’s increasing maturation and cognitive skills allow him growing mastery of his environment and many gratifications, but these developments are also sources of great pain, discomfort, and anxiety. The latency child begins to apprehend not only the external world, but also his own thoughts and feelings. The capacity to generalize affective experience and spot contradictions gives rise to internal conflict, and the advent of self-evaluation and self-love demands the fulfillment of the child’s own ideals (Loewald, 1962a; Vygostky, 1987) in addition to the exigencies of the outside world.

Once the superego is formed, children are in internal and external danger: they risk punishment and the loss of love of their parents, and guilt and criticism from the super-ego. To avoid the resulting anxiety and tension children develop a variety of defenses such as denial,

projection, and identification with the aggressor (A. Freud, 1945; Bornstein, 1951; Furman, 1991; Sarnoff, 1987; Williams, 1972) During latency children also escape painful reality by using the defense of fantasy formation and begin to develop the ultimate adaptive capacity: sublimation. As children move from instinctual to sublimated activity, and from being guided by the pleasure principle to the reality principle, they accomplish the transition from play to work (Bornstein, 1953b; A. Freud, 1965; Kaplan, 1965; Williams, 1972). Children progress from using materials aggressively: destroying, throwing, messing, and hoarding, to using them constructively: planning, building, sharing, and working out intervening frustrations.

As children's growing cognitive capacities allow them an increasing orientation to reality, they transform fantasy back into activity. Instead of magically flying, the child might pretend to pilot a plane, and then instead of pretending to pilot, he might decide to build a model of an airplane (Buxbaum, 1991). However, intellectual achievements are still closely tied to emotional development. For example, Anna Freud (1945) described conscientiousness and punctuality of middle childhood as the byproducts of anal regularity. Thus, disgust, order, and neatness guard against the return of the repressed, and collections replace highly valued anal outputs that the child withheld or offered up to the parents during earlier phases of development.

The classical psychoanalytic writers remind us of the fluidity of play, which is dynamically transformed with development while maintaining links to earlier symbolic meanings and functions. We might want to see not only how and why the stories' protagonists play, but also whether the nature of their play is transformed in the course of the narratives.

School takes center stage as children begin compulsory education in middle childhood, but to be free to learn, children need to have resolved the central conflicts of the earlier phases of development, and in particular, have developed the capacity for sublimation (Erikson, 1950;

Freud, 1905; A. Freud, 1965; Furman, 1991; Sarnoff, 1987). Erikson (1950) wrote that children need to have resolved the Oedipus complex to successfully learn in school, but once they get there, they “do like to be mildly but firmly coerced into the adventure of finding out that one can learn to accomplish things which one would never have thought of by oneself, things which owe their attractiveness to the very fact that they are not the product of play and fantasy, but the product of reality, practicality, and logic; things which thus provide a token sense of participation in the real world of adults” (p. 84). The internal pull forward pushes children away from the protective orbit of their home and parents into the ever-widening, overlapping circles of friends and family, school and peers, neighborhood and community.

As children spend more time in the adult world, the efforts involved tax their capacity to cope with anxiety, frustration, and superego and social demands. As described in the previous section, researchers have confirmed clinicians’ observations that temporary regressions are a constant in all areas of latency age children’s functioning, in particular, in impulse control, reality testing, secondary thought process, and speech (Bornstein, 1951; A. Freud, 1965; Sarnoff, 1976, 1987). Berta Bornstein (1951) wrote that children between the ages of five and eight frequently dip into primary process, and it is only “for the sake of the adults” that the latency child “behaves as though he were living by the rules of the secondary process” (p. 279). Children are particularly prone to regression when they are tired or ill: they whine, cling, and ask for physical attention from their parents. Anxiety and loss, particularly loss of love objects, also lead to ego regressions in latency age children (Freud, A., 1965). We might want to see if this in-between quality of growing up when autonomous ego functions are particularly vulnerable is represented in the stories. How do writers understand these regressions? Do they attribute them

to particular kinds of stressors? Do these depictions accord with what we know of children's functioning?

For psychoanalytic theorists, regressions are the hallmark of the progression of latency toward adolescence. Bornstein (1951) and Sarnoff (1976, 1987) divided the period into two phases, Williams (1972), into three. In their divisions, all three agree on the progressive transformations that happen between the ages of six and twelve. The ego gradually builds up a repertoire of defenses to deal with the pressure from the superego and the outside world. Initially, the ego calls upon reaction formations such as shame and disgust to defend against pre-genital impulses. The pre-genital impulses, in particular, sadistic anality, are temporary regressions from genital impulses which manifest themselves in incestuous fantasies and masturbatory temptations. The pre-genital impulses are chosen because they appear safer to the ego.

When oedipal urges appear, to avoid being overwhelmed by fear of loss of love or of parental retaliation, the child regresses to an earlier level, replacing the fantasy of taking one parent's place with the urge to mess, smear, and destroy. These urges are easily turned into their opposites: cleaning, ordering, and collecting. As the child's defenses mature, he can more easily cope with genital impulses. He deflects the energy from pre-genital aims and uses it for sublimations. The superego becomes less rigid and harsh, its autonomous functions are increasingly refined, the ego can devote itself more to coping with reality, and external objects can be increasingly used to gratify fantasy (Bornstein, 1951; Sarnoff, 1976, 1987; Williams, 1972).

Despite offering stage-like divisions, all three authors note that throughout latency the regressive pull of the earlier stages, especially oedipal longing, aggression, and frustration, seen in ambivalence toward the parents and fear of the loss of their love, emerge in analysis and are

observable in the child's functioning at home. In her research, Rona Knight (2011) demonstrated the fluid nature of children's gender identifications, which do not follow a neat progression over the course of latency. The meaning of gender role identifications and their expression differ for boys and girls, and while there is a lack of stable structures, these fluid gender representations are normative. This is evident in comparing them to the overly stereotyped gender representations, overt gender confusion and boundary disturbances found in the projective testing of extremely feminine boys, for example (Tuber & Coates, 1985).

Knight (2011) argues that as children mature, they experience alternating periods of fragmentation and break-down of defenses and consolidation of autonomous ego functions and structures. While earlier organizations color children's experience, they are continuously reworking their libidinal and aggressive oedipal feelings, not as a regression to earlier phases of development, but using their current internal structures. For example, throughout latency children have a chance to experience their oedipal feelings in different ways and to respond with alternative gender role and object choices. Based on these results, Knight (2011) proposes that psychoanalytic understanding of latency and development in general needs to be revised, for development is not linear. It is both continuous and discontinuous, progressing in a series of hierarchical reorganizations (Abrams, 1998, 2003).

Viewing development as series of hierarchical reorganizations accords well with Pine's (1970) definition of structural change as interrelated patterns of behavior that have some order and permanence while remaining in flux. It allows us to make use of the wealth of clinical knowledge and theorizing about patterns of conflict and defense, regressions and sublimations while avoiding the pitfalls of rigid divisions of development into psychosexual stages and categories. In our analysis, we may want to see if over the course of the narrative, there is an

increasing orientation to reality, a progression to more developmentally sophisticated defenses, or a temporary resolution of the Oedipal crisis which leads to greater independence of the protagonists.

Object Relations and Fantasy Formation

Freud (1905) wrote that when the superego is formed, “one of the most painful psychological achievements of the pubertal period is completed: detachment from parental authority” (p. 226-7). When the super-ego is formed, the parents are “something magnificent” (Freud, 1933, p. 80) and the perfection the child attributes to them is reflected in the ego ideal component of the super-ego, by which the ego measures itself. Later on, the parents lose much of their magnificence in the eyes of the child (Freud, 1933). The child feels disappointed in the parents in part because he feels slighted and excluded by them, and in part because he can increasingly evaluate them objectively (A. Freud, 1968; Freud, 1909). As they move out into the world, children have more and more opportunities to learn about their parents’ limitations and to compare their parents to other adults (Bornstein, 1951; Furman, 1991; Sarnoff, 1987).

Greater independence also ushers in more conflicts with parents. These conflicts evoke fear of loss of the parents’ love, hostility, and guilt (Sarnoff, 1987). Children’s inaccurate reading of their parents’ evaluation of them, in particular, the inaccurate perception that their parents have become less accepting of them, which arises during latency and resolves by adolescence (Alessandri & Wozniak, 1987; Armentrout & Burger, 1972) no doubt result from having to cope with criticism and opposition from both, their real parents and superego criticism.

At the start of latency children develop an unconscious sense of separateness from their parents and feel pushed out into the world. On projective tests, they betray feeling small, damaged, and abandoned by their parents (Knight, 2005). As described in the research section,

when interviewed without their parents, latency age children express their longing for the parents in terms of wanting more time with them and fear of being home alone (Belle, 1999). Along similar lines, children's dreams and worries focus on separation, which they unconsciously equate with parental death, as a result of their own parricidal fantasies (A. Freud, 1965; Knight, 2005), and their own death, as a result of fantasized parental retaliation (Bornstein, 1951; 1953a). Psychoanalytic writers point out that although the acting out of pre-genital, genital, and oedipal wishes with family members diminishes significantly, children continue to struggle with pre-oedipal and oedipal impulses during latency (A. Freud, 1968, Furman, 1991; Goldings, 1974; Sarnoff, 1976, 1987; Widzer, 1977).

One of the focal points of our narrative analysis will be how the child's experience of her instinctual life is depicted. How are oedipal passions and struggles represented? Are particular elements of the longing, aggression, and disappointment in the parents highlighted or obscured? What conscious and unconscious fantasies animate the stories? How do they relate to the fantasies evident in projective testing and interviews with latency-age children?

In her research, Knight (2005) noted children's ubiquitous use of fantasy and magical thinking to help cope with the internal and external stresses of latency. For example, to deal with harsh parental introjects children develop compensatory fantasies of becoming rich and famous. Conscious fantasies of power are also common responses to children's worries about body changes, gender, and sexuality (Knight, 2005; 2011; Sarnoff, 1987).

Ambivalence towards the parents comes to the fore during latency, and despite children's growing independence, it renders separation from parents more difficult. As Anna Freud (1965) wrote, when the parents are absent, hate, anger, and vengeful wishes might overpower love and affection, and only the parents' physical presence can save the child from his parricidal fantasies.

It is not surprising, then, that in her research Belle (1999) found a disconnect between parents' and elementary school children's perceptions of after-school arrangements. Children do not confide their longing, fear, and loneliness to their parents at least in part because their origins are intra-psychic and kept out of consciousness. Often, they are channeled into fantasies (A. Freud, 1968; Furman, 1991; Hollman, 1997; Sarnoff, 1976, 1987). Recall the boys in Belle's (1999) sample talked about fears of robbers, while the girls described fears of kidnappers in their interviews. When we consider the symbolic and unconscious meaning of these fantasies, the full force of the latency age children's libidinal struggles emerges.

Latency-age girls tend to spontaneously report kidnapping fantasies during clinical interviews, unconsciously linking them with their fathers (Hollman, 1997; Knight, 2005). In the fantasies, the girls are the helpless victims of nameless men, who chase, abduct, hold hostage, rob, stab, kick, shoot, or even roast, and eat them. The fantasy serves multiple functions: the girl betrays her mother and indulges in the forbidden, becoming the father's incestuous object; she is captured and hurt, instead of loved, so she is punished for her instinctual and destructive wishes; she joins with her mother by identifying with her suffering, sacrificing aspects; she experiences the pleasure of having power and control by identifying with the aggressor. During latency, it is normal for these feelings to find conscious expression in suicidal ideation, which is unconsciously linked to a defensive turning of aggression on oneself and longing for merger with the mother (Hollman, 1997; Knight, 2005).

Kaplan (1976) understands the frequent loss of self-esteem and accompanying sadness of the latency-age girl as the result of guilt over turning away from the mother and rage about the uncertainty and frustration of seeking the father's love, which evoke threatening, regressive dependency longings for mother. Girls project their sadomasochistic primal scene fantasies onto

boys, who become sources of danger. Similarly, in Knight's (2005) research, boys reported dreams and fantasies of their own and parents' death, and they frequently portrayed mothers as hurt or dead on projective tests. The girls' protocols, in contrast, were full of denigrated and injured men. In children's fantasy, death, killing, birth, and sex are often interchangeable, and conscious fear of dying can be a reflection of unconscious desire to be put to death by the father by orgasm (Bornstein, 1953a; Freud, 1908a; Knight, 2011).

Freud (1909; 1919) first traced the transformations of these primal scene and parricidal fantasies and described how they match the child's intra-psychic configurations of the moment. He also described how the universal latency age family romance and beating fantasies fulfill the need to preserve the tie to the parents while at the same time expressing forbidden libidinal and aggressive wishes towards them (Anthony, 1980; Bornstein, 1953a, 1953b; Burlingham, 1945; Frankiel, 1985; A. Freud, 1923; A. Freud, 1968; Freud, 1909; Freud, 1920; Friedlander, 1942; Horner & Rosenberg, 1991; Lax, 1992; Novick & Novick, 1972; Peller, 1959; Tabin, 1998; Widzer, 1977).

Family romance fantasies, as Freud (1909) described them, emerge when children feel slighted and disappointed in the parents. In these fantasies, children either replace both of their parents or alter their own or a sibling's paternity. Replacing the parents punishes them for excluding and neglecting the child. It also allows children to take the opposite parents' place without destroying them (Bornstein, 1953a). Siblings are also important rivals for the parents' affection and objects of forbidden sexual impulses, and family romance fantasies help to express and deny the sexual and aggressive impulses directed at them (Freud, 1909).

Freud (1909) stressed the family romance fantasies' role in helping preserve the child's relationship with the parents despite his disappointment in the parents and parricidal wishes. The

original parents serve as models for the new, better parents, and the whole effort, he wrote, “is only an expression of the child’s longing for the happy, vanished days when his father seemed to him the noblest and strongest of men and his mother the dearest and loveliest of women. He is turning away from the father whom he knows to-day to the father in whom he believed in the earlier years of his childhood; and his phantasy is no more than the expression of a regret that those happy days are gone” (Freud, 1909, p. 45). A related fantasy, “a child is being beaten,” (Freud, 1919) emerges when children are five or six, in the transition to latency, but its content and significance undergo many transformations as the child copes with oedipal passions. The earliest version of the fantasy is that another child, often a sibling, is being beaten by the father. Its meaning is that the father loves only me, and punishes my competitor for his affection. The transformation “the father beats me” expresses the girl’s incestuous oedipal strivings and her emerging guilt for them. In a regression to anal-sadistic level, love is substituted by the beating, but the beating is also a punishment (Freud, 1919; A. Freud, 1923; Bornstein, 1953b; Novick & Novick, 1972.)

When children can better tolerate their sexual wishes, they substitute conscious fantasies for unconscious ones, and remove themselves to the spectator role. The father is disguised, usually in the figure of a teacher, and others, usually boys, are beaten. For the boys, the beating fantasy takes a different form, but also derives from the incestuous attachment to the father. The passive fantasy of being loved by the father is transformed into a fantasy of being beaten by the mother (Freud, 1919).

These fantasies are variations of children’s primal scene fantasies, in which their sadistic view of intercourse find expression. The child may actively masturbate to the fantasy or indulge in masturbatory equivalents, such as nail biting, scratching, or caressing (Bornstein, 1953b;

Clower, 1976; Fraiberg, 1972; Furman, 1991; Lampl-de Groot, 1950). Children begin their struggle against masturbation in latency, and often they seek to suppress the associated fantasies as well. Multiple versions of the fantasies emerge from this struggle, and the child accepts the ones that are modified enough so that their origin is obscured (Freud, 1919; A. Freud, 1923; Bornstein, 1953b). Freud (1919) described the result as an “elaborate super-structure of day-dreams” which “had grown up over the masochistic beating-phantasy. The function of this superstructure was to make possible a feeling of satisfied excitation, even though the masturbatory act was abstained from” (190).

Anna Freud (1923) illustrated Freud’s description of beating fantasies with case material from the analysis of a girl whose struggle with her masturbatory impulses at the ages of eight and nine led her to the creation of “nice stories” of affectionate and considerate acts which were pleasurable and guilt-free, but whose underlying structure mirrored the structure of her beating fantasies. In the patient’s “nice stories,” a weak person’s misdeed put him at the mercy of a strong person, and the conflict was resolved with reconciliation instead of punishment, but only after a torturous period of suspense. Anna Freud (1923) pointed out that the substitution of reconciliation for the beating illustrates Freud’s (1905) description of the development of the child’s love for the parents. The sexual current is divided in two: the sensual tendencies, represented by the beating fantasies are repressed and redirected, while the affectionate ties to the parents, represented by the conscious “nice stories” are preserved.

With growing cognitive and emotional development the family romance, beating, primal scene, and kidnapping/rescue fantasies appear in more distant forms, elaborated with material from books and fairy-tales, such as Cinderella, Snow-White and Sleeping Beauty. These fairy-tales demonstrate the inter-weaving of all of these fantasies (Novick & Novick, 1972). They often

offer children two parent couples, one good and saving, the other evil and murderous, corresponding to the real and imaginary parent couples of family romance. As such, they lend themselves to the splitting of representations of real parents and offer another possibility: that the parents get rid of the child. This fantasy allows the child to project his rage and envy outward (Frankiel, 1985). They also highlight the fantasized role of the (step) mother as the punisher of the girl's oedipal desire (Lax, 1992). Finally, these fairy tales always contain the heroine's encounter with a man. She is in a bed/coffin and alone, and her body is implicated: she is either unconscious, dizzy, or is cured from a handicap, but the episodes are so seamlessly woven that the erotic scene is anticipated, but not consciously perceived (Peller, 1958).

If all goes well, the defense of "denial in fantasy" as Anna Freud (1946) called it, is a crucial developmental tool that allows children to experiment with taking on different roles (Knight, 2011), to peacefully resolve their oedipal conflicts⁶ (A. Freud, 1946; Sarnoff, 1987), and work through their daily struggles⁷ (Bornstein, 1951). Following Freud, Sarnoff (1987) called fantasy formation the "structure of latency" because of its central role in defending against oedipal impulses and preserving the child's ability for independent functioning. He wrote that when a child encounters a stressful situation, for example nudity in the home or unjust punishment, the situation is fragmented and only parts of it are represented in any given fantasy. The fragments are displaced onto symbolic representations that are elaborated and synthesized

⁶ Anna Freud (1946) described the fantasies of several boys in analysis with her that dealt with their ambivalence about their fathers. The boys had tamed ferocious lions who became the boys' protectors and the sources of their power. Only others' anxiety about the lions' viciousness carried the boys' fear and aggression toward the fathers.

⁷ Bornstein (1951) described the daydreams of a ten year old boy that formed the superstructure of a masturbatory fantasy. When the day-dreams emerged, they signaled that he had suffered a real-life humiliation and showed how he had dealt with it.

into coherent conscious fantasies. The fragmentation and symbolization allows for the original content to be disguised and transformed into less anxiety-provoking form such as playing house or cops and robbers or into unique fantasies, such as trips to distant places or battles with monsters. This way, despite immersion in fantasy, the normal child maintains a strong reality orientation (Sarnoff, 1987).

Knight's (2005, 2011) research supports this theory. She found that for the most part, the emotional upheaval evident in the Rorschach and TAT protocols of latency children was not manifest in their outward functioning, as judged by teacher ratings and even clinical interviews⁸. It will be interesting to see if the intensity and content of the primal scene, parricide, family romance, and beating fantasies elicited in analysis and projective testing of latency age children are reflected in the fantasy life and observable actions of our fictional protagonists. This will allow for an examination of how the subsequent reworking of the Oedipus complex and the separation-individuation dilemmas (Loewald, 1977) affects the selection and elaboration of fantasy material in the adult reconstructions of latency.

Summary

Middle childhood is a time of tremendous cognitive and emotional reorganization, and examining how latency experiences are remembered and transformed offers an opportunity to explore the nature of memory. In particular, we will inquire whether transformational processes that are the essence of "growing up" are themselves remembered and what role these memories play in the creation of the continuity of the self. During middle childhood, children must adjust to a changing body, brain, and mind. The experience of puberty brings radical physical and

⁸ Of course, parents did report that these children were at times moody, aggressive, and disobedient at home.

hormonal changes that alter how the child is perceived by the parents and the outside world and that demand reorganization in self-perception. The rapid development of cognitive structures aids in this task, but also means that a whole host of experiences must be assimilated and accommodated. Chief among them are the tasks of integration of conflicting views of self and other, transforming these into a coherent self- and other- representations, and mastering complex social interactions with peers and adults.

During latency, children move from a procedural and implicit to explicit, reflective, and actionable understanding of themselves and others. The mind is transformed accordingly as parental authority, values, and judgments are internalized, leading to greater independence as morality, self-evaluation and regulation come under internal control. Children experience a different order of conflict and evolve sophisticated patterns of defense. In the foregoing analysis, we will ask if and how these developmental processes are represented and whether that, rather than just events from our childhood, becomes the essence of the remembering self.

The transformations of the body, brain and mind during middle childhood mean that relationships with parents and peers are irrevocably altered. Loss and mourning of emotional and physical closeness with the parents seems to be the price of children's growing independence. Peers become an invaluable source of intimacy, support, and learning, but also the cause of much pain and anguish. We will look at how sports, games, and shared fantasies are represented in the stories and what role they play in the containment of the central dilemmas of middle childhood. We will ask if the dreams, day-dreams and fantasies of the protagonists reflect the content and intensity of oedipal desires, separation dilemmas, and issues of sexuality and identity that occupy latency-age children. Finally, we will examine whether the nature of children's joint and private

fantasy is transformed in the course of the narrative, reflecting the changes in meaning and function inherent in developmental reorganizations.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Method

The study proposes to examine the nature of memory by analyzing fictional narratives written for adults about the transition from childhood to adolescence. The analysis of fiction will be carried out using the techniques of narrative analysis which shares many of the assumptions and techniques of grounded theory research, but uses a case-based approach that takes entire narratives as units of analysis and pays special attention to sequential and structural features of the text (Mischler, 1996; Reissman, 2008).

The assumption of narrative analysis is that narrative is a “sense-making” mechanism: narratives structure people’s perceptual experience and organize memory (Freeman, 2002). All aspects of identity: continuity, coherence, meaning, are created by constructing a narrative about one’s life story. People impose patterns on events in order to establish meaning (Covington, 1995; Linde, 1993), and turn to auto/biographical narrative to constitute and make sense of past experiences (Bruner, 1987; Reissman, 2008).

Narrative scholars acknowledge and study the complex relationship between narrative, time, and memory (Bruner, 1987). Studying narratives helps discover how people “imbue life events with a temporal and logical order to demystify them and establish coherence across past, present, and as yet unrealized experience” (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p.2, quoted in Reissman, 2008). It does so by “interrogating how a skilled storyteller pulls the reader into his world and moves us emotionally through imaginative identification” (Reissman, 2008, p. 9).

In narrative analysis, inquiry is focused on how the writer assembles and sequences events and uses language to communicate meaning. Each narrative is treated analytically as a unit, thereby preserving unity and coherence of individual accounts. Narrative analysis is further

distinguished from category-centered approaches by attention to sequences, thereby capturing psychic processes. Thus, in short stories, the use of repetition, sequential attempts to cope with internal or external pressures, and transformations in self and object representations can be captured. Intention and language are also examined in narrative analysis, with close attention to all aspects of a literary text, such as tone, ambiguity, irony, and paradox (Charon, 2006; Reissman, 2008).

For example, Roesler (2006) carried out a narrative analysis of autobiographical interviews with people who suffered from a chronic disease or a physical disability which had a major impact on their lives. He hypothesized that the stories his subjects told would fit certain archetypal patterns, and through a micro-analysis of the text's themes, sequences, inflections, and word choices found that some of the narratives of illness fit a David-and-Goliath pattern, which allowed his subjects to highlight their strengths, perseverance, morality, and to make connections with a community. As illustration, Roesler (2006) quoted one man's description of being the subject of hospital grand rounds, during which he made a joke that altered the balance of power and united the junior doctors and interns on his side against the head doctor. In his line by line, sequential analysis, Roesler (2006) demonstrated how the patient build up a picture of his own weakness and potential humiliation, the power and arrogance of the head doctor, and dramatized the confrontation and his ultimate victory.

Sample

Twelve frequently anthologized texts by an internationally diverse group of writers were chosen for analysis (See Appendix A). To permit the close thematic and structural analysis of multiple narratives, the short story was chosen as the preferred format. Anthologies of short

stories about childhood and youth⁹, as well as general anthologies most frequently used for teaching short fiction¹⁰ were consulted for the choice of narratives. The selection of stories was guided by a number of factors. The narratives, like Welty's "A Memory," (1994) had to feature depictions of the internal world of the child and center on an aspect of the protagonist's emotional transition from childhood to adulthood. Female and male protagonists were featured in equal number, and several stories within each thematic category were selected to facilitate the comparison between narratives.

Thus, Dorothy Allison's "Gospel Song" (2004) and Jamaica Kincaid's "Gwen" (1992) are about the unfolding of girls' friendships; Julio Cortázar's "Bestiary" (1985) and Eudora Welty's "The Winds" (1994) transport us into girls' summer adventures and pleasures; Ralph Ellison "A Coupla Scalped Indians" (1995) is also a summer adventure, but like Harold Brodkey's "Play," (1988) and T. C. Boyle's "Rara Avis" (2004) it explores boys' relationships with their families, peers and sexual discoveries; Isaac Babel's "The Story of My Dovecote" (2002), Grace Paley's "The Loudest Voice" (1994) and Phillip Roth's "The Conversion of the Jews" (1959) feature Jewish children attempting to solidify their identities in relation to their families and often hostile societies, and Alice Munro's "Trespasses" (2004) focuses on a girl's search for her origins.

⁹ For instance, *Once Upon a Childhood: Stories and Memoirs of American Youth* (Solomon & Panetta, 2004); *Coming of Age, Volume 1: Fiction about Youth and Adolescence* (Emra, 1999); *Into the Widening World: International Coming of Age Stories* (Loughery, 1995); *Coming of Age in America: A Multicultural Anthology* (Frosch & Soto, 1995) and *Coming of Age Around the World* (Adiele & Frosch, 2007).

¹⁰ For instance, *The Story and Its Writer* (Charters, 2007), *Points of View: An Anthology of Short Stories* (Moffett & McElheny, 1995)

The growing separateness from parents and the fear and excitement of discovery permeate all of these stories, chosen because they reflect so beautifully what we know of the preoccupations and conflicts of middle childhood. At the same time, these stories were selected because they represent a wide range of voices and styles, their action ranging from primarily external and realistic to almost exclusively internal and dream-like. Two stories by the same writer, Eudora Welty, were chosen because they are both incredibly evocative, and yet are written in very different styles. The goal of analysis of these diverse narratives is to explore the different ways in which childhood experience is ordered, understood, and rendered by gifted authors, in the hopes of shedding light on memorial processes and their determinants.

Analysis

The specific questions that will guide the narrative analysis of short stories located in middle childhood are based on the previous chapter's examination of the empirical and clinical literature about this developmental period. A time of tremendous cognitive and emotional reorganization, middle childhood is the beginning of an independent, "narrative" self. Children move away from their parents towards peers and the world beyond, they begin to form sophisticated self and other representations, master complex social interactions, internalize parental authority and morality, experience conflict and evolve sophisticated patterns of defense (Buxbaum, 1991; Freud, 1933; A. Freud, 1965; Huston & Ripke, 2006; Mayseless, 2005; Schafer, 1960; Sarnoff, 1987). This study will ask how the cognitive and emotional reorganizations of middle childhood are represented in the fictional narratives and in what ways these reorganizations, rather than just memory traces of events from childhood, might become the essence of the remembering self.

For each short story a report will be generated using the techniques of narrative analysis that will answer the following questions:

1. What are the self and other representations of the protagonist and how is ambivalence experienced and resolved? How are they transformed in the course of the narrative?
2. What role do primary attachment figures play for the child and how does he or she experience and cope with their loss or unavailability? What changes in the attachment relationship as a result of “growing up”?
3. What role do peers play in the narrative and what is the child’s relationship to society as a whole? What shifts are evident as a result of the action of the story?
4. What are the child’s physical, bodily experiences and how do they link up with his or her sexuality and aggression?
5. What role do joint and private fantasies play in expressing and containing the central dilemmas of middle childhood, in particular, oedipal, separation, and identity issues?

The reports will be closely supported by the data and each section will include detailed examples from the text. Comparing reports across narratives will allow for an examination of how the constructed fictional worlds differ from each other and how they relate to what is known of the actual experience of middle childhood. The narratives’ stresses, omissions, and transformations will become the basis for making inferences about how memory functions to construct a coherent narrative about one’ past and thereby constitute the self. The findings will have not only theoretical implications, but will impact how we understand and accomplish the co-construction of a patient’s life narrative in the course of treatment.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

The twelve short stories discussed below vividly describe discrete internal moments of transition that mark the moment when their protagonists leave childhood. The goal of the narrative analysis was to elucidate which experiences of middle childhood are privileged in adult recollections and how these experiences are reconstructed in the fictional narratives.

The main focus of analysis was how the emotional world of the child self is remembered and represented in the stories: how the child relates to parents, peers, and the world; how moments of excitement, humiliation, sadness and loss are represented; how transformation is defined—are cognitive, emotional and physical changes highlighted? What emerged from the analysis is that while there are some general trends in all of the stories, the answers to these questions vary. Some patterns emerge, however, and the stories can be grouped into three categories. The categories are built around variations in the main narrative trend of the stories, which is the heightened focus on the protagonists' changing relationship with the parents. While peer relationships are the explicit subject of some of the narratives, they tend to function as arenas for the expression and containment of oedipal passions and as substitutes for parental care and engagement.

The variations in how the parents and the child's relationship with them are represented in the stories are best conceptualized in terms of the concept of mourning. The work of mourning involves accepting the loss of the object in the external world and modifying the internal world such that the relationship with the object becomes part of the self. How the object and the self in relationship with the object are perceived depends on the individual's capacity to accomplish the

work of mourning. The seven stories in the first category can be seen as illustrations of successful mourning for the parents as people, for the early relationship with them, and the child-self of the protagonists. The narrative voices in most of these stories are that of adults looking back on their childhood. These memoirs have a bitter-sweet quality, and many are concerned with loss of innocence and closeness with the parents. The children in these narratives are interesting composites. While their preoccupations, anxieties, desires, and pleasures conform to the developmental picture presented in the literature review, their self- and other- representations do not. The parents are presented as they are viewed by adults after the mourning process is complete: as flawed, real people. The self-representations of the child protagonists are also complex, demonstrating the central conflicts of middle childhood, but also an awareness of the gains and losses inherent in growing up and leaving childhood behind. This reflective stance creates works of great poignancy and immediacy, but it leaves out much of the confusion and disorganization that characterizes children's felt experience of latency.

The three stories in the second category are notable for the fantasy character of the protagonists' relationship with their parents. Instead of a conventional plot line, these stories are structured by the latency fantasies of their protagonists, and do not make a distinction between the imagined and the real. As a result, these stories reflect much more of the libidinal, disorganizing, and confusing experiences of middle childhood. The self- and other-representations of the children in these stories reflect more closely the developmental level of middle childhood, and the fantasies of the protagonists openly express their passions and anxieties as they attempt to orient themselves internally and externally. However, these stories are not isomorphic with the experiences of middle childhood: they, too, clearly offer an adult's perspective. Amidst the primary material of the child's internal dialogue, there is an adult

awareness of the child's move into a new developmental organization. Like the stories in the first category, these narratives can be seen products of successful mourning—for the oedipal relationship and the childhood self, but they differ from the other narratives by virtue of their greater tolerance for the unknown, uncertain, and uncontrolled, and their ready access to their protagonists' instinctual life.

The two stories in the third category are notable for their protagonists' lack of resolution in their relationship with their parents. The failings of the parents are perceived to be so grave as to be beyond forgiveness, and separation from them is accomplished through rejection of what they have to offer rather than through taking them in. The result is the protagonists' inability to gain any distance from their childhood experiences and to form an adult identity separate from the parents. These stories are pierced through with hopelessness and anxiety, and stand in sharp contrast with the bitter-sweetness and playfulness of the narratives in the other categories. As such, they exemplify the painful consequences of the failure to mourn and truly separate.

The Capacity to Mourn

Introduction

All of the stories in this category are about children accommodating to a dramatic perceptual shift as they recognize their separateness, their parents' shortcomings and failings, and learn about their place in a world whose dangers and cruelties they must navigate on their own. For most of the protagonists, the world they discover also functions as a mirror of their internal landscape as they struggle with their own destructive, aggressive and sexual impulses.

The theme of identity predominates in these stories. In most, the age, circumstances, and desires of the child selves are established in the first few sentences. As the story unfolds, the

child's identity—where they stand in relation to the world and to their attachment figures—is clarified. This process of remembering of coming into being allows the adult protagonist to mourn their parents, their childhood selves, and the attachment bond that changed dramatically as they matured. The process of mourning leads to recognition and acceptance of both, the parents, with all their failings, and of the self.

Mourning the Parents: “The Loudest Voice,” “The Conversion of the Jews,” “The Story of My Dovecote,” “Gospel Song,” and “Rara Avis”

Grace Paley's “The Loudest Voice,” (1994), Phillip Roth's “The Conversion of the Jews” (1959) and Isaac Babel's “The Story of My Dovecote” (2002) are about Jewish children, in America and Russia, who are coping with the realities of anti-Semitism and its effects on their parents. In all three, the parents' human failings are not viewed through the disappointed eyes of a latency-aged child, but instead they are contextualized, with an adult's retrospective mixture of affection and forgiveness. While ambivalence, awareness of a growing separateness, longing for parental care, and oedipal passions of latency animate these narratives, these feelings are mitigated through the all-knowing stance of the narrator and a retrospective closeness with the parents.

Set in the rural South and suburban Florida, respectively, Dorothy Allison's “Gospel Song” (2004) and T. C. Boyle's “Rara Avis” (2004) focus less on the actual figures of the parents, and more on the protagonists' experience of their emerging sexuality and aggression, and the oedipal tie to the parental imagoes. The children in these stories also appear to be on their way to mastering the cruelty and unfairness of the world and the vicissitudes of their own instinctual life through achieving a measure of self-understanding and acceptance. These

achievements appear to enable the protagonists to act independently, and thus move into a new organization.

In “The Loudest Voice,” (1994) a story about a Jewish girl with immigrant parents who, because of her clear and strong diction is given the role of Christ in the public school’s Christmas pageant, Grace Paley establishes the adult protagonist’s loss of her mother as she sets the stage for remembering her childhood. The opening lines of the story are:

“There is a certain place where dumbwaiters boom, doors slam, dishes crash; every window is a mother’s mouth bidding the street shut up, go skate somewhere else, come home. My voice is the loudest. There, my own other is still as full of breathing as me as the grocer stands up to speak to her.

‘Mrs. Abramowitz,’ he says, ‘people should not be afraid of their children’” (Paley, 1994 p. 34).

Shirley’s mother is concerned that a Jewish girl starring in a Christmas pageant is an example of a “creeping pogrom,” (Paley, 1994, p. 36) but her father disagrees, and in the end, her mother acquiesces and even attends the production. Paley’s heroine has to navigate the fact of her difference and submit to the teacher’s alteration of her image, “‘Now, Shirley,’” he asks, “‘can you put a ribbon in your hair or a bobby pin? It’s too messy’” (Paley, 1994, p. 35). Undaunted, she becomes the teacher’s right-hand and the story concludes as she goes to bed the night of the successful production:

“I made a little church of my hands and said, ‘Hear, O Israel...’ Then I called out in Yiddish, ‘Please, good night, good night. Ssh.’ My father said ‘Ssh yourself,’ and slammed the kitchen door.

I was happy. I fell asleep at once. I had prayed for everybody: my talking family, cousins far away, passersby, and all the lone-some Christians. I expected to be heard. My voice was certainly the loudest” (Paley, 1994, p. 40).

Having internalized the views of her parents, gotten them to accept her, Shirley has consolidated her identity and moved beyond their struggles. Yet it should not be forgotten that

the pageant in which she stars is about the childhood of Jesus. Like a dream within a dream, Balter (2006) suggests that a play within a play or story also reflects a real life event in the protagonist. In this case, the play within the story reflects the protagonist's sadness and ambivalence, albeit well-disguised by her (adult) sense of humor. Shirley's monologue begins:

“I remember, I remember, the house where I was born’...It was a long story and it was a sad story. I carefully pronounced all the words about my lonesome childhood, while little Eddie Braunstein wandered upstage and down with his shepherd's stick, looking for sheep...I groaned, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’” (Paley, 1994, p. 39).

In the story, Shirley strikes out on her own and succeeds, but also feels sad, lonely, and abandoned. She notes her parents' short-comings and lack of confidence outside of the protection of their home. She is also implicitly grappling with the latency-age questions about sexuality, birth, and death, embedded in the story of Jesus. Before she goes to bed, she hears her parents discussing the play with their friends and notes that her father teases the mother of the girl who played the virgin.

Phillip Roth's “The Conversion of the Jews” (1959) is very similar in its themes to “The Loudest Voice” but takes a thirteen year old boy, Ozzie, as its subject. On the cusp of adolescence, Ozzie is more directly focused on sexuality than Shirley and is more impulsive and open about his feelings. The story centers on Ozzie's confrontation with his Rabbi over the theological inconsistency that if a Jewish God is all powerful, he should be able to create a child without the necessity of intercourse.

The Rabbi, fed up with Ozzie's questions, requests to see Ozzie's mother, (his father is dead), and when Ozzie informs her of this over Shabbat dinner, “[f]or the first time in their life together she hit Ozzie across the face with her hand. All through the

chopped liver and chicken soup part of the dinner Ozzie cried; he didn't have any appetite for the rest" (Roth, 1959, pp. 13).

In the next class Ozzie persists in challenging the Rabbi, which also gets him hit. In response Ozzie runs to the synagogue roof. Everyone gathers on the grounds below. While the adults are afraid that he might try to kill himself, the children chant for him to jump in a frenzied chorus. Although he initially had no such intention, Ozzie recognizes his newfound power. He forces his mother, the Rabbi, all the onlookers, and even the firemen who are waiting with a net below, to kneel and admit that God is powerful enough to make a person without intercourse. Then he goes on:

"Promise me, promise me you'll never hit anybody about God.'

He had asked only his mother, but for some reason everyone kneeling in the street promised he would never hit anybody about God.

Once again there was silence.

'I can come down now, Mamma,' the boy on the roof finally said. He turned his head both ways as though checking the traffic lights. 'Now I can come down...'

And he did, right into the center of the yellow net that glowed in the evening's edge like an overgrown halo" (Roth, 1959, pp. 39-40).

With this conclusion, Roth makes a tragic event that brings into focus adults' failings and betrayals feel like a triumph. By the end of this story, the agony of the longing and need for parental care seems to have been solved, overt awareness of it pushed out of consciousness. However, the story can also be read as a beating fantasy, in which love is substituted by the beating, which also serves as punishment for oedipal desire. The scene of repentance and reconciliation attempts to work through the boy's loss of his father and his love, and of his mother's early nurture, represented by the ruin of the goodness of the Sabbath meal. The fantasy

remains latent, however, because the protagonist's internal picture of the parents does not correspond to the actual experience of middle childhood.

As his understanding of the world expands, Ozzie demonstrates the disappointment in his mother's limitations typical of middle childhood:

"Fifty-eight people had been killed in a plane crash at La Guardia. In studying a casualty list in the newspaper his mother had discovered among the list of those dead eight Jewish names (his grand-mother had nine but she counted Miller as a Jewish name); because of the eight she said the plane crash was 'a tragedy'" (Roth, 1959, p. 10).

However, the way Ozzie takes her in moves beyond the ambivalence of middle childhood and demonstrates an adult capacity for complexity.

"His mother was a round, tired, gray-haired penguin of a woman whose gray skin had begun to feel the tug of gravity and the weight of her own history. Even when she was dressed up she didn't look like a chosen person. But when she lit candles she looked like something better; like a woman who knew momentarily that God could do anything" (Roth, 1959, p. 13).

In all of the stories, the children appear wiser than their parents and the narratives offer a truly integrated view of the parents who come across in all of their complexity. Isaac Babel, writing about his childhood in turn of the century Russia in "The Story of My Dovecote" (Babel, 2002), shows each person in his family in all of their humanity. He is deeply attentive to his parents, as they relate to him, and to each other. It is a clear eyed view, which takes in their flaws and strengths as well as their powerlessness as Jews in the larger context of Russian society. For example, his mother, after she finds out that he has been accepted into a coveted school whose quotas only allowed a very limited number of Jews:

"...barely managed to wrest me away from my delirious father. She stood there, pale trying to foresee my fate. She kept caressing me and then pushing me away in disgust...My mother was pale. She was trying to foresee my fate in my eyes,

and looked at me with bitter pity, as if I were a little cripple, for she was the only one who fully realized how luckless our family was” (Babel, 2002, p. 367).

He notes her unsentimental estimation of him and simultaneously her fearful hope for him, having already given up on her too trusting husband whom everyone cheated. Similarly, he remembers his love and admiration for his Grandpa Shoyl, but “now I know that Shoyl was no more than an old fool and a naïve teller of tall tales, but I have not forgotten those tales of his, they were good tales” (Babel, 2002, p. 368). In “The Loudest Voice” Shirley’s mother argues with her father, and then goes on to “shut all the windows in order to prevent tonsillitis” (Paley, 1994, p.38). Humor, affection and nostalgia are palpable in these descriptions, making these stories bitter-sweet commemorations of the protagonist’s relationships with their primary attachment figures.

In Babel’s story, in reward for getting into the elite school Grandpa Shoyl fulfills the boy’s greatest wish and builds him a dovecote. On the day that he goes to the market to buy the doves to populate his dovecote there is a pogrom, and he overhears that his grandpa Shoyl has been killed. When he turns to the neighborhood peddler for help, the man, who has known him all of his childhood, hits him with the sack containing the doves, knocking the boy to the ground:

“I lay on the ground, the innards of the crushed bird trickling down the side of my face. They trickled, winding and dribbling, down my cheek, blinding me. The dove’s tender entrails slithered over my forehead, and I closed my uncaked eye so that I would not see the world unravel before me. This world was small and ugly. A pebble lay in front of my eyes, a pebble dented like the face of an old woman with a large jaw. A piece of string lay near it and a clump of feathers, still breathing. My world was small and ugly” (Babel, 2002 p. 373).

Yet, when he gets up and heads for home down the street made unfamiliar by the chaos and violence:

“I walked down a foreign street filled with white boxes, walked in my raiment of blood-drenched fathers, alone on sidewalks swept clean as on a Sunday, and I cried more bitterly, more fully and happily than I would ever cry again” (Babel, 2002, p. 373).

This is the boy’s fall from grace; the end of reveling in the small pleasures of school life: new uniform, pencils, morning sandwiches served by his attentive mother. There had been signs of intense anti-Semitism and his father’s and teacher’s powerlessness throughout the narrative, but this is the moment of full, visceral recognition that he can no longer be protected. Babel describes the moment that the world snaps into focus, the transition from implicit to explicit understanding, which is responsible for the admixture of pleasure to his bitterness.

In all the stories, what replaces childhood innocence and openness as a valued attribute is knowledge, a wider and wiser perspective on the inequities of the world and one’s parents’ and one’s own weaknesses and limitations; a retrospectively organized clarity about the self and other. This knowledge, while acquired in a most painful manner for some protagonists, is at the same time presented with pride, the pride of understanding. Acceptance of this knowledge allows the protagonists to move past their dependence on the parents and become truly independent. These moments offer us a glimpse of how the abstraction of the parental values; the internalization of the superego as a structure which is capable of giving direction independently of the parents, is accomplished.

Set in the rural South, Dorothy Allison’s “Gospel Song” is more internally focused, tracking the protagonist’s path to self-acceptance. The protagonist remembers being nine and struggling with the new awareness that she is poor and not pretty, and the devastating feeling that she is no longer lovable. She dreams of becoming a gospel singer.

“I wanted gray-haired ladies to cry when they saw my pink cheeks. I wanted people to moan when they heard the throb in my voice when I sang of the miracle in my life. I wanted a miracle in my life. I wanted to be a gospel singer and be loved by the whole wide world” (Allison, 2004, p. 23).

Filled with new desires, jealousies, and rages, the girl projects them outward by befriending Shannon, an albino girl so grotesque that “people have been known to suddenly lose their lunch from the sight of the clammy sheen of her skin, her skull showing blue-white through the thin, colorless hair and those watery pink eyes flicking back and forth, drifting in and out of focus” (Allison, 2004, pp. 25-26).

Shannon responds to the taunting of her peers by wild and unapologetic hatred, telling tales of farm machinery accidents that result in mangled and dead children. The protagonist describes her nine-year-old’s disgust and glee at being better off than Shannon and harsh self-judgment. She is also jealous of what she sees as Shannon’s mother’s elegance and unwavering love in the face of all the hatred Shannon encounters. This contrasts with the protagonist’s disappointment in her own mother’s imperfections and lack of attention. Her adult-self observes the child-self and offers comments and corrections, for example, making clear that her mother’s love for her was intact.

The girls find a protective cocoon at the revival meetings where Shannon’s parents manage the gospel singers; the musicians’ drunken sexual harassment almost a welcome reprieve from the world of their peers. When one of the singers tells Shannon how horribly ugly she is, the protagonist screams at him, while Shannon’s mother pretends not to notice and fawns over the singer. This open expression of her rage, coupled with proof of this other mother’s betrayal, allow the protagonist to move past her longing for her mother’s early care and to accept the

intensity of her aggression. This is a novel experience of mastery over the cruelty and unfairness of the world and the matching pressures of her instinctual life.

T. C. Boyle's "Rara Avis" (2004) also deals with separateness, emergent sexuality and aggression. Like in Babel's and Roth's stories about boys, the violence in this story is more explicit. In this very short story, the narrator describes a memory of a single afternoon when he was twelve. He is standing in a crowd of people watching an exotic bird inexplicably perched on top of a strip mall store. In the back of the crowd he notices his father, standing close to a woman with whom he suspects his father is having an affair. This discovery sparks feelings of longing, rage, betrayal and abandonment, which are not expressed directly, but are alluded to through the boy's reactions to seeing his father and to the spectacle of the bird.

The boy's rage, excitement and anxiety about sexuality lead to thoughts of death. When he sees his father in the crowd, the narrator remembers watching a fire with his father. An older girl died in the flames of an abandoned house where neighborhood kids, including the narrator, went to play forbidden games. He now remembers standing next to his father, taking in the "elemental odor of sweat, the odor of armpit and crotch and secret hair, the sematic animal scent of him that had always repelled me—until that moment" (Boyle, 2004, pp. 50-51). It is as if in that instance, desire breaks through the reaction formation of disgust, resulting in guilt. The narrator describes his subsequent unsuccessful effort to seek solace in a Church. This sighting of his father watching the bird brings the narrator's oedipal struggles back to consciousness.

The boy wants desperately to dissipate his sense of abandonment and betrayal, his awareness of sexuality and death, and the links he is making between these thoughts and emotions. This wish is expressed through his desire to see the stranded bird fly, "to see the great

impossible wings beating the air” (Boyle, 2004, p. 52). He keeps watching the bird as the crowd disperses, and only a couple of other boys and men remain along with him. When the narrator finally understands that his wish will not come true; that the bird is injured and cannot fly, that there is no escape from female sexuality or his own, he turns away from the boys and looks to the men. Together, in an act of violence and mercy, they stone the injured bird. The story concludes:

“Suddenly the wind came up...and the bird’s feathers lifted like a petticoat. It was then that I understood. Secret, raw, red, and wet, the wound flashed just above the juncture of the legs before the wind died and the feathers fell back in place.

I turned and looked past the neighborhood kids—my playmates—at the two men, the strangers. They were lean and seedy, unshaven, slouching behind the brims of their hats. One of them was chewing a toothpick. I caught their eyes: they’d seen it too.

I threw the first stone” (Boyle, 2004, p. 52).

The narrator conquers the fear of the power of his sexuality and aggression by way of knowledge and action. His epiphany allows him to leave his playmates and his parents behind and join with marginalized adults in an act of violence. The stone the narrator throws breaks the tension of anxiety, longing and unfulfilled desire. The comprehension and acceptance of himself and the world untethers him from his father and his childhood, opening the way for separation and independence.

Mourning the Child Self: “A Memory” and “Gwen”

Both Eudora Welty’s “A Memory” (1994) and Jamaica Kincaid’s “Gwen” (1992) are written in the form of reflections of an adult woman on the transformation of her child-self as she becomes newly aware of her body and sexuality. In both, the girls’ school experience, one in America, the other in the Caribbean, serves as the screen onto which their internal life is

projected: the girls' oedipal passions find expression in crushes on school-mates. These stories convey more of the turbulence, loss and bewilderment that characterize children's experience of the transformations of latency. While they portray confusing, painful, and overwhelming experiences of middle childhood, the structure of these stories, and in particular, the narrators' movement between the past and the present, provides a sense of perspective and continuity, and accomplishes the task of mourning the inevitable losses of growing up. In both stories, the narrators explicitly grapple with how they remember latency, and for this reason, these stories will be explored in more detail.

Welty calls her story "A Memory" (1994) and shifts from the past tense to the present when commenting on the narrator's memories, thereby highlighting their constructed nature. The narrative is explicitly framed as the memory of the day she left childhood behind. The action is internal—the narrator remembers spending the day on the beach, daydreaming. When the story opens, she remembers the vulnerable feelings aroused in latency by the perceived abandonment by unsuspecting parents:

"I was at an age when I formed a judgment upon every person and every event which came under my eye, although I was easily frightened. When a person or a happening seemed to me not in keeping with my opinion, or even my hope or expectation, I was terrified by a vision of abandonment and wildness which tore my heart with a kind of sorrow. My father and mother, who believed that I saw nothing in the world which was not strictly coaxed into place like a vine on our garden trellis to be presented to my eyes, would have been badly concerned if they had guessed how frequently the weak and inferior and strangely turned examples of what was to come showed themselves to me" (Welty, 1994, p. 75).

In love for the first time, she is lost in reverie about a boy. True to the reality of middle childhood loves, the relationship exists largely in her fantasy life as she has done little more than touch the boy's wrist while going up a school staircase. "[B]ut it was possible during that entire year for me to think endlessly on this minute and brief encounter which we endured on the stairs,

until it would swell with a sudden and overwhelming beauty, like a rose forced into premature bloom for a great occasion” (Welty, 1994, p. 76).

Beyond this, her love was unexpressed, and she came into a “dual life, as observer and dreamer;” the dreariness of school a protection from “the untoward” she feared will happen. When finally it did—the boy she loved got a nose-bleed, the sight of his blood and shock of the event, “unforeseen, but at the same time dreaded” led her to faint (Welty, 1994, p. 76). The narrator interrupts her story to wonder if that is the reason that from then on, even as an adult, she has been unable to bear the sight of blood, offering continuity and clarity after remembering a time filled with inchoate, overwhelming thoughts and emotions.

When the protagonist returns to her narrative, she describes how carefully she watched the boy, and how much time she spent imagining his parents. She devalued and murdered them, and the boy along with them, in her fantasies, which echo the typical fantasies of latency age children described in the literature review:

“It was unbearable to think that his house might be slovenly and unpainted, hidden by tall trees, that his mother and father might be shabby—dishonest—crippled—dead. I speculated endlessly on the dangers of his home. Sometimes I imagined that his house might catch on fire in the night and that he might die. When he would walk into the school-room the next morning, a look of unconcern and even stupidity on his face would dissipate my dream; but my fears were increased through his unconsciousness of them...” (Welty, 1994, pp. 76-77).

Welty does not plunge the reader into these fantasies; rather she describes them and then breaks the spell, noting the boy’s actual ordinariness. She then pulls the reader into the present, the narrator saying that she can still reproduce the weave and shade of the boy’s blue sweater and the exact way he used to swing his foot. Modified and tempered by all that she has come to know,

the narrator assures us, her love endures. The memory of these details “does not seem trivial” even now (Welty, 1994, p. 77).

In the next paragraph, the protagonist’s daydream on the beach is interrupted by a family that materializes close to her: a man, two women, one older, one younger, and two boys. She describes them in minute physical detail, especially the man and the older woman whose bodies oppress her: aged, wrinkled, fat. Her reaction to their play lays bare her concerns with sexuality and aggression: “I saw that they were all resigned to each other’s daring and ugliness,” says the narrator, and after the man pours sand down the older woman’s bathing suit “between her bulbous descending breasts,” and includes the narrator in the scene by gazing at her, she wishes them all dead (Welty, 1994, p. 78).

Despite herself, she is mesmerized. “I lay there with my eyes pressed shut, listening to their moans and their frantic squeals. It seemed to me that I could hear also the thud and the fat impact of their ugly bodies on one another” (Welty, 1994, p. 79). She tried to make the memory of the touch on the stairs come back.

“I felt the heavy weight of sweetness which always accompanied this memory; but the memory itself did not come to me...the story of my love, the long narrative of the incident on the stairs, had vanished. I did not know, any longer, the meaning of my happiness; it held me unexplained” (Welty, 1994, p. 79).

Welty shows the moment when the experience of the narrator’s sexuality is irrevocably altered. Libidinal feelings are no longer attached to the innocent touch on the stairs; now they are attached to a more adult version of sexuality, which, like in the other stories, includes raw physicality, aggression, comprehension of sexual acts, and the reactions of disgust and rage. Like the other writers, Welty provides us with a sense of continuity: the narrator had intimations that

this was to come—the bloody nose, the murderous fantasies, but here is the moment of transformation.

When the narrator opened her eyes, the older woman was standing in front of the man, pulling down her bathing suit and shaking out the sand he had poured, “I felt a peak of horror, as though her breasts themselves had turned to sand, as though they were of no importance at all and she did not care” (Welty, 1994, p.79).

Opening up to the reality of bodies, aging, and ultimately, death, the narrator tells us, she was horrified. After the family left, she felt “victimized” by their presence and cried. To the recognition and acceptance of her new knowledge and separateness, the narrator adds an adult’s perspective on the shifting nature of memory as recollections are enriched and reshaped by subsequent life experiences.

“I remember continuing to lie there...trying to think ahead to ...return to school in winter. I could imagine the boy I loved walking into a classroom, where I would watch him with this hour on the beach accompanying my recovered dream and added to my love. I could even foresee the way he would stare back, speechless and innocent, a medium-sized boy with blond hair, his unconscious eyes looking beyond me and out the window, solitary and unprotected” (Welty, 1994, p. 80).

In the story’s conclusion the narrator’s pleasure, of newfound knowledge and mastery, of finding coherence and continuity, mixes with the sadness of acknowledging the loneliness and anxiety inherent in independence, which is projected onto the boy.

Jamaica Kincaid’s short story “Gwen” (1992) is structured very similarly to “A Memory” (Welty, 1994). It foregrounds the sense of loss and longing for the childhood attachment relationship. Gwen, a school-mate, is the object of the protagonist’s desires, as she mourns her expulsion from the protective orbit of her mother’s love. The story opens with the narrator’s first

day in an all-girls school in the West Indies. She feels uneasy in a sea of girls who all know each other, but is rescued by the assignment of the day: an autobiographical essay to be shared with the class.

She wrote the truth, save one detail, the protagonist tells us, and Kincaid offers the essay in full: when she was small, her mother, a strong swimmer, used to take her to the sea. Naked, she would take her on her back and sing to her while swimming. That joy was broken by a moment of fear and despair when her mother left her on shore to swim alone and the narrator lost sight of her. When she finally spotted her, her mother was sitting on a large rock out at sea, paying her no heed. When her mother finally came ashore she reassured her, but the narrator began having recurrent dreams in which “my mother never came back, and sometimes my father would join her” (Kincaid, 2004, p. 139). She told her mother of the dreams and was once again reassured, this time for good.

The story proceeds: “I didn’t exactly tell a lie about the last part. That is just what would have happened in the old days. But actually the past year saw me launched into young-ladyness, and when I told my mother of my dream—my nightmare, really—I was greeted with a turned back and a warning against eating certain kinds of fruit in an unripe state just before going to bed” (Kincaid, 2004, p. 140). The narrator, at twelve, attributes her mother’s unresponsiveness to her disapproval of her daughter. We are left to wonder if the narrator fantasizes that her mother disapproves in reaction to her own conflicts about her nascent sexuality and her desire to get rid of the mother and replace her in the special relationship with her father.

The essay and subsequent successes assure the narrator’s popularity, and she experiments with kindness and cruelty as she exercises newfound power over her classmates. She also

becomes inseparable with Gwen, redirecting all of her libidinal energy from her mother. Like Welty's narrator, as an adult, she can still reproduce every detail of Gwen's hat, knees, face. The conclusion of the story revolves around the day her latency structure of daydreams unraveled: it was the day she began to menstruate. Initially, her mother brushed aside her complaints, but seeing her gloomy face, relented and shared her own experience. "I pretended that this information made us close—as close as in the old days—but to myself I said, 'What a serpent!'" (Kincaid, 2004, p. 143). The narrator remembers her inability to accept her mother's care because she longs for the lost pleasure of child-like nurturance and merger. At the same time, because she is aware of the parents' special relationship, the narrator knows that the merger is impossible. In reaction to feeling left out, she denigrates her mother's beauty and turns all of her attention and love to her peers.

At school, a gulf opens up between the protagonist and the other girls, even Gwen. The adult protagonist reflects on her desire to preserve the girls' safe sensual world forever, "with no future full of ridiculous demands, no need for any sustenance save our love for each other, with no hindrance to any of our desires...But that could never be..." (Kincaid, 2004, p. 144).

Returning to that day, the narrator, like Welty's heroine, describes becoming overwhelmed by her aggression and fainting in class—she imagined herself at her desk covered in her own blood. She is sent home early from school, and her mother comes to her, "arms outstretched, concern written on her face. My whole mouth filled up with a bitter taste, for I could not understand how she could be so beautiful even though I no longer loved her" (Kincaid, 2004, p. 144).

Kincaid conveys the sense of loss and bewilderment that accompanies the child's transformation of the sense of self and other. While she describes the confusing, painful, and

overwhelming experiences of middle childhood, her narrative is retrospectively structured to provide a sense of coherence and continuity. In all of these stories, the narrators' dual position of protagonist and observer allows a sense of perspective, as if they had known during latency that the episodes of fear, humiliation, and loss are inevitable in the process of growing up, separation from parents, and consolidation of one's identity.

Conclusion

These stories of transformation are both mournful and joyful. They mourn the vanishing warmth, safety, and insulation of a child's world, but celebrate newfound clarity of vision and sense of liberation of coming into being. This effect is achieved in part through narrative structure. Because the vast majority of these stories take the form of a memoir, we are privy to the internal experiences of the narrator's child-self while the child's actions and reactions are observed by their adult selves. As a result the memoirs of events and the emotions they evoked are presented in light of the adult's superior knowledge, as if the child protagonists already possessed the self-awareness and perspective of their adult-selves.

The Role of Fantasy and Play in Mourning

Introduction

The stories in the previous section stand in sharp contrast with the narratives of latency age children (Knight, 2005, 2011) in which notions of their own incompleteness, fears without any feeling of mastery, and wishes to be saved and returned to a more comforting structure predominate. The diffuse and fragmented experience of middle childhood as it is reported by children undergoing it has been transformed, the oedipal conflicts of latency seemingly solved by the acceptance of a new organization. However, a few exceptional stories accomplish the task of mourning while fully conveying the ambivalence, confusion, and diffusion of latency. They do so through the evocation of fantasy and play, which are the core coping mechanisms of middle childhood. The universal latency age fantasies of family romance, primal scene, beating, and parricide, which embody the child's oedipal struggles and conflicts over separation from the parents, animate these stories.

These stories more accurately reflect the more inchoate internal experiences of middle childhood and are told primarily through the protagonists' fantasy and play, with little effort to contextualize and clarify the children's experience. They are less plot-driven and make less use of standard grammatical structures than the stories described above. Their authors combine Joycean stream of consciousness with the mixture of primary and secondary process that characterizes the thought process of latency-age children (Bornstein, 1951; Vygotsky, 1964). The result is an almost musical style that makes frequent use of repetition and conveys the child's experience of the shifting interplay of external reality and internal, fantasy states.

While in the stories in the first category the depth of the protagonists' anxiety and longing for the lost early attachment bond is somewhat obscured, in these stories it takes center stage. In the acclaimed Argentinean writer Julio Cortázar's "Bestiary" (1985), Isabel, a latency-age girl, experiences her first lengthy separation from her mother. In the process, she becomes aware of the transformation of her internal world. Like the other narratives examined above, the story chronicles Isabel's attempts to adjust to a new double awareness of the realities of the adult world and of the passions that rage within her.

In contrast to the stories in the first category, Isabel's attempts to cope with the separation from her mother and her internal transformation are structured by a series of beating fantasies which are aimed at preserving the ties to the parents while at the same time expressing forbidden libidinal and aggressive wishes. These fantasies do not suffice to contain Isabel's emotions, and a parricidal fantasy takes their place in the story's conclusion. While conveying the limitations of latency-age cognitive and emotional structures, throughout the story, Cortázar communicates an awareness of Isabel's transformation to a new level of development, one in which her experiences of herself and others are irrevocably altered.

Eudora Welty's "The Winds" (1994) also takes a latency age girl, Josie, as its subject. As she waits for a night-time storm to pass with her parents, Josie passes in and out of a dream/fantasy state about the summer that is about to end. Josie welcomes and fears her growing sense of separateness from her parents. Her passions and anxiety are contained by a family romance fantasy about Cornella, a girl who lives next door and becomes an alter-ego for Josie. An awareness of the passage of time and the irreversibility of internal transformation organizes

“The Winds” (1994), as Welty makes clear that fantasy is the force that moves the process of internalization and separation forward.

Ralph Ellison’s “A Coupla Scalped Indians” (1995) shares some structural and thematic elements with the stories in the first category. It is written in the form of a memoir and is focused on the protagonist’s search for identity. However, like in “Bestiary” (Cortázar, 1985) and “The Winds,” (Welty, 1994) the move to a new organization is accomplished through imaginative play and a powerful sexual fantasy. Like in the other two stories, the narrative is also embedded in an understanding of the fleeting nature of time and memory. As a result, the function of the childhood fantasy in the story is not so much the consolidation of identity, as its momentary transcendence. Development moves forward as the child-self is connected with the adult-self he is on his way to becoming.

Beating Fantasy and Parricide: “Bestiary”

Julio Cortázar’s “Bestiary,” (1985) written in the style of magical realism, is by definition and interweaving of fantasy and reality. As in a dream, events are not presented in chronological order; they are circled back upon, viewed from different angles, and layered with additional meaning rather than clarified. At its core, it is a story about a normative event in any child’s life: a first lengthy separation from mother. Isabel, a young girl from the city, is sent to spend a summer with her cousins at their country estate, Los Horneros. Because of the close third-person narration, we are privy to her thoughts and fantasies, as well as to how events would appear to an external observer.

Isabel has been invited as a play-mate for a slightly younger boy, Nino, by his father, Luis. A woman, Rema, to whom Nino refers as his aunt, and another man, “the Kid,” to whom

Nino refers as his uncle, make up the rest of the family. How they are all related is never clarified and is left to our imaginations. Throughout the story, we share Isabel's confusion as she struggles to understand and enter the obscure world of these adults. Isabel must also adapt to the fact that there is a tiger living on the estate whose presence everyone else seems to calmly accept, although they are always careful to avoid the room the tiger happens to be in at any time.

The Kid is unpleasant to everyone, and seems, at least to Isabel, to force sexual favors from Rema, who is the object of Isabel's adoration, partly because she substitutes for Isabel's absent mother. After a series of unpleasant events involving The Kid, Isabel misinforms him about the location of the tiger, which eventuates in his being mauled.

The story opens with Isabel finding out about her upcoming trip, and she is filled with excitement and dread about the separation. When her mother and Inés (probably the housekeeper who lives with them and also takes care of Isabel; there is no mention of Isabel's father) take Isabel to the train station, their good-byes seem repulsive. "Between Inés and her mother they kissed her so much that her face felt like it'd been walked on, soft and smelly, rouge and Coty powder, wet around the mouth, a squeamish feeling of filth that the wind eradicated with one large smack" (Cortázar, 1985, p. 79). Disgust replaces longing in order to master the separation, and makes it easier for Isabel to face "the enormous entrance to platform 14" (Cortázar, 1985, p. 79).

Alone on the train, Isabel focuses on the precise details of the external world, both to distract herself from her fears, and to locate herself physically in a world she experiences as lacking its usual coordinates without the guidepost of her mother and Inés. She reads signs from

the window, memorizing the posted prohibitions, tracking both the train's route and her mother's whereabouts.

“Sansinena Co., Frozen Meats a sweetish stink seeping in the window, the railroad trestle over the yellow brook and Isabel already back to normal from having had to have that crying spell at the station, happy, dead with fear, active, using fully the seat by the window, almost the only traveler in that portion of the coach from which one could examine all the different places and see oneself in the small mirrors. She thought once or twice of her mother, of Inés—they'd already be on the 97 car, leaving Constitution—she read no smoking, spitting is forbidden by law, seating capacity 42 passengers, they were passing through Banfield at top speed, vavoom! country more country more country intermingled with the taste of Milky Way and the menthol drops” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 79).

Cortázar conveys the sounds, sights, and tastes of Isabel's first departure and makes room for her love and hate, pleasure and disgust, excitement and dread. Isabel transfers her ambivalent longing for her mother's care and protection to Rema. On her way to the estate Isabel repeatedly calms herself with the image of Rema's soft hands, which “made you want to cry and feel them on your head forever, a caress like death almost and pastries with vanilla cream, the two best things on earth” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 80). However, what was once gratifying has now entered into conflict. Isabel repeatedly notes Rema's remoteness and sadness even though Rema is a constant presence in Isabel's life: playing, joking, helping put on pajamas. Isabel is the one who feels distant and alone, longing for something that she can no longer get from her caregivers. Here she silently meditates on Rema:

“Rema, Rema. How she loved her, and that unhappy voice, bottomless, without any possible reason, the voice of sadness itself. Please. Rema, Rema...A feverish heat reached her face, a wish to throw herself at Rema's feet, to let Rema pick her up in her arms, a wish to die looking at her and Rema be sorry for her, pass her cool, delicate fingers through her hair, over the eyelids...” (Cortázar, 1985, pp. 92-93).

Cortázar's conveys Isabel's longing and sadness at her loss, projected onto Rema. The sensual desire that breathes through the passage also evokes the fantasy of being put to death by orgasm. Death can also mean a return to pre-oedipal merger with mother, which would erase the

painful separateness growing between them. Isabel's instinctual life mirrors the findings of developmental researchers working with children's rhymes, dreams, and projective materials (Knight 2005, 2011; Kaplan, 1975; Novick & Novick, 1972; Peller, 1959; Wermer & Levin, 1967). In the story, Isabel's games, day-dreams, and night-time reveries become the expressions of her attempts to cope with her oedipal passions, internalize her attachment figures and separate from them.

Rema and the Kid become the substitute oedipal couple for Isabel, subject to her desire and rage. While longing for Rema, Isabel is also fascinated, excited and scared by the Kid's adult sexuality; by his "hard, handsome mouth, very red lips" (Cortázar, 1985, p. 88). Rema becomes the container for Isabel's intolerable wishes; the object of the Kid's desire in Isabel's imagination. Because Rema avoids answering Isabel's questions about her and the Kid, every word and act is open to interpretation. This also feeds into Isabel's powerful feeling of exclusion. The Kid, in particular, barely notices Isabel and treats her like an insignificant child. She despises the Kid in turn: in her eyes he is impatient, boorish and unpleasant. When a praying mantis flies into the room and the children trap him, Isabel immediately identifies the insect with the Kid, and "Isabel would have liked to cut the mantis' head off, a good snip with the scissors, and see what would happen" (Cortázar, 1985, p.91).

Isabel's rage and longing find expression in an elaborate beating fantasy which emerges during the transition from waking to sleeping, as part of Isabel's going over the events of the day. The plot of the fantasy is hazy, but it appears that Isabel and Nino were playing ball and broke the Kid's window. Later in the day, the Kid found Nino and slapped him until Rema interceded. Luis was neither involved nor informed of the incident. Isabel is just an observer in the fantasy, and she replays the beating scene twice. The first time, the sexual undertones of Nino's

experience are unmistakable: “the Kid continued to whack back and forth across his face with a loose soft slap that sounded moist...” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 87). Since Isabel’s shot actually broke the Kid’s window, Nino literally stands in for her in the beating scene.

The second time Nino functions more as an excuse for the contact between the two adults. The Kid “looked at Rema while he hit him, he seemed furious with Rema and she defied him with her eyes for a moment. Terrified, Isabel saw her face up to him, then she stepped in between to protect Nino” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 88). The violence of the primal scene is tempered by the sense that there is a complicated dance between the adults, which is beyond a child’s comprehension.

In a playful way, the beating scene is linked to Isabel’s mother and Inés. When the fantasy begins as Isabel is falling asleep, she first sees them, “looking at one another and smiling like accomplices and pulling on gloves of phosphorescent yellow. She saw Nino weeping, her mother and Inés with the gloves on that now were violet hairdos that twirled and twirled round their heads...” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 87). The internal world of latency age children is recognizable in this fantasy, which uses another child to express unacceptable impulses and emotions directed at the primary attachment figures. And just as in middle childhood, in the story, the beating fantasy does not suffice as maturational forces pull Isabel into a new organization.

Isabel’s internal transformation is the driving force of Cortázar’s narrative. When Isabel gets to the estate, she recognizes that her view of the world has been irrevocably altered. On her previous visit to Los Horneros “barely three years ago,” “without the tiger then,” everything was “smaller, more crystalline and pink” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 80). Now that a wild beast roams the estate, life is organized around prohibitions: everyone has to be constantly vigilant, keep out of

certain rooms, postpone meals, and always check ahead before venturing out. Inseparable from this new reality is Isabel's growing awareness that even the execution of daily rituals is replete with conflicts, small cruelties, and hidden meanings. Isabel becomes painfully conscious of the rules and silences that she must now learn to obey both because of the threat of the tiger and because of her desire to be seen as a big girl and to be accepted by her cousins.

The new challenges of middle childhood: trying to understand and comply with the multiplicity of unspoken rules and prohibitions of the social world are externalized in the figure of the tiger. New to Isabel, never seen or described, the tiger is a dangerous, but also regulating and containing force that she must internalize just as the adults on the estate have done. Simultaneously, the tiger's animal nature reflects Isabel's emergent sexuality and aggression, which the external controls are designed to contain.

We witness this in Isabel's play. She watches the ants in the ant farm she set up with Nino work furiously on their tunnels,

“[I]t gave her immense pleasure to think that the ants came and went without fear of any tiger, sometimes she tried to imagine a tiny little tiger like an eraser, roaming the galleries of the ant-farm; maybe that was why the dispersals and concentrations. And now she liked to rehearse the real world in the one of glass, now that she felt a little like a prisoner, now that she was forbidden to go down to the dining room until Rema said so” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 85).

Isabel “likes to rehearse the real world” in her play, working through her frustration at the inevitability of the tiger. Cortázar shows how Isabel's super-structure of day dreams fails when external events intrude on her play. While Isabel is watching the ants, Rema comes to check on her and stands behind Isabel, in the doorway. At that moment, Isabel is preoccupied with a scene she witnessed between the Kid and Rema. Their fingers momentarily tangled as he took a cup from her. When she sees Rema's hand reflected in the glass of the ant farm she imagines the ants

running along Rema's fingers. This fusion of fantasy and external reality makes Isabel so anxious that she asks Rema to take her hand out of the glass, as though it had actually been inside the glass tank. She cannot help, then, but ask what has been on her mind: "Is the Kid mad at you, Rema?" (Cortázar, 1985, p. 85), giving voice to what we guess are her preoccupations: punishment for aggressive and incestuous impulses, and the confusion between sexuality and fighting.

"The hand moved across the glass like a bird through a window. It looked to Isabel as though the ants were really scared this time, that they ran from the reflection. You couldn't see anything now, Rema had left, she went down the hall as if she were escaping something. Isabel felt afraid of the question herself, a dull fear, made no sense, maybe it wasn't the question but seeing Rema run off that way, or the once-more-clear empty glass where the galleries emptied out and twisted like twitching fingers inside the soil" (Cortázar, 1985, p. 85-86).

Isabel panics because her attempts to sublimate her aggressive and libidinal impulses through the beating fantasy and her play are failing. Her powerful feelings of abandonment, exclusion and betrayal gives rise to an impulse to "wreak vengeance," (Arlow, 1980) which finds expression in a fantasy of a murderous act, which serves as the story's simultaneous climax and conclusion.

The same night, painfully aware of her childish inadequacy and insignificance, and of the desire and rage stirred up within her, Isabel experiences an internal shift.

"Isabel had hardly slept at all, she remembered rooms full of flowers, tinkling bells, hospital corridors, sisters of charity, thermometers in jars of bichlorate, scenes from her first communion, Inés, the broken bicycle, the restaurant in the railroad station, the gypsy costume when she had been eight. Among all this, like a delicate breeze between the pages of an album, she found herself wide awake, thinking of things that were not flowers, bells, hospital corridors" (Cortázar, 1985, p. 94).

In this passage, Cortázar makes clear that Isabel is leaving childhood behind, saying good-bye to a more innocent time. By morning, her view of Nino, her playmate, has been

transformed, “she saw him suddenly as so childish, such a little boy with his snails and his leaves” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 94). Although there is plenty of the child left in her, (when she got up that morning she “washed her face hard, especially the ears,” (Cortázar, 1985, p. 94)) Isabel is firmly on the other side of this transition. That day, consciously or unconsciously, in reality or in fantasy, the distinction is meaningless, by misinforming the Kid about the tiger’s location, Isabel moves from passive to active. The ultimate (fantasy) act of parricide ushers her into a new organization.

Family Romance Fantasy: “The Winds”

An awareness of the passage of time and the irreversibility of internal transformation also animates Eudora Welty’s “The Winds” (1994). Like Cortázar, Welty mixes primary and secondary process, and her narrative is full of repetition and fantasy. Her heroine, Josie, stands poised between childhood and adulthood, between a wish for novel excitements and a call back to her parents.

Josie passes in and out of a dream/fantasy state as she rides out an equinoctial storm with her parents. In the process, she remembers the summer that she realizes is now over: the games that she played alone and with friends, her fantasies of kings, queens, and romantic love, the pleasure of riding her bicycle, chewing nasturtium, sucking honey out of flowers, a cornucopia of multi-sensory experiences, conveyed with striking immediacy.

Josie relies on her parents’ solidity, on her connection to them, but also recognizes her growing separateness as her interior life expands away from them:

“She woke only to hunt for signs of the fairies, and counted nothing but a footprint smaller than a bird-claw. All of the sand pile went into a castle, and it was a rite to stretch

on her stomach and put her mouth to the door. ‘O my Queen!’ and the coolness of the whisper would stir the grains of sand within....It was delicious to close both eyes and wait a length of time. Then, supposing a mocking-bird sang in the tree, ‘I ask for my first wish, to be made to understand the tongue of birds.’ They called her back because they had no memory of magic...Her bicycle was the golden Princess, the name in a scroll in front. She would take her as early as possible. So as to touch nothing, to make no print on the earliness of the day, she rode with no hands, no feet, touching nowhere but the one place, moving away into the leaves, down the swaying black boards of the dewy alley. They called her back. She hung from and circled in order the four round posts, warm and filled with weight, on the porch. Green arched ferns, like great exhalations, spread from the stands...She ran and jumped, secure that the house was theirs and identical with them...” (Welty, 1994, pp. 212-213).

The storm shakes this foundation as Josie becomes aware of her parents’ fear and, like the separation for Isabel, it activates her longing for merger with the magical, omnipotent parents of early childhood who have the power to soothe and to heal. Like for Isabel, Josie’s longing for protection and closeness is colored by her oedipal feelings and a new awareness of her separateness and sexuality. When her parents wake her in the night, she is still half-dreaming. To her, the noise of the storm sounds like the song of the older girls and boys on a hay ride to Lover’s Lane, an old, dark place at the edge of town where the young people go.

“An excitement touched her and she could see in her imagination the leaning wagon coming, the long white-stockinged legs of the big girls hung down in a fringe on one side of the hay – then as the horses made a turn, the boys’ black stockings stuck out the other side.

But while her heart rose longingly to the pitch of their delight, hands reached under her and she was lifted out of bed.

‘Don’t be frightened,’ said her father’s voice into her ear, as if he told her a secret.

Am I old, Am I invited? she wondered, stricken.

The chorus seemed to envelop her, but it was her father’s thin night-shirt she lay against in the dark” (Welty, 1994, p. 209).

While Josie accepts her parents’ protection, she imagines that she sees Cornella, a girl who lives across the street, out in the storm. She is anxious for her and wants to save her. The narrative moves between Josie’s memories of her summer games and of watching Cornella who

lives in a disgraced house of orphans, “not even a daughter in her side of the house...there only by the frailest indulgence” (Welty, 1994, p. 216). The heroine of Josie’s family romance fantasy, Cornella spends her days in a state of angry agitation as she remains alone in her yard, (neighborhood children including Josie aren’t allowed to play with her) sunning and combing her hair, and endlessly waiting for someone to liberate her. Josie projects her growing restlessness, curiosity, aggression, and sexuality onto Cornella. Just as Rema becomes the substitute object of Isabel’s desire, Josie experiences a tender and aching longing for Cornella. Latency rhymes run through Josie’s head as she spends hours meditating on her Rapunzel: “Cornella, Cornella, let down thy hair, and the King’s son will come climbing up” (Welty, 1994, p. 214).

Josie’s oedipal passion also finds expression in her erotic associations to her father’s touch and irritable reactions to her mother. These feelings are inseparable from Josie’s sense of loneliness, sadness and desolation, also powerfully projected onto Cornella. Like Cortázar, Welty conveys this by the sequencing of Josie’s fantasies and associations. As the storm winds down, Josie’s father gives Josie a kiss, which evokes a memory of the evening that preceded the night of the storm. Josie was “pierced with pleasure” when a female musician played at a concert (Welty, 1994, p. 220). The music was passionate and magical, and in the night, Josie interprets the memory of its sound as a message to her “that there would be no more waiting and no more time left for the one who did not take heed and follow...” (Welty, 1994, p. 220). She notes her parents’ indifference to this music which transports her, and in this moment, Welty makes clear, she makes the move out of the protective orbit of her parents towards new realities, passions, and dangers, personified in Cornella.

Like Cortázar, Welty illuminates Josie's movement between dependent and independent strivings as she enters a new organization. Her dream-like narrative is also infused with an adult-like awareness of the passage of time and its irreversibility.

"The house shook as if a big drum were being beaten down the street.

Her mother sighed. 'Summer is over.'

Josie drew closer to her, with a sense of consolation. Her mother's dark plait was as warm as her arm, and she tugged at it. In the coming of these glittering flashes and the cries and the calling voices of the equinox, summer was turning into the past. The long ago..." (Welty, 1994, p. 211).

As Josie "drifts" through the summer, "the way of the past," she wishes that she had had more time for all of its pleasures and has an epiphany:

"For the first time in her life she thought, might the same wonders never come again? Was each wonder original and alone like the falling star, and when it fell did it bury itself beyond where you hunted it? Should she hope to see it snow twice, and the teacher running again to open the window, to hold out her black cape to catch it as it came down, and then going up and down the room quickly, quickly, to show them the snowflakes?" (Welty, 1994, p. 219)

In "The Winds" (1994) and "Bestiary" (1985), Welty and Cortázar evoke the fantasies that move forward the process of internalization and separation from the parents. While the confusion, anxiety, loneliness, and longing inherent in the transformations of latency are highlighted in these narratives, they too offer a sense of continuity and coherence by imbuing their protagonists with a sense of time and an awareness of moving into a new organization.

The Primal Scene: “A Coupla Scalped Indians”

Like “Bestiary” and “The Winds,” Ralph Ellison’s “A Coupla Scalped Indians” (1995) returns to the confusion, anxiety, and desires of latency. Through the memory of the fantasies and play of its protagonist, the story explores the interior process of identity formation in latency and its continuation in adulthood. The narrator looks back on a boyhood adventure with his older and wiser friend, Buster. At eleven, the narrator had already lost his mother; he never knew his father. The boys had just had a mysterious operation “down there” and, contrary to doctor’s orders, spent the day swimming and running in the woods. Under Buster’s direction, they were pretending to be Indian Scouts, modifying the trials from a Boy Scout Handbook. In so doing, they are trying on and sorting through White, Black, and Indian identities, and who they want to be in the world.

The reader is never told what this operation is, just as Welty and Cortázar do not offer any clarity on the nature of the tiger or Cornella’s origins. Instead, the operation, which the boys joke makes them “scalped Indians,” becomes a concrete expression of the boys’ confusion and anxiety about their identity and the meaning of their impending manhood. The boys explore their questions about sexuality, race relations, and their place in society through their conversation about the “operation” and about the music they hear from a distance. When the story opens, the narrator and Buster are headed out of the woods, to a carnival: “They had a small, loud-playing band, and as we moved through the trees, I could hear the notes of the horns bursting like bright metallic bubbles against the sky” (Ellison, 1995 p. 272).

Buster puts words to the music: he imagines that the instruments are battling it out in a game of “the dozens,” frequently played by pre-adolescent and adolescent Black boys. They are

trading sexual insults about each other's mothers, and each has a unique style: the trumpet is a soldier, the clarinet is a sweet-talker. Buster also points out the racial implications of the game: "Man, the white folks know what that fool is signifying on that horn, they'd run him clear on out the world. Trumpet's got a really *nasty* mouth" (Ellison, 1995, p. 278). When the narrator turns serious, and points out that he and Buster should not be playing the dozens if they want to be like the White boy scouts, Buster's response is defiant: "Those guys can't take it, man. Besides, who wants to be just like them?" He aims to be both, a scout and a player, because it is necessary for survival in the world of his peers. "You have to outtalk 'em, outrun 'em, or outfight 'em and I don't aim to be running and fighting all the time" (Ellison, 1995, p. 278). The narrator reports feeling uneasy as the boys move through the woods, and the narrative sequence signals that he is less sure of himself and his place in the world than Buster.

The narrator's anxiety intensifies as the boys come upon the cottage of Aunt Mackie, the village crazy woman, healer and sorceress. He has always feared her in a deep, instinctual way. The narrator ends up separated from Buster, watching Aunt Mackie through her window as she dances naked while she drinks wine. He is shocked at the beauty of her body and the grace of her movements, which do not match her wrinkled, old face. He ends up passing out and she brings him inside, cradles him in her arms, and tells him to kiss her. Overwhelmed with emotion he cannot name, the boy cries as he kisses her, and tells her about his operation. As she opens up his bandages and laughs, "a fishing worm with a headache!" he becomes ashamed and angry, "I'm a man, I said within myself. Just the same I am a man!" (Ellison, 1995, p. 283) and the insistence on his emerging manhood gives him the courage to look at her naked body up close. He has an epiphany as she appears to him,

“brown in the lamplight, with all the complicated apparatus within the globular curvature of flesh and vessel exposed to my eyes. I was filled then with a deeper sense of the mystery of it, too, for now it was as though the nakedness was nothing more than another veil; much like the baggy dresses she always wore. Then across the curvature of her stomach I saw a long, puckered, crescent-shaped scar” (Ellison, 1995, p. 284).

As if in confirmation of the boy’s sense of his manhood, Aunt Mackie comes out of her drunken haze for a moment, and asks his age. Learning that he is eleven, she snatches up her bathrobe and throws him out. As he walks in the woods, he has visions of her dancing naked, as she had first appeared to him. His “senses seemed to sing alive” and the sounds and sights of the warm summer night came to him with a particular sharpness. As the memory of the encounter with Aunt Mackie becomes “thin and dreamlike,” the narrator tells us it was “real, I knew...All was real” (Ellison, 1995, p. 285).

The narrator’s insistence reminds us that the entire sequence with Aunt Mackie might very well be a fantasy. In fantasy or reality, as in “Bestiary” (Cortázar, 1985), the distinction is meaningless, the boy’s crisis of manhood is solved, for the moment, not by a direct acquisition of knowledge, but by a powerful fantasy of physical contact with an ageless earth-mother who satisfies his craving for maternal care and acknowledges his budding sexuality. The vision of Aunt Mackie’s body links flesh, sexuality, birth, and death in a new, intuitive way for the narrator, which allows him some clarity about his own origins and identity.

The story concludes:

“And for a moment I felt much older, as though I had lived swiftly long years into the future and had been as swiftly pushed back again. I tried to remember how it had been when I kissed her, but on my lips my tongue found only the faintest trace of wine. But for that it was gone, and I thought forever, except for the memory of the scraggly hairs on her chin. Then I was again aware of the imperious calling on the horns and moved again toward the carnival. Where was that other scalped Indian, where had Buster gone?” (Ellison, 1995, p. 285)

Like Welty, Ellison addresses the fleeting nature of time and memory, which are a product of adult understanding. For a moment, all burdens are lifted, and the narrator knows that he has moved into a new internal organization. When he returns to the present, his sense of self has been altered, and his identity has been grounded in a vision of age, sex, and skin-color that transcends the limitations of time, place, logic, and other indicators of “reality.”

Conclusion

In these three extraordinary stories the protagonists are in a less resolved state. They endure a painful awareness of the costs of transformations of middle childhood, and manifest both a greater longing for the lost continent of early childhood and an ongoing struggle to understand the mores of adulthood. Like latency-age children, the protagonists of these stories tend to experience more confusion, as the accuracy of their observations and their capacity for understanding the people and social structures that surround them are both limited and clearly influenced by their particular dynamics.

Like in all of the stories, issues of identity take center stage, but here, they are more clearly infused with ambivalence toward the self and the objects in the child’s world. The fantasy life of the protagonists allows them to express their ambivalence while maintaining their tie to the object, and to accept the gains and losses inherent in entering a new developmental organization. These stories, in which transformation is driven by fantasy, and resolution is completely internal, show another dimension of the mourning process. Their heroes move freely between separation and merger, dependence and independence. The feeling of lightness and playfulness that permeates these stories contrasts sharply with the bitterness of two equally exceptional stories that show their protagonists’ inability to mourn the parents and themselves.

The Inability to Mourn

Introduction

A few stories stand out from the rest because of the starkly different portrayal of the protagonists' parents. Although their protagonists, like in the majority of the stories about the transition to adulthood, are wise beyond their years, they are deeply critical of their parents and are unable to forgive them their transgressions. Like the stories described in the previous section, the protagonists in these stories do make some use of fantasy and play, but these latency structures do not succeed in containing their longing, anxiety, aggression, and deep sense of disappointment in their parents.

Alice Munro's "Trespasses" (2004) plays out the universal family romance fantasy, confronting its protagonist, Lauren, with the possibility that she is adopted, and, more importantly, that she might find the protective cocoon she feels was denied to her by her parents who always treated her like a little adult. In a dispassionate, judging voice of a child whose understanding far outruns her years, the third person narration sticks to Lauren's subjectivity as she discovers her parents' painful and shameful secrets. Unable to take in what her parents can now offer her, Lauren manages the separation from them, but in doing so, she leaves her parents completely behind.

Harold Brodkey's "Play" (1988) shares "Trespasses'" (Munro, 2004) irrevocable sense of disappointment in the parents and the resulting inability to separate from the parents and form an independent identity. Like "A Coupla Scalped Indians" (Ellison, 1995) it is constructed as a memoir of a boy's pivotal sexual experience. While the orphan protagonist of Ellison's story relies on his friend Buster for support and scaffolding, the boy in "Play" (Brodkey, 1988) has no

external holding structures. His father is gravely ill, his mother is unpredictable, and both refuse to parent their child. The quality of the protagonist's memories is vastly different from the recollections of the narrators of the other stories, indicating the unresolved state of an adult unable to forgive and to mourn.

The Inability to Mourn the Parents: "Trespases"

In Alice Munro's "Trespases" (2004), Lauren moves with her worldly and free-thinking parents to a small town, where after a brief summer idyll, they discover that none of them fits in. Lauren finds herself friendless at school and comes to spend her after-school hours in the company of Delphine, a waitress who works in a near-by hotel. The woman's brash, colorful, and decidedly unsophisticated ways fascinate Lauren, just as her tender and nervous interest draws and unsettles the girl. Knowing that her parents would disapprove, Lauren keeps the relationship a secret. Early on, Delphine hints to Lauren that she is the daughter she gave up for adoption and that Lauren is the reason for her presence in the town. Initially, she does this in subtle ways, for example asking Lauren if she has allergies after describing her own, but eventually, after getting Lauren to come with her to her musty little room, she tells Lauren a thinly veiled version of her story. Lauren feels imprisoned by the room, the woman, and her tale, and flees, but Delphine continues to pursue her at her home. Munro masterfully creates a sense of fairy-tale like foreboding and danger, as Lauren fears being engulfed by this woman who claims to be her mother.

The story opens with a surreal scene of Delphine, Lauren and her parents driving out of town at midnight, looking for a place to stop. The narration then shifts to the family's

disappointment in the little town and their life there, and describes Lauren's discovery of an oddly light cardboard box while helping her father move his papers. She asks about it, and her father tells her that it contains ashes of a child born before Lauren. He asks Lauren not to discuss this with her mother who finds it too upsetting, and then tells her that her mother became immediately pregnant with Lauren after they had this baby, and felt sick and overwhelmed. Wanting to get out one night, she failed to properly secure the baby in the car seat, and, driving too fast, got into an accident which was fatal for the baby.

Lauren's father omits the fact that this was an adopted baby, and when Delphine sets up her encounters with Lauren, it is not clear to Lauren or the reader whether Lauren or the dead baby or neither is actually Delphine's child. As Delphine becomes more aggressive in her pursuit, Lauren tells her mother about her claims. Lauren's mother is frightened and protective of her daughter, but she and her father also overwhelm and disgust Lauren with their fighting and self-involvement. The story closes where it began, with the drive out of town, which turns out to be the parents' attempt at reconciliation with each other, Lauren, and Delphine: they scatter the baby's ashes in the woods together, but Lauren experiences this act as false and self-serving, and refuses to participate in it.

The case against Lauren's parents builds gradually. Initially, her father is appealing, but a bit self-indulgent and naive, and she resents him for succeeding in infecting her with his enthusiasm—for the town, the county fair, the closeness of nature, and then leaving her alone to deal with the disappointment of the “weight of dailiness, of reality,

that she had to carry around once school began...and the weather changed” (Munro, 2004, p. 205). Lauren’s mother is beautiful, provocative, fragile and remote.

What emerges in the narrative is Lauren’s perception that her parents refuse to take up their authority and responsibility as parents. They deny her any childhood innocence—she tried beer at five, pot at six, and knows all about sex and her parents’ indiscretions. That knowledge is a burden to Lauren and a source of “embarrassment and peculiar sadness, even of deprivation” (Munro, 2004, p. 205). Lauren is delighted with Delphine’s simple questions, fit for a five year old—“what do you get scared of? What’s your favorite color? Do you ever walk in your sleep?” (Munro, 2004, p. 211) Her longing for the pleasures of early maternal care is expressed most purely in the contrast she draws between her father’s self-conscious singing of *Moon River* and Delphine’s rendition of the song. Delphine sings as Lauren helps her hang sheets to dry in the hotel,

“Lauren felt the calm sorrow of Delphine’s voice pulling her towards the wavering white sheets. The sheets themselves seemed as if they would dissolve around her—no, around her and Delphine—creating a feeling of acute sweetness. Delphine’s singing was like an embrace, wide-open, that you could rush into. At the same time, its loose emotion gave Lauren a shiver in her stomach, a distant threat of being sick” (Munro, 2004, p. 214).

In contrast to Isabel, in “Bestiary” (Cortázar, 1985), Lauren has a hard time tolerating her fantasies of merger. Her aggression outruns the libidinal tie to the parents who seem unable to put her needs first and to maintain appropriate boundaries. This emerges in the discussion of her parents’ fights which recur in Lauren’s memories.

Like the narrators in so many other stories, Lauren has an adult’s sophisticated understanding of the origin and the function of the fights. They are part of her parents’ sexual relationship, both painful and exhilarating. She knows “that there was a tender

spot in both of them—that Harry made jokes all the time because he was sad, and Eileen was brisk and dismissive because of something about Harry that seemed to shut her out” (Munro, 2004, p. 230).

At the same time, the child’s bewilderment and fright at the parents’ yelling, throwing, threats of pills and razors is communicated in the narrative. Lauren always hoped that the fight would not break out, even though “[t]here had never been one time when this feeling was in the room, the change in the air, the shocking brightness that made all shapes, all furniture and utensils, sharper, yet denser—never one time that the worst did not follow,” and she would be “unable to stay in her room, she had to be where they were, flinging herself at them, protesting and weeping” (Munro, 2004, p. 229).

The cost of this lack of safety in Lauren’s relationship with her parents is her inability to take in what is available of their care, for their love and concern for her comes across clearly in the story. Often, it is in the minor details Munro offers as part of the narrative. For example, we are told in passing that Lauren’s mother hated the three little tear-drop windows in the front door of their house, but her father said that they were not bad and pointed out that they were at the right height for each of them to look out of. He called them Papa Bear, Mama Bear, and Baby Bear. When Lauren claimed to be sick and stayed home the day after she escaped from Delphine, her mother called to check on her, and when Lauren did not answer, her mother “ran from then newspaper office without putting on her coat and drove home. When she found the door locked she banged on it with her fist and rattled the knob. She pressed her face to the Mama Bear window and shouted Lauren’s name....” (Munro, 2004, p. 225).

When Lauren broke down and told her mother about Delphine, “it was a great relief, and yet even as shivered and cried she felt that something private and complex was being traded away for safety and comfort. It wasn’t possible to tell the whole truth because she couldn’t get it straight herself. She couldn’t explain what she had wanted, right up to the point of not wanting it at all” (Munro, 2004, p. 225). Lauren feels that she is giving up something of herself in confiding in her mother, and she immediately removes herself from her mother’s orbit, observing her parents deal with the crisis as if from a distance.

Lauren’s mother arranges for her to leave for boarding school, and Lauren has no hesitation about leaving her parents, experiencing this as a “miraculous rescue.” She is only concerned with what price her parents might exact from her for this rescue, but Munro signals that Lauren has already accomplished her separation, as she is able to fall asleep that night just as her parents are gearing up for one of their terrifying fights.

When Lauren’s parents wake her up, Delphine is at the house, and they want Lauren to hear the full story of what happened and to drive out with them to scatter the ashes. In the story’s conclusion, Lauren is resigned to her parents, but her disappointment and outright aggression are evident in her barely contained irritation and disgust with them. The only connection she makes on the drive is with Delphine, wishing for a moment that she would “turn back into the person she had been at the beginning, sitting behind the hotel desk, bold and frisky” (Munro, 2004, p. 234). As Lauren comes full circle, we recognize that from the start, this family romance fantasy was destined to fail in securing the tie to the parents.

The Inability to Mourn the Self: “Play”

In Harold Brodkey’s “Play” (1988) it is the games of middle childhood that fail to contain the protagonist’s aggression and anxiety. The adult self of the protagonist understands this failure as a result of the absence of a safe holding environment. The story begins and ends with a single memory, of playing a game of “Tarzan”¹¹ with a younger child, and in this fashion, discovering the sensations of masturbation and orgasm for the first time. The visceral memory of the “Tarzan” game book-ends memories of the forbidden games the protagonist played with his peers. Brodkey is masterful in painting a picture of the intense pre-genital sensuality of latency age children and the masturbatory equivalents evident in these games. His narrator focuses on the constant admixture of aggression in these games, which he understand as deriving from children’s rage at the humiliation of being small and powerless, their sense of expulsion from their parents’ protective orbit, and the lack of safety and predictability within themselves and in their interactions with others.

Although incredibly perceptive and accurate in its details, the descriptions given of the games of “Torture,”¹² daring, and competition are strikingly un-playful. They are punctuated by explanations that feel almost academic, and contrasts sharply with the memory of the “Tarzan” game, which appears almost as a dream, unprocessed and uncontrolled. The protagonists’ description of his parents and his relationship with them veers between the two narrative tropes,

¹¹ The protagonist pretends that he is climbing in the jungle. He grips the underside of a mattress box-spring with his hands and feet and moves around in this way. The younger child holds onto his neck and braces himself on his legs.

¹² The games consist of being held captive and threatened with punishment or actually being physically punished.

and makes clear that the disgust and rage at the parents' failings are experienced in the present by the adult-self of the narrator.

The disorienting and unsettling effect of the memories of the parents and the "Tarzan" game is achieved by the abrupt changes in tenses and in narrative voice in the story. In the opening lines that introduce the game Brodkey switches between the first person and the third person voice as the adult protagonist struggles to locate himself in his memories:

"Sometimes when I wake, I am eleven years old; and the underside of the bedsprings, the rows of coils that face me, sag, squeak, clatter...I am in my underpants and otherwise naked. And sweaty. That child's bare feet are crudely large, intrusions from next year's body. The weighty endowments to come shove and push unimaginably at a mind that refuses to name or predict them...Some time-ridden force hives and swarms in him, with no due proportion, swelling out here and there, enlarging his lips: his mouth is dull and harsh, the lips flattened panes, unchildish in his high-colored face; his eyes are cold, abstract, and hurt and vengeful eleven-year old eyes ..." (Brodkey, 1988, pp. 197-198).

The narrative continues in the first person, in the past tense, reflecting on the in-between quality of latency, when children are poised between childhood and adulthood, and on the impossibility of truly coming back to that time and sensibility. As in the other stories, an awareness of the passage of time shapes the narrative, and this awareness, gained in retrospect, is attributed to the young protagonist:

"to be eleven was humiliating, the powerlessness, the lie of looking like a child still; we had been more lovable a few years before; now we got on everybody's nerves... We did not believe we were temporary; we were too rational for miracles, for puberty; there was no hair on me below that of my eyelashes except childish fuzz—we waited...We were like actors in a movie who know they will be murdered shortly, and everything about them, arms, legs, soul, will be carted away, will vanish from the plot, and not our parents, not our friends, not even memory would find *us* again" (Brodkey, 1988, p. 198).

The image of murder and disappearance contrasts sharply with the vision of memory as layered, enriched, and lasting offered by Welty's (1994) protagonist in "A Memory". Brodkey's (1998) narrator captures the peer relationships of latency—with their cruelties, affections,

contradictions, and shifting alliances. He is unflinching in his description of the violence he and his friends perpetrated—upon objects, animals, and humans, but also contextualizes it from an adult’s perspective: “we were sexually inadequate; the rage spilled out... We were sick to death of innocence” (Brodkey, 1988, p. 199). His children are adults in waiting: “we were grubby, we were little militarists, soldiers in a garrison town. Would we be six feet tall? Would we be creepy? What would luck do to us?” (Brodkey, 1988, p. 199), but there is no wistfulness for the sensual pleasures of peer relationships that we find in “Gwen” (Kincaid, 1992). The reason is that the peer relationships this narrator describes offer no emotional comfort. They only provide an outlet for aggression and sexuality.

“To coast downhill on a bicycle was to go slightly berserk with pleasure (no hill was long enough)... We streamed here and there on errands that mostly had to do with the obscene... We knew even parental love to be a physical attachment: weren’t we loved and stroked, touched and bathed, and bidden embrace our parents? We knew our parents lied to themselves about us; sometimes we tried to be as good as they thought we were; but it wasn’t so important usually—it was only terrible sometimes. We were used to hurting people. Not always, though. Some of us had an added element of self-consciousness—that’s all that virtue was then. Or that it came from... we knew that no one was sympathetic unless you charmed them physically first. We were children, little whores—the whole suburb was a bordello—how could it have been otherwise, how can it ever be otherwise?... Among the trees and the living, heated people, it has to be the same no matter how much they lie or how much they forget. It is a sensual wonder to be young. We are alive from a very early age” (Brodkey, 1988, pp. 208-210).

Brodkey shows that children’s aggression emerges as a perverse attempt to conquer the disorganizing sexual feelings which are not tempered by the “affectionate current” of the relationship with the parents. The description of the narrator’s parents’ relationship with each other and with the protagonist switches back and forth between the past and the present tense, between the pain and confusion of raw and unprocessed memories, expressed in direct quotations of the parents’ words, and the clarity of an adult’s reflections on family dynamics. Like in

“Trespases” (Munro, 2004) the parents are presented as neglectful, selfish and cruel. They too fail to shield the protagonist from their conflict and while he too, sees them as people derailed by tragedy, he is unable to forgive them their inability to rise above it.

The child-self in this story is baffled by his parents’ cruelty. Memories of the father are in the present tense: “sometimes he asks me to sit near him; he holds my hand and tells me bitter things; sometimes almost with dim amusement...he refuses to be interested in something I ask him; he will say, ‘You don’t need me to tell you what to do—you know how to be a fool all by yourself.’ He says it often with affection...I don’t understand why he doesn’t worry about me” (Brodkey, 1988, p. 200). The adult-self comprehends the origins of his parents’ behavior. His mother “thought my father and I ought to be inspired by our feelings for her...but my father did not want just to be a father, breadwinner, husband, man uplifted by love, and she didn’t want to deal with him as a person” (Brodkey, 1988, p. 201).

However, the explanation veers between the past and the present tense, a child’s hurt and loss, and an adult’s attempt to gain distance from it,

“She minds it that I am young, that she is supposed to take care of me, that I am a boy and will never be stuck as she has been as a nurse for someone. In an idle, terrible way, she hates being a nurse and lets herself be cruel... She said, ‘I suppose you expect me to give you a happy childhood?’ They were all crazy...I know she feels animosity toward me, and she lets herself feel it, and I am sickened and afraid, but what should I do?” (Brodkey, 1988, p. 201)

The narrator makes the link between the sadomasochism in his relationship with his parents and in the play with his peers, its failure to contain his aggression, anxiety, and longing. His mother cries if he tries to ignore her and escape her cruelty: “It is part of my wildness, those tears of hers, the animosity and then those tears” (Brodkey, 1988, p. 201).

In the conclusion of the story, the narrator's justifications of the "Tarzan" game, mixed with insistence that he did not know what he was doing and did not care if he was discovered points to his guilt about using a younger child. He explains that his mother, at once abandoning and cruel, made him play with the younger boy, and we can see the naked game as in part vengeance, in part bid for physical love, through the body of another. The tenses switch from the past to the present and back as the narrator dips in and out of his physical memories, and the climax comes in ungrammatical and tumbling prose, depicting the excitement and terror of the experience: "I felt something like a wire whip through me; it was drawn through me and then from me, eviscerating me; I was thrown into grief, into astonishment, into a strange nothingness, a blankness of feeling unlike anything I'd ever known" (Brodkey, 1988, p. 216).

Like in the other stories, in the concluding lines of the story, the child's burgeoning awareness of his sexual sensations is tied to grief, but also to the pleasure of discovery.

"... I found I was not as sad and as frightened as I usually was going home (I never knew if my father was worse or even dead or how my mother would be acting); and on a suburban street, empty except for me, beneath trees whose leaves lightly clashed in a pale spring breeze, I began to suspect that I had found something very special.

An unfailing hot mitigation" (Brodkey, 1988, p. 217).

The protagonist has discovered a source of self-soothing, which leads to a sense of liberation. Like in "Trespases" (Munro, 2004) an internal shift has been achieved, and the protagonist has moved away from his parents, but at a great cost. Like his parents, he has trampled on a helpless child to get his needs met. His tie to the object has been colored by experiences of helplessness and uncontained aggression, which make mourning and forgiveness impossible. As a result, there is no sense of growth, independence or mastery. The adult protagonist's memories take the shape of either a present-tense, visceral and uncontrolled flash-back or dispassionate analysis

that describes and acknowledges emotions, but does not allow them full expression. He does not have the capacity to shape his memories into a coherent story because he is still relating to his parents as a child. As a result, the narrator is unable to separate, mourn and achieve an independent sense of identity.

Summary

All twelve stories can be seen as works of mourning for the childhood relationship with the parents and for the child selves of the protagonists. The stories fall into three overlapping, but distinct categories which reflect the protagonists' capacity to mourn the parents and separate from them, thereby forging an independent identity. The secondary theme that emerges from the narrative analysis is that of knowledge, understanding, and mastery.

In all twelve of the stories, the moments of clarity, when the coordinates of the protagonists' world and their selves regroup, become the narratives' climactic moments. In the first category, the protagonists acquire knowledge, about themselves and the world, and reach a level of acceptance, which allows them to remove the parents from the cherished role of nurturer and protector. In these stories, the acquisition of knowledge appears to be the means by which independence is acquired, while also serving as the compensation for the inevitable losses that accompany separation and the move forward.

In the second category, the protagonists do not have a ready understanding of themselves, their parents, or the world. They relinquish the sense of control this illusion offers by immersing themselves in fantasies which give full expression to their desires. External "truth" becomes irrelevant as the internal experience is privileged. Knowledge and coherence remain the

organizing principles of these narratives, however, as these narrators' memories are infused with an awareness of the passage of time and of internal transformation.

The stories in the third category show their protagonists struggling to make use of the holding structures of knowledge and coherence, but failing to do so. Instead of helping to assuage their losses, the knowledge these protagonists acquire is experienced as overwhelming and disorganizing. The process of separation and mourning and the connection with the human search for knowledge, understanding, and coherence will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In the literature review, latency-age children's evolving relationship with their parents, peers, and society were discussed in equal measure. How these relationships are remembered, what is omitted and what details are transformed in the process were the guiding questions for the narrative analysis of twelve evocative short stories about the transition from childhood to adulthood. We discovered that while social realities, school life, and peer relationships of latency age children were often the thematic focus of these stories, these areas primarily functioned as arenas for the vital drama of separation and individuation, played out in the fantasy life of the protagonists. In addition, although on first glance, the protagonists of these stories were children, analysis revealed an adult narrator, not merely remembering, but memorializing his or her parents and childhood. Tracing the adult narrative voices and the differences in their reflections on childhood experience led us to the concept of mourning.

In this chapter we will discuss the concept of mourning as it relates to the process of internalization and separation as well as adult bereavement. In both the work of mourning involves accepting the loss of the object in the external world and modifying the internal world such that the relationship with the object becomes part of the self. In latency this modification is the essence of superego formation, which allows the child to begin to function independently. We will explore what might have gone wrong for the protagonists of the stories in the third category, which exemplify an inability to mourn. In particular, we will look at the role of the early attachment relationship as well as aggressive and libidinal strivings in determining the capacity to mourn.

The stories in the first category which are predominantly reality-based, and those in the second category, whose action takes place largely in fantasy, both accomplish the work of mourning, but they do so in different ways. We will explore the similarities and differences between these narratives, and what they might tell us about the role of fantasy in accomplishing the work of mourning. In particular, we will focus on the narratives' elaboration of the fantasies and conflicts of ambivalence that characterize latency. Finally, we will turn to the relationship between the fantasy character of narratives and the kinds of knowledge ascribed to its protagonists and explore the role of knowledge, perspective, and coherence in mourning.

Internalization, Separation, and Mourning

In the results chapter we noted the discrepancy between the traumatic or difficult experiences of the protagonists of the narratives in the first and second categories and their bittersweet and playful tone. Moreover, the narrators of these stories demonstrated a subtle awareness of the gains and losses inherent in growing up and leaving childhood behind. Although thematically and stylistically similar to other stories in the sample, Munro's and Brodkey's stories stood out in comparison by their anxious and unsettling tone, decided un-playfulness, and the devaluing and rejecting stance of the child protagonists toward the parents. The narrators of these stories seemed infinitely disappointed in the parents, unable to take in what was available of their love and care, separate from them, and gain any distance from the experience. We framed their experience as an "inability to mourn" for their childhood relationship with their parents and their childhood selves.

In "Mourning and Melancholia" Freud, (1917) saw the unrelenting self-criticism that characterizes depression as a way of expressing criticism of a lost or disappointing person in the

sufferer's life. When the disappointing object is incorporated into the ego, the tie to that lost object is not given up. Rather, it is preserved by making it internal rather than external. This "melancholic identification" becomes a means of denying loss and refusing to mourn. This stands in sharp contrast with the process of superego internalization, which Freud described in his later work, in which the infantile tie to the object is given up by forming an internal representation that can take over the functions of the object.

In his seminal paper, "Internalization, Separation, Mourning, and the Superego" Loewald (1962a) argued that in true mourning, the loss of a loved person may be denied temporarily, but is eventually accepted and worked through by internalization, which is a complex inner process by which "relationships and interactions between the individual psychic apparatus and its environment are changed into inner relationships and interactions within the psychic apparatus. Thus an inner world is constituted and it in turn entertains relationships and interactions with the outer world" (Loewald, 1962a, p. 489). For Loewald, the concept of internalization includes all the transformations from the external to the internal described in psychoanalytic theory by terms such as "incorporation," "introjection," "identification," as well as "vicissitudes of the instincts," and "turning inward of libidinal and aggressive drives."

For Schafer (1960), Jacobson (1964), and Loewald (1962a, 1973, 1979) the original impetus for mourning and internalization is the need to relinquish infantile object relations. The developmental process of separation-individuation requires this step, which carries with it not only loss, but also the possibility of emancipation and mastery. Schafer (1960) wrote that the internalization process allows us to preserve the tie to the parents by virtue of its transformation. Jacobson (1964) conceived of internalization as the actualization of our need for independence

and separateness which at the same time honors our needs for merger and object love. Loewald wrote: "Whether separation from love object will be experienced as deprivation and loss or as emancipation and mastery will depend, in part, on the achievement of the work of internalization. Speaking in terms of affect, the road leads from depression through mourning to elation" (1962a, p. 490).

The stories in the first two categories vividly express the intensity of longing for merger and the joy of coming into being. Shirley, in "The Loudest Voice" (Paley, 1994), strikes out on her own and succeeds, but also feels sad, lonely, and abandoned by her parents. Ozzie's agony of longing for parental care is palpable in "The Conversion of the Jews," (Roth, 1959) but he also makes himself heard and feels triumphant over his Rabbi and his mother. Allison's (2004) protagonist in "Gospel Song" acknowledges longing for her mother's care, accepts the intensity of her own aggression, and thereby gains mastery over the cruelty and unfairness of the external world. In "Rara Avis" (2004) T.C. Boyle's hero experiences his oedipal desire and rage, and through comprehension and self-acceptance, moves toward independence. Isabel in "Bestiary" (Corátzar, 1985) and Josie in "The Winds" (Welty, 1994) both fantasize about merger with the magical, omnipotent parents of early childhood and recognize their growing separateness as their interior lives expand away from the parents.

In contrast to all of these stories, Lauren, in "Trespases" (Munro, 2004) cannot tolerate her fantasies of merger, and finds no joy in her move into independence. Brodkey's hero in "Play" (1988) acts out the sadomasochism in his relationship with his parents in play with peers, which fails to satisfy and contain his feelings. Ultimately, he expresses his physical longing and aggression toward his parents through acting on the body of a younger child. He gains

independence at the cost of trampling another's needs and subjectivity. In both stories, the protagonists are exquisitely tuned to their parents and feel utterly dependent on them. They end up feeling alone and unprotected, for they have no internal compass by which to steer, and turning to their parents for love, care, or protection carries a very high price. Unlike the protagonists of the other stories, they have not been able to take over the parents' protective, guiding and nurturing functions (Schafer, 1960, Jacobson, 1964, Loewald, 1979). Schafer (1960) and Jacobson (1964) point out that these features of a faithful and benevolent superego buffer us from psychic and even physical injuries. This may be why devastating events, present in many of the stories in the first and second category, do not overwhelm and destroy their protagonists.

What failed for the protagonists of "Trespasses" (Munro, 2004) and "Play" (Brodkey, 1988)? What might account for their inability to mourn, to separate from the object and take over its caregiving and guiding functions? Schafer (1960) writes that parental superego pathology will be passed down to the next generation in the parents' over-indulgent or overly strict parenting. Loewald (1962a) also points out the importance of the parents' ability to remain present while also promoting the partial detachment of libidinal-aggressive drives from themselves as external objects. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that internalizations which constitute the superego do not represent external, realistic figures (Jacobson, 1964; Loewald 1962b; Schafer, 1960). In fact, Jacobson (1964) writes "parental demands and prohibitions probably can become internalized only by joining forces with the child's own narcissistic, ambitious strivings, to which, however, they give an entirely new direction (p. 96)."

The internalized images of the parents are determined by the quality and strength of libidinal and aggressive drives of the Oedipus complex, so that, as Loewald puts it, "the introjects

represent the drives as much as the drives objects” (Loewald, 1962b, p. 266). In other words, it is not the actual interactions with the parents that come to constitute the child’s internal models of relationships, but how the child took in the parents in the context of his own feelings of love, hate, excitement, desire, and longing. From the children’s viewpoint in “Play” and “Trespasses” both sets of parents refuse to carry out their protective and nurturing functions. In “Trespasses” and, particularly, in “Play,” the parents’ fall far short of the “good enough” standard, but they do love their children and attempt to care for them. Looking back on their childhoods, the narrators in these stories cannot take in their parents’ love and concern. They are only disgusted and repulsed by them.

Aggression, disappointment, and disgust with the parents are a feature of all of the narratives. The narrator in “Gwen” (Kincaid, 2004) turns away from her mother and denigrates her beauty; Shirley makes fun of her mother for her fears and feels ashamed of both of her parents’ lack of confidence outside their home. Babel’s and Roth’s narrators are also disappointed in their parents’ foolishness, cowardice and weakness. The differences between these narratives lies in how these disappointments are described by the adult voices of the now-grown children. Brodkey’s narrator does not construct a coherent narrative. Instead, he veers between the past and the present tense, between visceral and uncontrolled flashback and dispassionate analysis. Munro’s third-person narrator maintains a steady distance from the action, and is the only narrator that does not acknowledge the passage of time or express nostalgia for the childhood past. All of the other stories, whether written in the first or third person, convey a sense of looking back fondly on their past.

The capacity to truly look back, to organize memories and consign them to the past develops in adolescence. This developmental period, into which the protagonists of many of the stories are transitioning, is often described as a time of grief and mourning. With the possibility of actualizing the incest taboo and growing demands for autonomous functioning, the adolescent must finally give up his parents as love objects and renounce his childhood dependence on them (A. Freud, 1958; Jacobson, 1961, 1964; Lampl-de Groot, 1960; Wolfstein, 1966).

Wolfstein (1966) argues that during this time-period, for the first time, the child is not only aware of the pain of separation, but begins to actively remember and consign memories of childhood to the past. Awareness of the passage of time and its transience develop, and nostalgia marks adolescents' reflections and memories. Like Ellison's hero, Welty's (1994) heroines in "A Memory" and "The Winds" become suddenly aware of the fleeting nature of time and the inexorability of change. In these stories, the children's awareness of the passage of time and its irreversibility, as well as the nostalgic lens on experience, clearly do not belong to the latency period, but are features of the narrator's passage through adolescence. In addition to this layering of adolescent experience, we must be aware of the possibility that the adult narrators of these stories suffered the actual loss of their parents in adulthood. For example, in "The Loudest Voice" (Paley, 1994) the narrator makes it clear that her mother is no longer living. Before coming back to the question of what accounts for failure to mourn in our narratives, we will briefly turn to the literature on adults' reaction to loss, which provides another lens on the experience of mourning.

Baker (2001), in his review of theoretical and research literature on normative processes of mourning, describes it as a transformative process that alters both, the image of the self and of

the internal object. For adults, successful mourning results in the creation of an internal object relationship that allows the bereaved to maintain a tie with the love object and to invest in new relationships. Baker (2001) defines the internal object relationship as the image of the object, of the self as it relates to the object, and the affective valence of the relationship. In ego psychological terms, these images are self-representations and object-representations. As the bereaved acknowledges the loss of the other in reality, her most cherished qualities and functions are taken into the self. These are internalized as superego or ego-ideal identifications, and as a result, the mourner's self-image and capacity for independent functioning are enhanced.¹³

Thus, in mourning, like in superego development, the psychic relationship with the living person is transformed into an ongoing internal relationship that becomes an inner resource for the bereaved individual. Based on empirical research, Baker (2001) identifies three related functions of this internal relationship: emotional nurturance and reassurance, problem-solving, and identity maintenance. The bereaved turns to the image of the deceased in fantasy in times of stress, "talks out" issues of the day with the image of the loved other, and clarifies his own needs, wishes, and feelings in fantasied dialogue with the other.

Baker also notes that research, particularly with widowed individuals carried out by Rubin (1984), shows that how a loved one is remembered is directly tied to the mourner's capacity to function well despite the loss of the sustaining presence of the other. Completed mourning means that the representations of the deceased are neither exclusively idealized nor devalued. Memories of the deceased are easily accessed, but not experienced as intrusions or

¹³ Subsequent work, most notably by Aragno (2003) and Kernberg (2010) supports this view.

objects of preoccupation. Eventually, recollections of the deceased evoke a sense of well-being, and finally, memories are not isolated or rigid, and are subject to modifications over time.

It is striking that Brodkey's character in "Play" (1988) fails all of these criteria. In "Trespasses" Munro (2004) subtly shows that the parents, although far from perfect, are devalued based on the subjective feeling of disgust evoked in the protagonist, who appears fairly rigid in how she views them. These stories stand in sharp contrast with the other narratives which show a multi-faceted picture of the narrator's internal objects. Their narrators are able not only to modify, but to play, with their memories, and ultimately, to feel warmth and compassion toward their parents and their child-selves.

Melanie Klein (1940) saw object loss as leading to the reactivation of the depressive position of infancy, in which good internal objects are felt to have been lost, and bad ones come to dominate the inner world. During object loss in adulthood, destructive fantasies are unleashed, and the mourner feels persecuted and punished. He also feels guilty for hating his internal object for abandoning him. Ideally, the inner world of love and safety is gradually restored as the mourner finds the lost good object and repairs the internal relationship with it. In the process, the mourner does not only recover what has been attained in childhood, but also experiences a deepening of inner relationships by virtue of increased trust and love for these objects because they were able to survive this onslaught and help him through it.

In "Gwen" (Kincaid, 1992) the mother survives the narrator's attacks, and in the conclusion of the story we see her coming to her "arms outstretched, concern written on her face." Looking back, the narrator remembers her own aggression and hatred, but at the same time she describes her mother's beauty and care. Ozzie's mother is described by the third-person

narrator as deeply flawed, but ultimately she survives the boy's disappointment and hate: she is "a round, tired, gray-haired penguin of a woman," and yet, when she lights candles, she looks like "a woman who knew momentarily that God could do anything" (Roth, 1959, p. 13).

Otto Kernberg (2010) builds on Klein's conceptualization, writing that the more ambivalent the relationship with the lost object, the more guilt will be experienced over real and fantasized aggression toward it. While unconscious guilt is related to unconscious aggression aimed at the loved object, and is expressed in self-depreciation and devaluation, conscious guilt is associated with conscious regret for aggressive behavior. Remorse becomes the impetus for reparation—desire to undo aggression in order to atone for real or imagined damage done to the object.

Conflicts of ambivalence are inevitable in mourning the loss of the parents as nurturing, protective and guiding objects and as "real" people. They originate in the dualities of simultaneous love and hate, wish for merger and emancipation. Before atonement and reparation for conscious aggression can be rendered, the child has to deal with the unconscious aggression that is part and parcel of the oedipal bond. Working through the unconscious determinants of the Oedipus complex in fantasy allows oedipal passions to be transformed into affectionate bonds. Only then can the adult mourn the progressive separation from the parents and eventually, their death.

The Role of Fantasy in Mourning

In "The Waning of the Oedipus Complex" (1979) Loewald argues that unconsciously, we are all guilty of parricide and incest, which stand for sexuality and aggression directed at the oedipal objects in their ultimate form. The fantasies that organize the narratives in the second

category exemplify his point. Whether it is Isabel's attack on the Kid, Welty's heroine's sensual response to her father's touch, or the caresses Ellison's hero receives from Aunt Mackie, all of the protagonists are guilty of incest and parricide. The protagonists of the stories in the first category are equally guilty, but their parricidal and incestuous fantasies take a more disguised form. In "Gwen" (Allison, 2004) and "A Memory" (Paley, 1994) the heroines express their parricidal and incestuous wishes in fantasies that are labeled as such, and separated from the action of the stories. In "Rara Avis" (Boyle, 1998) and "The Story of My Dovecote" (Babel, 2002) the protagonist's incestuous and murderous wishes are enacted in the deaths of the deeply desired girl/birds. In "The Loudest Voice" (Paley, 1994) and "Conversion of the Jews" (Roth, 1959), not only these sins, but also guilt and atonement for them are conveyed through the story of Jesus that preoccupies the child selves of the narrators.

Loewald (1979) writes that we consider these (fantasy) acts criminal and must bear the guilt for them. We master this guilt by acknowledging and achieving reconciliation of conflicting strivings—for emancipation and autonomy, and identification and union. He uses the example of a patient who could not move forward professionally until he acknowledged his desire to eclipse his dead father, while also maintaining closeness with him. Loewald (1979) argues that it is the acceptance of the superego prohibitions that allow us to move past the self-condemnation – and also the avoidance of guilt by being able to predict what situations will give rise to it. For Loewald (1979), this can only happen if the aggression towards the original objects is not too great.

In his evocative papers about latency, Winnicott (1962 a, b) also argues that emotional growth consists of moving from dependence to independence while retaining the capacity to shift

from one to the other. In the course of development, Winnicott (1962 a, b) writes, the child comes out of a series of protective physical and emotional “enclosures” – leaving the home, the garden, entering school, exchanging a child’s subjective world for one of shared reality. The child gains independence, not just by getting away from home, but by destroying it in fantasy. As the child separates and destroys one “enclosure,” he finds safety in the next, so upon entering school, he finds a new “home,” and upon leaving school, he begins work and finds a home in other institutions, more appropriate to his developmental needs.

As Tuber (2008) explains, for Winnicott, the capacity to “destroy” is a supreme achievement that is created in the mother-infant relationship. If the mother stays consistent in the midst of the baby’s spontaneous gestures, over time, the baby will come to know her as outside of the baby’s self. “Being outside the baby means that for that moment, the mother has been ‘destroyed’ as an extension of the baby. Multiply these mini-distinctions by the thousands and ‘suddenly’ it’s that cataclysmic moment when, as Winnicott puts it,

‘Hullo object! I destroyed you. I love you. You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you. While I am loving you, I am all the time destroying you in (unconscious) fantasy (p. 90)’ It’s the most sublime kind of joy; the discovery that the ‘thing’ survived because it was so real” (Tuber, 2008, p. 86-87; quoting Winnicott, 1971).

In destroying the object we find a path to independence, but the object needs to be available, and destruction has to feel safe. For Winnicott, the faith that the object will always be there is the essence of the process of internalization, and gradually relinquishing this sense of magical omnipotence is the pathway to “humanization.” Tuber (2008) writes that if the mother is able to tolerate the baby’s spontaneous gestures, the child can fuse his aggression with his libidinal wishes to connect with the mother. Thus, the child can “integrate the wish to destroy with the wish to connect. This allows passion, in the sexual, sublimated, and aggressive senses,

to be ‘bathed in the milk of human kindness,’ so to speak, bringing creativity and aliveness to the forefront of human experience” (Tuber, 2008, p. 182). Thus, it is not so much the quantity of aggressive or incestuous strivings that are at issue here, but whether they are neutralized or sublimated, and linked up with the “affectionate current” of the parental relationship. Oedipal aggression and sexuality can be mastered in fantasy only if a “good enough” early attachment relationship allowed for the baby’s destruction of the maternal object.

For Winnicott, if destruction is possible, the child will consciously achieve independence from the parents and will always be able to come back to dependence in unconscious fantasy (Winnicott, 1962b). In both “Play” (Brodkey, 1988) and “Trespasses” (Munro, 2004), there is a marked absence of safety in the protagonists’ relationship with their parents. In their internal world, there is no mother/home for them to separate from and destroy, and as a result, there is a marked failure of fantasy and play to serve their containing functions. In contrast, even in the absence of one or both parents, all of the children in the stories in the first and second categories have a psychic home which they can destroy and to which they can return. The child’s sense that the parents have survived his aggression underlies these narratives and is a vital component in developing the capacity to separate and to mourn. The actual work of mourning is accomplished through the expression of the conflicting desires for independence and dependence, autonomy and merger through the medium of fantasy.

Winnicott (1962a) adds that coming out of the safe enclosures of home, garden, etc. is both, frightening and exciting because awareness of dependence dawns when independence begins. This is most clearly observable in the three stories in the second category. Isabel, Josie, and Ellison’s hero are literally coming out of the familiar, protective enclosures during their

summer adventures. Their excitement propels them forward, while their fear sends them in search of safety with new objects. This search for safety is tinged with early, pre-oedipal desire for merger. Isabel imagines dying of ecstasy while looking at Rema, but also competes with her and tries to establish her “big-girl” status. Ellison’s hero loses himself in Aunt Mackie, but also removes himself from her protection and triumphantly proclaims his manhood. The children in these stories move seamlessly between merger and separateness, dependence and independence.

For Winnicott (1962 a, b) and Loewald (1979) fantasy is the key to achieving this freedom of movement between dependence and independence. In “Psychoanalysis as an Art and the Fantasy Character of the Psychoanalytic Situation” (1975) Loewald makes the point that fantasy is usually falsely opposed to reality: “But fantasy is unreal only insofar as its communication with the present actuality is inhibited or severed. To that extent, however, present actuality is unreal too. Perhaps a better word than ‘unreal’ is ‘meaningless’” (Loewald, 1975, p. 289). When infantile fantasies and memories are “linked up” with the patient’s present, he argues, they regain meaning and can thereby help the patient to continue the growth process. At the same time, the patient’s present actuality gains or regains meaning by being linked up with infantile fantasy. The “disruption of communication” between infantile fantasy and the present actuality “is the most important aspect of the problem of defense, of repression, isolation, etc.” (Loewald, 1975, pp. 289-290).

In all of the stories in the first and second category fantasies animate the narrative and help move the child’s development forward. In the stories in the second category, the fantasies take center stage to the point that distinction between fantasy and reality becomes meaningless. Desire breathes through these narratives, and while this does not protect the protagonists from

intra-psychic conflict, it allows them much more full access to their sensations, perceptions, and thoughts. The protagonists in both categories have access to their sexuality and aggression and the capacity to sublimate them and achieve independence. In Loewald's (1979) terms, they have admitted their crimes and atoned for them by allowing conflicting and forbidden strivings freedom of expression.

Compared to the stories in the first category, the stories in the second category convey more of the turbulence, loss, and bewilderment that characterize children's experience of the transformations of latency. Greater awareness of uncertainty and confusion seems to be the price for having more access to desires and emotions. What keeps these fantasies, particularly in the stories from the second category, from being disorganizing to the protagonists and to the readers? It appears that the narrators' sense of perspective and continuity serves a holding and containment function in these narratives, while the immense pleasure of comprehension counterbalances some of the pain and loss inherent in transformation.

The Role of Knowledge in Mourning

In the stories in the first two categories, which accomplish the work of mourning, the moments of transition from childhood to adulthood are marked by epiphanies: about the parents, the self, and the world. In these stories, it appears that the knowledge gained offers the possibility of understanding and acceptance of both, the parents and the self.

The review of experimental literature sensitized us to the magnitude and pace of the cognitive transformations in middle childhood. During this developmental phase, children's implicit, procedural knowledge runs ahead of explicit, reflective understanding, and their newly acquired cognitive capacities are easily disrupted by emotional disequilibrium. Because of their

rapidly growing cognitive capacities children make enormous leaps in their understanding of themselves, the world, and their place in it, and the assimilation and accommodation of this emotionally loaded information become some of the most important tasks of middle childhood.

The narratives in the first two categories are built around the transformative moments when implicit and procedural knowledge becomes explicit and subject to reflection. Not only is there enormous pleasure in these moments, but they also function as catalysts for the process of separation and self-acceptance. As such, these moments show how independence is achieved through structure-building: we see that the parental authority has been internalized and the child's super-ego becomes capable of direction-giving and self-evaluation.

Thus, when faced with death, Babel's (2002) hero experiences grief and loss, but also elation when he finally understands the world he inhabits. Boyle's (2004) protagonist's epiphany about the injured bird and what it represents helps him face his own sexuality and aggression. The resulting action, in turn, opens the way for separation and independence. In Welty's stories, the end of childhood is defined by the child's comprehension of the concept of finality – of individual moments, of summers, and relationships. Similarly, Ellison's (1995) hero's epiphany is about the circle of life. Seeing Aunt Mackie's body in a new way allows him to alter his vision of himself and transcend socially-imposed markers of identity which invalidate individuality.

Even though there is an observing, adult-self voice in most of the narratives in the first and second categories, the epiphanies about the nature of life are attributed to the child-selves of the protagonists. It is as though the illusion of past knowledge and mastery helps the narrators in these stories to maintain a continuous sense of self. While the narrators in the first category create continuous, coherent narratives that ascribe an adult consciousness to their child-selves,

the narrators in the second category create fantasy worlds that lack precise coordinates, but ascribe a conscious awareness of self-transformation to the child-selves. In the stories that illustrate failure to mourn, either the protagonist's attempts to create a continuous and coherent narrative fail or, despite the ability to create a coherent narrative, knowledge and understanding do not result in containment and mastery.

The protagonists in the first category have internalized their parental imagoes and have come to a "good-enough" or tolerable understanding of their childhoods. They have created autobiographical narratives that are coherent, logical, and reasoned. Because the guiding fantasies for their self-narratives remain latent in these stories, these protagonists have less access to memories of primary, chaotic and disorganizing desires and emotions. The protagonists in the second category have more access to such memories in the form of fantasy. As a result, they move more freely between dependence and independence, but they also feel more overwhelmed, at times, by the intrusion of more primitive material and dysphoric affects.

The memories of the protagonists in the first category are constructed as though their child-selves had already been in possession of all the knowledge their adult-selves would gradually accumulate. In contrast, the protagonists in the second category can maintain self-continuity without adopting an all-knowing stance. Their auto-biographical narratives include a greater level of uncertainty, variability, confusion and disorganization. For them, the illusion that they understood themselves and the world is not necessary to maintain self-continuity. Instead, their narratives are constructed as though their child-selves recognized that they were changing as it was happening. Developmental research shows that this is not an age-appropriate attribution. However, we do know that because of cognitive and structural changes, events from middle

childhood are remembered in a way that earlier childhood experiences are not. These memories often become self-defining, and although altered by subsequent developmental transformations, many aspects of self-identity are established in latency.

The moments of disequilibrium when a new developmental organization is emerging are inherently disorganizing because old structures do not hold. These stories show that we have some memory of what this disequilibrium felt like, but in reconstructing our memories, and therefore our “selves,” we can tolerate the idea of destruction inherent in transformation only if something remains stable and unchanged. To attribute awareness of transformation as it is happening to the child self is an affirmation that despite all the changes, the self remains the same. Thus, it appears that the basic belief that allows us to have a “self”—that we are continuous beings, is the essential conscious knowledge ascribed to the child-self by the protagonists in the stories in the second category.

The memories of the protagonists in the third category are also constructed around moments of discovery. However, just like fantasy and play, knowledge and understanding fail to fulfill their holding and containment functions in these stories. From the opening lines of “Play” (1988) Brodkey’s narrator struggles to locate himself in his memories. His attempts to move between past and present, child- and adult-selves are disjointed and jarring. They offer a sharp contrast to the seamless narratives in “A Memory” (Welty, 1994) and “Gwen” (Kincaid, 1992) in which the continuous linking of past and present emotional experiences build a multi-layered, unified sense of self.

Brodkey’s (1988) narrator attempts to maintain the illusion that his child-self knew how things really were and why, but it falls apart when his memories turn to his relationship with his

parents. Without warning, the all-knowing adult voice gives place to the despairing, lost child-voice, and the narrator's anxiety and rage break through, uncontained. The affective tone is also a signal of problematic internalization in "Trespasses" (Munro, 2004), which almost passes for a story that belongs in the first category. Although it is not written in the first person, the narrative voice is very similar to the adult observer voices of the stories in the first category. Similarly to these stories, the narrator is offering a coherent story with a sense of perspective and a sophisticated understanding of Lauren's and her parents' dynamics. The difference lies in Lauren's inability to accept her parents' care, and in her final break with her parents. The problem is that, just like in "Play" (Brodkey, 1988), in Lauren's internal world, there is no safe home for her to destroy and abandon. Unable to mourn her parents, she gives up on them.

The other notable difference between "Trespasses" (Munro, 2004) and the stories in the first category is the function of knowledge in the narrative. Discoveries and insights, so precious and useful to the protagonists in the first category, are an unwelcome burden to Lauren, and result in feelings of sadness and deprivation. In the absence of striving for independence, acceptance and reconciliation, Lauren's store of knowledge and even understanding of her parents' dynamics are useless to her. This story shows that even in the presence of a compelling narrative that is coherent, measured, and reflective, the absence of thirst for knowledge and understanding can be an important sign of derailed development.

Clinical Implications

In the narratives in the first and second category, the human desire to know, comprehend and master serves as the containment and holding structure for the work of mourning, accomplished through the expression of conflicting desires in fantasy. In the narratives in the

third category, either coherence is not achieved at all or knowledge fails to serve its containment function. In these stories, only one side of the independence-dependence conflict is expressed, as the protagonists feel endlessly hungry for early maternal care. We conceptualize this as a result of a failure to internalize the parental objects, to separate and to mourn.

What are the consequences of this failure of internalization? Loewald (1962a), Jacobson, (1964), and others describe patients who are perpetually seeking external substitutes for the parents, cannot form new lasting relationships, or are incapable of sublimations. Repair of early attachment failures in treatment is a vast topic that cannot be addressed here fully. Instead the foregoing discussion will highlight a few elements of treatment which have to do specifically with the role of knowledge and fantasy in accomplishing the work of mourning.

Anton Kris (1985, 1987), in describing divergent conflicts, such as conflicts of ambivalence inherent in separation-individuation, writes about the importance of remembering that loss is inherent in choosing one or the other, and that impasses in treatment might have to do with failure to explore one side of the conflict or patients' refusal to make a choice. For Kris (1985) the process of resolving divergent conflict is akin to the process of mourning, and he notes that the bereaved often resists mourning because he thinks that mourning a loss means losing the totality of the relationship with the loved other. It takes doing the work of mourning to recognize "that mourning does not mean giving up the love for the lost object, "but the illusion of its permanence" (Kris, 1985, p. 557). That work of mourning consists of repeated alternation between expressing longing for the lost object and the acknowledgment of loss. Kris is pointing out that while we long for the object, we also long to acknowledge its loss. As the narratives beautifully illustrate, if all goes well, we hate the object as much as we love it, and we celebrate

liberation from it at the same time as we wish for its continued presence, and we must offer room for both in treatment.

Expression of desire, on both sides of divergent conflicts of ambivalence, is essential to separation and mourning. When working with our patients' memories, we need to remember Loewald's (1975) point that language does not report on action—it is itself action. Our patients create narratives whose dramatic qualities we need to interrogate. Identifying the key actors in the patient's habitual narratives and the roles they play (Abrams, 2010) can help determine the guiding oedipal fantasies in the patient's drama. How patients approach desire—whether it feels dangerous and insatiable or is allowed into consciousness, is a useful marker of their capacity to mourn and separate.

Loewald (1979) argues that the experience of self-identity, of oneself as agent, culminates in the capacity to be aware of our needs, desires and impulses, and own up to them instead of defending against them. Rizzuto (2003) makes a similar point that the ultimate goal of analysis is to help the patient recognize the self as agent, and to become aware of the self's desires and impulses without the need to immediately act to fulfill them or defend against them. For Loewald (1979), this level of self-awareness is achieved only through completing the work of mourning.

How, then, do we work with patients to help them experience themselves as agents, to become aware of their needs, desires and impulses without the need to immediately act on them or defend against them? Rizzuto (2003) offers that the most effective tool she has found to achieve this goal is making the patient curious about what he says and how he says it. Mayes (1991) also writes, "once the individual is freely curious, the analysis can begin and a part of our

early work is to release the curiosity and give it free reign to search the representative domains of fantasy” (24). By encouraging curiosity, we are tapping into the human exploratory drive. This works if development is on track because on some level, acquisition of new knowledge and understanding is experienced as a mechanism of safety. The search for knowledge stabilizes us and enables us to make discoveries that move us forward in development and in self-discovery (Mayes, 1991).

If patients can tap into their fantasy life and consciously “link up” their memories with the oedipal fantasies that underlie them, they can find enormous pleasure and relief in finally expressing unconscious desire. Moreover, in giving voice to previously un-verbalized experiences and finding a place for them in a more complex, variable and flexible narrative patients can re-establish a sense of knowing and understanding. This progressive hierarchical reorganization (Abrams, 1998, 2003; Knight, 2011) of self-narrative mirrors the course of normative cognitive-emotional development, and becomes the path to advancing it in treatment.

Shabad (1993), in discussing the work of mourning in treatment, writes “mourning need not, indeed, cannot, entail that one be rid of one’s irrational wishes, but rather that one ultimately relinquish the necessity and burden of their fulfillment” (Shabad, 1993, p. 73). This can happen through allowing the wishes inclusion in the psychic life of the individual, which includes gaining conscious knowledge of the wishes themselves. Shabad (1993) gives an example of a Jewish man in his early forties who had achieved an “oedipal victory” over his father, becoming the center of his mother’s life. In his adult life he felt alienated from his father and offered a “reparative gift” to him by “joining him” in professional failure. Ten years after the father’s death, the man came to his session in a depressed mood, and discussed feeling unappreciated by

his Passover guests. This led to a discussion of the patient's role as "rabbi" at his family Seders since his father had abdicated that responsibility to him. Shabad asked the patient if he missed his father at the Seder, and specifically, if he wished to be commended on his performance as a "rabbi."

Imagining this scene enabled the patient to feel satisfied and "full" in a way that he had never felt with his father. Shabad (1993) suggests that creating an imaginary world in which the patient's wishes are fulfilled is mutative because it allows for "conscious reintegration of long-buried wishes for 'what could have been'" (Shabad, 1993, p. 74). The wish for an ideal childhood, for the gifts that were never offered, must be elaborated in their positive form instead of being merely statements of loss. Shabad (1993) argues that this positive vision can then be internalized, and can offer "a new beginning." Otherwise, our patients are compelled to keep repeating traumatic patterns in the search of fulfillment of their unconscious fantasies. Of course, in this process, the patient also has the experience of being known and recognized in full by the therapist, who becomes another important object to be internalized and mourned in the course of the therapy.

Summary

This study explored how memories are constructed in fictional narratives about the transition from childhood to adulthood. The assumption of the study was that a narrative analysis of twelve short stories would shed light on which experiences of middle childhood are remembered, how they are transformed, and what might account for that transformation.

The narrative analysis showed that the memories of the transformation of the relationship with the parents and the emerging independent self are the predominant themes in the twelve

stories. It was hypothesized that how the parents and the self are remembered is a function of the narrator's capacity to accomplish the work of internalization and mourning. While the child's faith that the parents can survive his attacks and destruction is a basic pre-condition for the capacity to mourn, the work of mourning is accomplished through fantasy, and particularly, through the expression and elaboration of conflicting desires. The exploratory drive and the illusion of coherence and knowledge serve as containment and holding structures for the work of mourning, which can otherwise be destabilizing and overwhelming.

Although these hypotheses accord with psychoanalytic theory, we must view them with caution, for they were generated based on a small sample of fictional narratives that we assumed represent memorial processes. The thematic and narrative qualities of the stories could have been particular to the selected writers, and therefore do not represent universal phenomena. More significantly, constructed written material is vastly different from spontaneous, spoken language which is usually the provenance of psychotherapy or analysis, and might not be a valid source of clinical insight. In our case in particular, we must note that expression of fantasy is the natural realm of the fiction writer, and written narrative, by definition, requires some form of coherence. While these factors might be responsible for over-statement of the importance of fantasy and coherence in our findings, they did not predetermine their particulars, for example, the specific fantasies or the differences in the setting of stories in the worlds of fantasy versus reality. Similarly, the types of knowledge acquired by the protagonists and methods by which narrative coherence was achieved differed across narrative categories and were not predicted at the outset of the study.

The constructed and worked-over nature of these narratives certainly makes it different from verbal expression, but it is worth noting that these writers selected their themes freely, and it is likely that their choices reflect developmental experiences and preoccupations that still played in their minds, and on some level, were significant to the construction of their self-identities. They transformed their personal experiences into narrative art by creating characters that readers experienced as real, breathing people much like themselves.

The next step in investigating how memory is constructed and the role of fantasy and knowledge in internalization and mourning might be to analyze session material. It would be fascinating to examine how analytic patients describe their childhood, and in particular, their siblings, peers, and parents; how they construct childhood memories and what they purport to know and understand as children; what fantasies are evident in their recollections, and whether these fantasies in some way guide their present interactions with significant others; finally, we would want to trace elaboration of desire and fantasy through the course of analysis, and see what role it might play in the work of mourning and therapeutic change.

APPENDICES**Appendix A: List of Short Stories**

Dorothy Allison's "Gospel Song"

Isaac Babel's "The Story of My Dovecote"

T. C. Boyle's "Rara Avis"

Harold Brodkey's "Play"

Julio Cortázar's "Bestiary"

Ralph Ellison "A coupla Scalped Indians"

Jamaica Kincaid's "Gwen"

Alice Munro's "Trespases"

Grace Paley's "The Loudest Voice"

Phillip Roth's "The Conversion of the Jews"

Eudora Welty's "A Memory" and "The Winds"

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