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Self-Monitoring and the "New Look" at the Imaginary Audience and Personal Fable: An Ego-Developmental Analysis

Daniel K. Lapsley
University of Notre Dame

Sara Jackson
University of Southern Mississippi

Kenneth Rice
Gregory E. Shadid
University of Notre Dame

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relation between self-monitoring and the imaginary audience and personal fable constructs, and their relation to levels of ego development in early and late adolescence. Subjects included 29 fifth-graders, 26 seventh-graders, 26 ninth-graders, 23 eleventh-graders, and 22 college undergraduates. Standard assessments of self-monitoring, imaginary audience, and personal fable were used. Ego development was assessed by means of the Sentence Completion Test. The results can be summarized as follows: (a) self-monitoring displays significant (decreasing) trend from early to late adolescence, as do the imaginary audience and personal fable constructs; (b) these constructs show a statistically equivalent relationship with age; (c) high self-monitoring predominates in early adolescence, low self-monitoring predominates in late adolescence; (d) high self-monitors have significantly higher imaginary audience and personal fable scores that do low self-monitors; (e) high scores on self-monitoring, imaginary audience, and personal fable are associated with lower levels of ego development. Results are discussed in terms of the "new look" at the imaginary audience and personal fable proposed by Lapsley and Rice (1987), and the possibility of phrasing an integrative theory of adolescent ego development. Directions for future research are noted.

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The imaginary audience and personal fable constructs have proven to be quite useful for conceptualizing adolescent cognition. In the original formulation Elkind (1967) argued that these complementary constructs were the outcome of a differentiation failure, or egocentrism, that is associated with the onset of formal operations. The imaginary audience describes the adolescents' belief that he or she is the object of the attention and evaluation of others. The adolescent imagines or anticipates the reactions of others to the self in real or imagined situations. The personal fable is the belief in one's uniqueness, invulnerability, and omnipotence. These twin components of "adolescent egocentrism" have considerable heuristic power for explaining typically observed adolescent behaviors. For example, self-consciousness, show-off behavior, and the preoccupation with shame, shyness, and embarrassment all seem to reflect the tendency to construct imaginary audiences. The adolescent's heightened sense of personal agency, idealism, and indestructability implicate the personal fable (Elkind, 1967, 1985).

Research on adolescent egocentrism has typically been of two types. Much of the early work was devoted to demonstrating the developmental features of the imaginary audience and personal fable constructs (e.g., Elkind & Bowen, 1979; Enright, Lapsley, & Shukla, 1979; Enright, Shukla, & Lapsley, 1980). The evidence from these studies is rather clear that these ideations tend to predominate in early adolescence, with attenuation in middle and late adolescence. More recent research (e.g., Gray & Hudson, 1984; Riley, Adams, & Nielsen, 1984; Goossens, 1984) has focused on the crucial assumption of the adolescent egocentrism theory, namely, that the emergence of the imaginary audience and personal fable is associated with the onset of formal operations. The evidence on this issue is equivocal at best. In a recent study, for example, Lapsley, Milstead, Quintana, Flannery, and Buss (1986) found, in two studies, that little support exists for this aspect of the theory.

While not disputing the heuristic power of the imaginary audience and personal fable constructs, Lapsley and Murphy (1985; Lapsley, 1985; Lapsley & Rice, 1987) have recently argued that the proper theoretical context for understanding these constructs is not that of the egocentrisms of logical development. They argue that adolescent constructions of imaginary audiences and personal fables are problems of interpersonal understanding, of *social* cognitive development, and that stage sequences that describe the ontogenesis of interpersonal understanding (e.g., Selman, 1980) would constitute a more theoretically consistent context for understanding the developmental emergence and decline of these ideations.

To be useful this "new look" at the adolescent egocentrism theory should have generative power to anticipate novel facts about adolescent development (Elkind, 1985; Lapsley & Rice, 1987). Lapsley (1985) has suggested, to this end, that the model could be extended to bring heretofore unrelated constructs, like self-monitoring, under its theoretical umbrella. In addition, he aruges that imaginary audience and personal fable ideation may be at the heart of ego development in adolescence (Lapsley, 1985; Lapsley & Rice, 1987). The purpose of this paper is to report on an initial effort to examine these claims.

Self-monitoring is an individual differences orientation to how one presents and guides behavior in social contexts (Snyder, 1979; Snyder & Cantor, 1980; Snyder & Gangestad, 1982). According to Snyder (1987, p. 31), "Self-monitoring meaningfully influences people's images of themselves and the world around them, their behavior in social situations, and the dynamics of their relationship with other people." High self-monitors carefully manage the images of the self that they present in social situations. In a chameleonic fashion they are hyper-sensitive to interpersonal cues so as to always be ready to respond in situationally-appropriate ways. The high self-monitor is a dramatist who is concerned with outer appearances and with maintaining fronts. Images of the self are strategically fashioned according to the requirements of a particular audience. Snyder (1987, p. 49) suggests that, "...when confronted with the task of choosing actions in social situations, high self-monitors construct a mental image of the ideal person (either a specific example—perhaps a friend or acquaintance—or a generalized image) for the situation at hand. This image, and information it provides, may provide a 'script' or a 'plan' to follow." Snyder (1987) further suggests that the high self-monitor plays an *as if* role, *becoming* the imagined person.

Low self-monitors, on the other hand, are (a) less responsive to the contingencies of the situation, (b) more likely to project their own core identities and personal dispositions in social situations, and (c) more likely to guide their behavior on the basis of *inner* sources of information. The self-monitoring construct, although it describes a dimension of individual differences, is becoming increasingly of interest to developmentalists (Harter, 1987; Berzonsky, 1987; Graziano, Leone, Musser, & Lautenschlager, 1987; Edwards & Eder, 1987; Leone, 1987; Hauck & Loughhead, 1985). Indeed, Lapsley and Rice (1987) argue that the same developmental process that yields imaginary audience and personal fable ideations also yields self-monitoring biases. In other words, adolescents who construct imaginary audiences and personal fables are high self-monitors.

In their model the tendency to engage in object relational ideation, or to entertain private interpersonal fantasies or "visions of the self" (Josselson, 1980, p. 199), is characteristic of early adolescent ego development. Adolescents engage these ideations to maintain a hold on object relations during the course of psychological separation from parents. This tendency is facilitated by the ability to assume third-party social perspectives, an ability that is described by Level 3 in Selman's (1980) stage sequence of interpersonal understanding, also emerging in early adolescence (Lapsley & Murphy, 1985). At this role-taking level an adolescent can not only engage in object relational fantasies (i.e., construct imaginary audiences) but can also engage in self-reflective monitoring of the self (via the "self-observing ego" properties of Level 3). "The self-reflective monitoring of the self in ongoing interactions means that the adolescent plays to the audience of the ego (the 'observing ego'), and...also to the audience of the peer group or the *"generalized other"* (Lapsley, 1985, p. 234). Hence, the construction of imaginary audiences and tendency to self-monitor have a common basis in the self-observing ego phenome-

non of early adolescent ego development. Both constructs describe either fantasied or *as if* self-presentations, both of which describe *trial actions* that allow the adolescent to assimilate, in manageable doses, the affective experience of interpersonal interaction (Lapsley & Rice, 1987).

This model suggests, then, that self-monitoring is at least partly a developmental variable. The dramaturgical role-playing skills of the high self-monitor are placed at the service of the ego for the construction of, for example, imaginary audiences, and these skills assume particular power with the emergence of third-person perspective-taking abilities and the concomitant ability to self-reflectively monitor the self. In the research to be reported here, the developmental basis of self-monitoring and its pattern of relationship to the imaginary audience and personal fable constructs from early to late adolescence was examined. It was hypothesized that self-monitoring would be significantly related to the "adolescent egocentrism" constructs (i.e., high self-monitors would score significantly higher on measures of imaginary audience and personal fable), and would show a similar pattern of development and relation to age as do those constructs. The relation of both sets of constructs to ego functioning in early and late adolescence was also examined. Here it was hypothesized that high self-monitoring adolescents, and those who score high on indices of the imaginary audience and personal fable, will be in a lower ego level, as measured by Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test of ego development (1970).

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects for this study included 29 (8 male, 21 female) fifth-graders, 26 (14 male, 12 female) seventh-graders, 26 (8 male, 18 female) ninth-graders, 23 (8 male, 15 female) eleventh-graders, and 22 (8 male, 14 female) college undergraduates. The average age of the fifth-grade sample was 10 years, 4 months; for seventh-graders, 12 years, 2 months; for ninth-graders, 13 years, 10 months; for eleventh-graders, 16 years, 1 month; for college subjects, 23 years. The grade- and high-school samples were drawn from the same school district. The undergraduate sample (14 juniors, 8 seniors) was drawn from a predominantly commuter university that was located in the same town as was the school district. These schools are attended by students from predominantly White, lower middle-class families.

Instruments and Procedure

The imaginary audience (IA) and personal fable (PF) were assessed by means of the Adolescent Egocentrism Scale (AES) developed by Enright et al. (1979, 1980). The AES has separate subscales for the IA and PF constructs. There are five items each in the IA and PF subscales. The items are arranged in a Likert format along a five-step continuum. Subjects are required to rate the importance of each item along

a scale ranging from *no importance* (1) to *great importance* (5). A total score per subscale is obtained by summing the ratings across the five items. Scale scores for either measure range from 5-25. The IA and PF subscales have been found to possess excellent psychometric properties. The actual test items are reported in Enright et al. (1980).

Self-monitoring was assessed by means of a revised version of Snyder's (1979) Self-Monitoring Scale. This measure calls for true of false responses to each of 25 test items (e.g., "I find it hard to imitate the behavior of others"; "In different situations and with different people I often act like very different persons"). This instrument was originally designed for use with adult populations. Consequently, and in a manner akin to previous research (Snyder, 1987), the wording of several of the test statements was slightly altered to better ensure clarity and to aid comprehension by younger subjects. The measure was scored according to procedures outlined by Snyder (1974). For correlational analyses and test of means, test items were keyed for high self-monitoring. Low self-monitoring responses were given a score of one, high self-monitoring responses were assigned the score of two. Scores thus ranged from 25−50. For some analyses of group differences subjects were assigned to high and low self-monitoring groups by means of a median split. Subjects who scored at the median ($N = 13$) were not assigned to groups. This measure also enjoys excellent psychometric properties.

According to Loevinger (1976) the course of ego development can be demarcated into a hierarchically-ordered and invariant sequence of stages and substages. The stages are as follows: impulsive (I-2), self-protective (Δ), conformist (I-3), conscientious (I-4), autonomous (I-5), and integrated (I-6). Substages are located between Delta and the conformist stage (Δ/3), between I-3 and I-4 (I-3/4), and between I-4 and I-5 (I-4/5). Each stage describes a framework of meaning that describes an individual's customary orientation to the self and the world. The stages differ along dimensions of interpersonal and cognitive style, impulse control, and conscious preoccupations. In general, individuals at the "preconformist" levels (I-2, Δ, Δ/3) are impulsive, dependent, exploitative, opportunistic, self-protective, and concerned with advantage and control in interpersonal relationships. At the "conformist" levels (I-3, 3/4) there is an emphasis on conformity, belonging, social acceptance, a preoccupation with appearance and feelings, and a cognitive syle given to stereotypy. As one moves through the "post-conventional" stages (I-4−I-6) the individual develops the capacity for self-criticism, a respect for individuality, an ability to tolerate and to reconcile conflict. The individual also develops an autonomous interpersonal style that respects autonomy but acknowledges interdependence. Conscious preoccupations are concerned with role conceptions and identity, and there is not only evidence for greater conceptual complexity, but also toleration for ambiguity as well.

Ego development was assessed with the Sentence Completion Test (SCT) developed by Loevinger, Wessler, and Redmore (1970). This test consists of 36 incomplete sentence stems. Different versions exist for males and females, and for

adults and children. In this study subjects received the sex-appropriate version, but only the college sample responded to the adult version of the test. Sentence completions were assigned a stage level in accordance with a complex coding scheme that is reported in two available scoring manuals (Loevinger, Wessler, & Redmore, 1970; Redmore, Loevinger, & Tamashiro, 1978). From the cumulative frequency distribution of item ratings a *total protocol rating* (TPR) is derived according to ogive rules (see Loevinger et al., 1970). Raters were blind to the age and grade of the subjects. For most analyses (correlations, trend, ANOVA) the TPR was used. To accommodate these analyses the TPR was scaled as follows: I-2 = 1.0 ; Δ = 2.0; Δ/3 = 2.5; I-3 = 3.0; 3/4 = 3.5; I-4 = 4.0; 4/5 = 4.5; I-5 = 5.0. For subsidiary analyses of group differences, subjects were classified into the pre-conformist (I-2, Δ, Δ/3), conformist (I-3, 3/4) and post-conformist (I-4, 4/5, I-5) ego levels.

Subjects were tested in group settings and in accordance with standardized instructions. The order in which the scales were administered was completely random (for each subject) to control order effects.

RESULTS

The first set of analyses estimated instrument reliabilities via Cronbach's coefficient alpha (IA and PF scales) and the KR-20 (SM scale) formula. The alpha coefficient for the IA and PF scales was .73 and .82, respectively. The SM reliability coefficient was .64. Although not impressive, a reliability of this magnitude is generally considered sufficient for tests of group differences. Inter-rater reliability was established for the Sentence Completion Test in the following manner. Five protocols were randomly selected from each grade for re-scoring by an independent rater who was blind to the age and grade of the subjects, and the previously assigned total protocol rating (TPR). Inter-rater exact agreement was established at 95 percent.

Means and standard deviations for the IA, PF, and SM scales are reported in Table 1. The subject breakdown for TPR and ego level are reported in Table 2. In order to determine if performance on these measures could be described as developmental functions, orthogonal polynomials were generated for linear and quadratic trend. Significant linear trend was observed for IA, $F(1, 121) = 10.81$, $p < .05$; for PF, $F(1,121) = 7.68$, $p < .05$; for SM, $F(1, 121) = 4.42$, $p < .05$, and for TPR, $F(1,121) = 162.46$, $p < .05$. There were no significant departures from linearity. Hence, all of the measures used in this study showed significant linear trend from early to late adolescence.

In order to determine grade differences on these measures a series of Grade x Sex ANOVA's were calculated. Significant grade effects were observed for IA, $F(4, 116) = 3.87$, $p < .05$; for PF, $F(4, 116) = 4.30$, $p < .05$; for SM, $F(4, 116) = 2.40$, $p = .056$; and for TPR $F(4, 116) = 42.59$, $p < .05$. Post hoc analysis with the Scheffe procedure showed that fifth-graders were higher on the imaginary audience than were college subjects; fifth-, seventh-, and eleventh-graders were higher

TABLE 1
Means and Standard Deviations for Imaginary Audience, Personal Fable, Self-Monitoring, and Total Protocol Rating, by Grade

Grade 5	IA	PF	SM	TPR
M =	17.31	17.21	37.96	1.96
SD =	4.14	4.90	2.74	.73
Grade 7				
M =	15.38	17.88	38.96	2.06
SD =	4.72	4.63	3.34	.64
Grade 9				
M =	14.15	15.31	37.96	2.83
SD =	3.99	4.19	3.16	.44
Grade 11				
M =	15.47	17.43	38.52	3.24
SD =	4.37	3.51	8.15	.25
College				
M =	12.86	13.54	35.82	3.61
SD =	4.32	3.77	3.87	.51

on the personal fable than were college subjects; seventh-graders had significantly higher self-monitoring scores than did college subjects; fifth-graders had significantly lower TPRs than did ninth- and eleventh-graders and college students ; ninth-graders had significantly higher TPR scores than did seventh-graders, but lower scores compared to eleventh-graders. There were no significant Sex main effects nor. Grade x Sex interations for IA, PF, or TPR. A significant Sex main effect emerged for Self-Monitoring, favoring males, $F(1, 116) = 6.26$, $p < .05$. A significant Grade x Sex interaction did not emerge for Self-Monitoring. Sex effects for self-monitoring were not anticipated, nor are they typically reported in the self-monitoring literature. Consequently, the sex main effect reported here (for males, $M = 39.02$, $SD = 3.75$; for females, $M = 37.25$, $SD = 3.64$) must be viewed cautiously. The most conservative interpretation is to regard the statistical significance of the small mean difference between males and females as an artifact of excessive power, and this is our preference.

TABLE 2
Total Protocol Rating and Ego Level by Grade

	Ego Level						
	Pre-Conformist			Conformist		Post-Conformist	
Grade	I-2	Δ	Δ/3	I-3	3/4	I-4	4/5
5	8	12	6	1	2	0	0
7	5	12	5	4	0	0	0
9	0	0	15	6	4	1	0
11	0	0	0	12	11	0	0
College	0	0	2	1	11	6	2
N =	13	24	28	24	27	7	2

Although linear trend and grade effects are evident for self-monitoring, the above analyses may have underestimated the developmental patterning of the construct. This is so because the scores of subjects who are neither high nor low self-monitors contribute to the self-monitoring mean and the subsequent test of group differences. A better indication of age-related patterns of self-monitoring is illustrated in Table 3. This table reports the frequency of high and low self-monitors by grade. As can be seen in Table 3, there is a clear age-related pattern to high and low self-monitoring. High self-monitors are more frequent in early adolescence, and less so in late adolescence. The opposite pattern is true for low self-monitoring, with low self-monitoring predominating in late adolescence. In order to statistically evaluate this pattern we collapsed the grades into an "early adolescence" sample (grades 5, 7, 9) and a "late adolescence" sample (eleventh-grade and college), and performed a four-cell chi-square analysis (Early vs. Late Adolescence x High vs. Low Self-Monitoring). This analysis was significant, χ^2 (1) = 12.19, $p < .05$, indicating that the distribution of high and low self-monitoring in early and late adolescence is not random—high self-monitoring predominates in early adolescence, low self-monitoring predominates in late adolescence. Note that the early adolescent grouping contained three groups, while the late adolescent group included but two. A second analysis was attempted such that the early and late adolescent groups were equated on the number of grades that contributed to the cells. For this analysis the "early adolescent" sample was formed by collapsing grades five and seven, while the "late adolescent" sample again included eleventh-graders and college subjects. A four cell chi-square analysis (Early vs. Late Adolescence x High vs. Low Self-Monitoring) was again calculated. This analysis was also signficant, χ^2 (1) = 11.61, $p < .01$.

A third set of analyses attempted to determine if high self-monitors would also score higher on measures of IA and PF, in comparision to low self-monitors, and if high scores on IA, PF, and SM, would be associated with lower ego level. Tables 4 and 5 report the means and standard deviations for these comparisons. A series of planned comparisons revealed the following results: (a) high self-monitors had significantly higher scores for imaginary audience than did low self-monitors $F(1, 111) = 5.19$, $p < .05$, (see Table 4); (b) high self-monitors had significantly higher personal fable scores than did low self-monitors, $F(1, 111) = 11.13$, $p < .01$; and (c) pre-conformist and conformist subjects had significantly higher scores for imaginary audience than did post-conformist subjects, $F(1, 123) = 3.28$, $p < .05$. As Table 5 indicates, subjects in the lowest ego level had the highest IA scores. A chi-square analysis was calculated to determine whether high and low self-monitors were randomly distributed between the pre-conformist and conformist ego levels (see Table 5 for frequencies). This null hypothesis was rejected, χ^2 (1) = 4.73, $p < .05$, indicating that high and low self-monitors tend to be at the pre-conformist and conformist ego levels, respectively. Post-conformist data could not be used for this analysis because expected frequencies for the self-monitoring cells were less than five.

TABLE 3

Frequency of High and Low Self-Monitoring by Grade

	Grade				
	5	7	9	11	College
Self-Monitoring					
Low	3	1	4	5	11
High	24	19	21	16	9

TABLE 4

Mean Imaginary Audience and Personal Fable Scores and Standard Deviations by High and Low Self-Monitoring Groups

	Self-Monitoring	
	Low	High
Imaginary Audience		
$M =$	13.50	15.79
$SD =$	3.79	4.49
Personal Fable		
$M =$	13.5	16.78
$SD =$	3.56	4.43

TABLE 5

Mean Imaginary Audience and Personal Fable Scores and Standard Deviations, and High and Low Self-Monitoring Frequencies, by Ego Level

	Ego Level		
	Pre-Conformist	Conformist	Post-Conformist
Imaginary Audience			
$M =$	15.82	14.88	11.89
$SD =$	4.55	4.11	5.21
Personal Fable			
$M =$	16.92	16.02	14.22
$SD =$	4.74	3.92	5.49
Self-Monitoring			
Low, $N =$	5	14	5
High, $N =$	53	32	4

Table 6 reports a correlation matrix of the variables under study. It will first be noted that there are significant, negative, correlations between age and IA, PF, and SM. As age increases these ideations tend to decrease. A test for difference between dependent correlations was calculated to determine if the age-IA and age-PF correlations were significantly different from the age-SM correlation. They were not, t (123) = .619, $p > .05$. This suggests that self-monitoring, an individual differences construct, enjoys a similar relationship with age as do the IA and PF constructs. Significant positive correlations were also evident between SM and both IA and PF, and all three constructs (IA, PF, SM) were negatively correlated with ego development (TPR). Many of these correlations were attenuated when their common relationship with age was partialled. The IA-PF relationship remained significantly correlated ($r = .37$, $p < .05$), as did the IA-SM relationship ($r = .14$, $p = .059$). The remaining correlations were nonsignificant after partialling age.

TABLE 6
Correlation Matrix for Imaginary Audience, Personal Fable, Self-Monitoring, Total Protocol Rating, and Age

	PF	SM	TPR	Age
Imaginary Audience	.43[2]	.20[1]	−.24[2]	−.31[2]
Personal Fable		.16[1]	−.21[2]	−.30[2]
Self-Monitoring			−.21[2]	−.24[2]
Total Protocol Rating				.61[2]

[1]$p < .05$ [2]$p < .01$

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relation between self-monitoring and the imaginary audience and personal fable constructs, and their relation to levels of ego development. The results can be summarized as follows: (a) self-monitoring displays significant (decreasing) linear trend from early to late adolescence, as do the imaginary audience and personal fable constucts; (b) these constructs show an equivalent, negative relationship with age; (c) high self-monitoring tends to predominate in early adolescence, while low self-monitoring predominates in late adolescence; (d) high self-monitors have significantly higher imaginary audience and personal fable scores than do low self-monitors; (e) high scores on self-monitoring, imaginary audience, and personal fable are associated with lower levels of ego development, which is also reflected in significant negative correlations with ego level.

This pattern of findings suggests that, although self-monitoring is certainly not identical to imaginary audience and personal fable ideations, it is, nonetheless, not independent of them. Further, these results support the contention that these constructs bear some relation to patterns of ego development from early to late adolescence. That is, self-monitoring may not be strictly a dimension of individual dif-

ferences. Rather, this construct may describe something important about the process and course of adolescent social cognitive development. How, then, to make theoretical sense of these findings?

The traditional adolescent egocentrism theory (Elkind, 1967), with its emphasis on differentiation failure as the progenitor of the imaginary audience and personal fable, cannot easily be deployed to account for the pattern of relations to self-monitoring and ego development observed here. Formal operations, as Blasi and Hoeffel (1974) have pointed out, has no necessary relation to adolescent personality development, and there is reason to believe that the traditional account is particularly lacking with respect to the emergence of the imaginary audience and personal fable (Lapsley & Murphy, 1985). However, the present findings are in keeping with the "new look" at these constructs (Lapsley & Murphy, 1985; Lapsley & Rice, 1987). According to this view, adolescents who construct imaginary audiences and personal fables are high self-monitors. These ideations are the result of the tendency of young adolescents to self-reflectively monitor the self, an ability that emerges in early adolescence (e.g., Selman, 1980). The self-observing ego engages in object relational ideation, entertains fantasied, *"as-if"* visions of self, and monitors on-going dyadic interactions (Lapsley & Rice, 1987). The new look further suggests that these tendencies are tied to early adolescent patterns of ego development, particularly with reference to the psychological separation process. That is, high self-monitoring, and the creation of object relational ideation, is deployed in the service of the ego and has adaptive consequences for the young adolescent. It has been suggested that the self-observing ego engages these ideations to compensate for separation anxiety, and to serve as restitution for the loss of the parental object-introject (Lapsley & Rice, 1987). The present findings should not, of course, be overgeneralized to support all of these speculations. They do, however, provide initial support for novel predictions anticipated by the model, predictions involving (a) the age-related patterning of high self-monitoring in early and late adolescence, (b) the relation between self-monitoring and the imaginary audience and personal fable, and (c) the relation of these constructs to ego development. These results are indeed encouraging, and attest to the generative power of the "new look" to anticipate novel facts about adolescent development.

A number of reservations and other points should be noted. First, given the cross-sectional nature of the design, no firm conclusions about the *developmental* patterning of the relationships observed here are warranted. Second, although care was taken to insure that the Self-Monitoring Scale used by younger adolescents was comprehensible and relevant to the situations that they typically face, it may still be possible that the scale was inappropriate for children of these ages. Fortunately, scales are in development that will permit the assessment of self-monitoring in young children and adolescents (Graziano et al., 1987). These scales should allow for a more reliable assessment of self-monitoring in future replications.

A third qualification concerns the fact that unmeasured variables may be exerting an influence on the present findings, or may constitute a competing explanation

for them. It might be the case, for example, that the heightened self-monitoring displayed by the youngest groups is a consequence of their changing physical appearance (due to puberty) and/or change in educational settings. Although we are not prepared, in the absence of the relevant data, to rule out these quite reasonable competing explanations, a number of comments are in order nonetheless.

In order for the educational setting explanation to succeed there would have to be evidence to suggest that early adolescents who make school transitions (versus adolescents who do not) would show positive increases in self-related ideation, that is, increases in self-monitoring, imaginary audience, personal fable, and that these changes would be comparable for boys and girls. Clearly, such evidence is not available for these constructs. Our best approximation is to look at conceivably related constructs, such as self-esteem, self-image, and self-concept. Although many studies find that self-concept, self-image, and self-esteem show stability or positive change throughout adolescence (e.g., Dusek & Flaherty, 1981; McCarthy & Hoge, 1982), even during the transition between childhood and adolescence (Abramowitz, Offer, & Jarcho, 1984), a number of studies seem to show that adolescent transitions (school setting, pubertal status) may be associated with self-esteem disturbance. There is evidence, for example, that girls (but not boys) show declines in self-esteem in the year following the transition from grade school to junior high school, and again in the year following the transition from junior high school to high school (Simmons, Blyth, Van Cleave, & Bush, 1979; Blyth, Simmons, & Carlton-Ford, 1983). As Simmons et al. (1979) point out, however, the critical variable is not school transition per se but whether the transition is accompanied by significant pubertal changes. Because girls are more likely to encounter these changes than are boys during this period, girls are hence more likely to experience disturbances in self-related ideation. This suggests that if school transition is an operative variable at all, it operates to exacerbate the effects of pubertal status or timing. Further doubts on the status of the school transition variable is reported in a more recent study by Nottlemann (1987, p. 447), who also finds that there "...is no notable school transition effect, either early or late in the school year," on the self-esteem of junior high school students. Consequently, we are not easily disposed to a school transitions explanation of the present results.

To what extent can pubertal status or timing account for the present findings? There is a growing literature that attests to the importance of these variables in accounting for aspects of adolescent adjustment and development (e.g., Petersen & Crockett, 1985; Peskin, 1979; see Petersen & Taylor, 1980, for a review), and these findings are not to be gainsaid. Indeed, in his theoretical article on adolescent egocentrism, Elkind (1967) did reserve a role for pubertal changes in increasing self-focused attention. In our view, however, the effects attributed to pubertal changes are the surface markers of deeper psychological processes. According to Blos (1962, p.2), "sexual maturation initiates shifts and changes in the mental life of the pubescent child." In particular, the onset of puberty begins the process of psychological separation-individuation from parents (Blos, 1962). We are in agree-

ment with this view. Our interpretation of the present results takes place within the theoretical context of this developmental process. In our view the tendency toward high self-monitoring, the tendency to engage in object relational ideation, are spin-offs of the separation-individuation process. We do not argue that puberty is irrelevant to understanding the preponderance of self-related ideation in early adolescence, only that to focus solely on puberty is to miss the deeper currents of development that are taking place during this phase of the lifespan. That there is merit to this view is suggested by a recent study by Steinberg (1987). He finds that pubertal maturation "increases the emotional distance between youngsters and their parents" (Steinberg, 1987, p. 457). We would suggest that it is not pubertal status that increases emotional distance, but the more fundamental process of separation-individuation, of which pubertal status is but a surface marker. Our preference for ego developmental variables over pubertal variables reflects a strategic bet on our part that the former variables will render a theoretically richer explanation for a broader range of adolescent behaviors and affects than will the latter variables. Only future research will decide the issue. We can note, however, that if pubertal variables were at work in the present data, then one would expect to find, given previous work (Simmons et al., 1979), that girls in the youngest samples would show a different pattern of scores on the IA, PF, and SM variables than would boys and older girls. The absence of grade by sex interactions for these variables would tend to discount the puberty factor.

Finally, although the predicted relationship between ego developmental level and self-monitoring and imaginary audience did obtain, the use of the Loevinger model of ego development may not have provided the strongest test of the hypothesized relationship. The strongest test would entail a more forthright assessment of psychological separation-individuation, because it is this understanding of adolescent ego development that is directly implicated by the new look. Future research should pursue this question. In addition, further work in this area should test the thesis that the emergence and decline of self-monitoring, and imaginary audience and personal fable ideations, are linked to levels of interpersonal understanding (Selman, 1980). The successful test of these predictions should aid in the development of an integrative account of adolescent ego development (Lapsley & Rice, 1987).

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Address reprint requests to:

Daniel K. Lapsley
Department of Psychology
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN 46556