CHILDREN'S NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS OF BEING HURT: SELF-REFERENTIAL

FOCUS AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PERPETRATOR'S EXPERIENCE

by

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Psychology

The University of Utah

August 2013

The University of Utah Graduate School

STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether the different ways that children are prompted to talk about events in which they were the target of harm are related to their judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self. Participants (N=92; 10 – 11-year-olds) were instructed to narrate about their experience from one of three narrative conditions – the prototypical victim perspective, the consideration of the perpetrator's perspective, and the consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions condition. After providing the narrative accounts, participants reported their judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self. Whereas participants' judgments about the self and to a lesser extent, the perpetrator, were associated with the different ways of narrating, judgments about the event were similar across the narrative conditions. Results provided insight into how narratives can shape children's judgments about some features of the conflict event but not others.

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INTRODUCTION

In their everyday interactions with others, children often feel that they have been mistreated or hurt, and parents, teachers, or other significant adults may ask children to talk about the conflict. In the process of narrating about the conflict situation in which they were the target of harm, two things may occur. First, children's narrative accounts may reveal the specific ways in which they interpreted and made sense of the event. Previous research has shown that victims construct narrative accounts that are extensive in their reference of the harm inflicted on them and their mental, emotional, and behavioral responses (Wainryb, Brehl, & Matwin, 2005). Rarely do victims make reference to the perpetrator's experience (e.g., the perpetrator's intentions, thoughts, and emotions) in these narrative accounts of being hurt, and when they do, such as in the case of some adolescents, their narrative accounts are still predominantly self-referential (Wainryb et al., 2005). Victims' predominantly self-referential focus in their narrative accounts therefore reveal that victims interpret and make sense of their interpersonal conflict around their experience of hurt (Wainryb et al., 2005).

Secondly, through the process of narrating, the interpretations formed can shape children's judgments about features of the conflict event when children include other information that was not previously considered (e.g., McGregor & Holmes, 1999; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Ross & Wilson, 2003). Accordingly, victims' prototypically self-referential narrative accounts may inform the sort of judgments that

children make about the time when they were the target of harm and since their narrative accounts are predominantly self-referential, these judgments may be based on their experience of hurt.

Although children who have been the target of harm prototypically narrate about the event from a self-referential perspective, stories can be told in different ways. In everyday interactions and conversations, people, especially adults, can scaffold children to talk about their experiences in different and distinct ways. Some adults may scaffold children to include the perpetrator's intention in their narrative accounts of being hurt. Other adults may go a step further and ask children to think of reasons that show that the perpetrator did not intend to hurt them, thereby asking children to only include the perpetrator's perspective, but also provide the narrative account in a way that focuses on the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions. We believe that these different ways that adults' prompt children to narrate about their victim experience are related to the judgments that children make.

The main purpose of this study is to examine whether the different ways that children can be prompted to talk about events in which they were the target of harm are related to their judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and themselves. More specifically, how do children who narrate from the prototypical self-referential victim perspective differ in the kinds of judgments that they make from children who are prompted to consider the perpetrator's perspective or children who are instructed to consider the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions, on their judgment about the event, the perpetrator, and the self?

Children's narrative accounts as windows into their construal

of the event

Narrative accounts about past events serve an important function of bringing to the fore people's representations and interpretations of the event (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988, 1996). An assessment of children's narrative accounts about their interpersonal conflict situations provides a way to obtain information about the specific ways in which children constructed and interpreted those experiences. Since children's conflict situations represent a complex interaction between the provoking event, the perpetrating child, and the child that was the target of harm (Murphy & Eisenberg, 2002; Shantz, 1987), their narrative accounts would include these features. However, when children and adolescents narrate about a time when a peer wronged them, they only include references about the event and the self and rarely make reference about the experience of the perpetrating child (Wainryb, Brehl, & Matwin, 2005).

Interestingly, victim's construal of interpersonal conflicts around their wants and feelings is not exclusive to children. Several studies show that adults also focus on their experience when they were the target of harm, rarely making reference to the perpetrator's intentions, thoughts, and feelings (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Wotman, 1990; McGregor & Holmes, 1999; Mikula, Athenstaedt, Heschgl, & Heimgartner, 1998; Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997). For example, in a sample of college students, victims provided narrative accounts that focused on the harmful behavior and the severe and lasting negative consequences of the harmful behavior to self and to the relationship with the perpetrator. Similar to children and adolescents' narrative accounts about their victim experience, adults rarely include the perpetrator's experience. When they do, they

characterized the perpetrator's motives and actions as incomprehensible, arbitrary, and contradictory (Baumeister et al., 1990; Baumeister & Catanese, 2001).

Taken together, these multiple findings reveal that victims' experience of hurt may be particularly salient so that they are systematically blinded to the perpetrator's intentions and this exclusive focus on their thwarted desires and experience of distress in their narrative accounts reflect that victims construe or interpret their interpersonal conflicts around their experience of hurt (Wainryb et al., 2005).

<div align="center">The other function of narratives: Shaping children's

interpretation and judgments</div>

So far, the above body of research demonstrates that victim's narrative accounts of their interpersonal conflicts reveal how people construe the event around their experience of hurt (Baumeister et al., 1990; Wainryb et al., 2005). However, narratives do more than reveal people's interpretation of the events. When people narrate about past events, their initial interpretations can be shaped, especially when the narratives include evaluative and emotional elaborations (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007).

Considering that interpersonal conflicts are characterized around the event, the perpetrator, and the target of the harm (e.g., Murphy & Eisenberg, 2002; Shantz, 1987), the victim's narrative accounts can shape judgments related to these three distinct features. That narratives can shape people's perceptions and judgments is evident in research showing that the perspective that people take in retelling events can change their subsequent memory (e.g., Tsethlikai & Greenhoot, 2006; Tversky & Marsh, 2000) and judgments about the event (e.g., Libby, Eibach, & Gilovich, 2005; McGregor & Holmes,

1999; Ross & Wilson, 2003). Furthermore, research in autobiographical memory has shown that the perspective from which memories are recalled can affect the way in which these memories are experienced (McIsaac & Eich, 2002; Nigro & Neisser, 1983). For example, when people are asked to recall events from their own perspective, the events are reported as more emotional, vivid, and detailed than when they are asked to recall these memories from the perspective of a third person (Berntsen & Rubin, 2006; McIsaac & Eich, 2002; Nigro & Neisser, 1983). Thus, these studies provide evidence that narrating can indeed shape people's perceptions, memories, and emotional experience about past events.

Narratives can also shape people's impressions about the perpetrator. For example, in one study, McGregor and Holmes (1999) asked participants to provide a narrative account of a hypothetical conflict. First, participants were asked to read a vignette about a relationship conflict between a couple named "Kim" and "Jim." Subsequently, they were randomly assigned to two narrative groups. One group was asked to construct a narrative about the interpersonal conflict from the perspective of Kim's lawyer while the other group was to construct the narrative from the perspective of Jim's lawyer. Two weeks later, participants were asked to report on which character was most to blame for the relationship conflict. As expected, McGregor and Holmes found that storytelling does in fact shape people's subsequent judgments about blame – participants assigned to write a lawyer's version in favor of Kim significantly blamed Jim and vice versa.

The role that narratives play in shaping people's judgments has especially been dominant in research on children and adolescents' development of the self (e.g., Fivush &

Nelson, 2004; McAdams, 2006; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Pasupathi, 2001; Pasupathi & Rich, 2005; Pasupathi, Stallworth, & Murdoch, 1998; Thorne, 2000; Weeks & Pasupathi, 2011). When people narrate about a past event, they usually construct the narrative account in a way that reinforces or maintains their view of self (Weeks & Pasupathi, 2011). For example, McLean, Pasupathi, and Pals (2007) provided a conceptual framework for how narratives can be used to develop and maintain the self. The process of constructing a personal narrative account of a specific situation, especially accounts that emphasize evaluative and emotional elaborations, can be related to children's evaluative self-concept such as self-esteem (Bohanek, Marin, Fivush, & Duke, 2006). However, for judgments about the self to be shaped differently from their original judgments, people's narrative accounts have to be significantly elaborative and require a substantial amount of contextual support from listeners (Weeks & Pasupathi, 2011).

As a whole, these studies show that the process of constructing narrative accounts of past events can shape people's judgments about the event or action (e.g., Pasupathi & Wainryb, 2010; Tsethlikai & Greenhoot, 2006; Tversky & Marsh, 2000), the perpetrator (e.g., McGregor and Holmes, 1999), and understanding of the self (e.g., McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Pasupathi & Rich, 2005; Pasupathi, Stallworth, & Murdoch, 1998; Weeks & Pasupathi, 2011). These studies hint that victims' narrative accounts about their interpersonal conflict may be related to their subsequent judgment of the event, the perpetrator, and the self.

How do children's self-referential focus in their victim narrative

accounts shape their judgments about the event,

the perpetrator, and the self?

Since victims maintain a self-referential focus in their narrative accounts, one might expect that their judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self may revolve around their experience of hurt. Indeed, children's judgment of the perpetrator's harmful actions tend to be negative, and they reference the harm and injustice inflicted upon them when making these judgments (Wainryb et al., 2005). Similarly, children who narrate from a self-referential victim perspective report feeling sad and on rare occasions, angry (Wainryb et al., 2005).

Children's self-referential focus in their victim narrative accounts may also be related to their judgments about the perpetrator. When adults narrate from the prototypical self-referential victim perspective, they tend to describe long-term damage to the relationship with the perpetrator and exclusively blame the perpetrator for their experience of hurt without including the possible mitigating factors such as their own probable involvement or other external constraints (Baumeister et al., 1990; Baumeister & Catanese, 2001). Similarly, research in interpersonal forgiveness has shown that victims who consider only their perspective in the interpersonal conflict report having not forgiven the perpetrator, and having the desire to seeking revenge (McCullough, Sandage, & Worthington, 1997; McCullough, Worthinton, & Rachal, 1997).

Considering that interpersonal conflicts provide a rich context for children's self-development (e.g., Pasupathi & Wainryb, 2010; Recchia et al., 2013), and the way that children narrate about past events has been shown to shape children's self-conceptions

(e.g., Bird & Reese, 2006; Bohanek, Marin, Fivush, & Duke, 2006; Harley & Reese, 1999), children's self-referential focus in their victim may be related to their judgments about the self. Since children's narrative accounts about being hurt exclusively focus on children's experience, children's judgments about the self may reflect their experience of hurt. However, little is known about the specific self-judgments that victims have in relation to their victim narrative accounts, although research in moral development and peer relationships hint to the fact that children make moral and prosocial attributes about the self in relation to peer conflicts (e.g., Komolova & Wainryb, 2011; Pasupathi & Wainryb, 2010; Recchia, Wainryb, & Pasupathi, 2013).

<u>Including the perpetrator's experience in children's narrative accounts of being hurt</u>

Since victim's narrative accounts focus almost exclusively on their own experience, and this way of narrating may be related to their judgment about the event, the perpetrator, and the self, an important question to ask is whether a broadening of children's narrative accounts of being hurt to include the perpetrator's intentions may be associated with different judgments. In other words, will children's judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self be different when they have a dual-focus in their victim narrative accounts, as compared to when they have a self-focus?

Research in moral development demonstrates that even young children take intentions into account in their moral thinking, judging acts of intentional harm as more wrong than acts in which the harm was depicted as unintentional (Harris & Nunez, 1996; Jones & Nelson-Le Gall, 1995; Nunez & Harris, 1998; Siegal & Peterson, 1998; Shultz et

al., 1986). Similarly, children can and do make judgments about a perpetrator's emotions (Arsenio & Lover, 1999; Arsenio, Gold, & Adams, 2006; Denham & Kochanoff, 2002; Dunn, 1999, 2006; Harris, 1989; Turiel, 1998). By the age of 10, children develop a complex understanding of intentions – that intentions are distinct from actions, fitting within a broad network of interrelated mental states (e.g., emotions, desires, beliefs) that together guide behavior (Brehl, 2008; Chandler & Lalonde, 1996; Wainryb & Brehl, 2006).

These findings reveal that children, at least by the age of 10 years, are developmentally capable of considering the perpetrator's intentions, emotions, and thoughts when evaluating their own interpersonal conflicts. This is especially important, since the process of taking another person's perspective has been found to be associated with positive outcomes such as the inhibition of aggression (Batson, 1990; Batson, 1991; Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997; Batson & Oleson, 1991; Davis, 1994; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Hoffman, 1981, 1990; Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991), and positive peer relations (Carlo, Knight, Eisenberg, & Rotenberg, 1991; Charbonneau & Nicol, 2002; Denham, 1986; Denham, Blair, et al., 2003; Eisenberg, Carlo et al., 1995; Eisenberg, Zhou, & Koller, 2001). The ability to take another person's perspective has also been shown to increase the perceiver's empathic concern as the perceiver is allowed rare insight into the experience of the perceived (Batson et al., 1997).

However, the positive association between children's perspective-taking and prosocial behavior should not be interpreted to mean that children's consideration of the perpetrator's experience would necessarily promote children's prosocial behavior

towards the perpetrator. Studies on perspective taking and prosocial behavior have examined this link, asking participants to take the perspective of a target in need or a victim of injustice or harm (Batson et al., 1997; Okimoto & Wenzel, 2011). What is less clear is whether victims can be prompted to integrate the perpetrator's intentions, emotions, and thoughts in their narrative accounts when they are the targets of harm, and if they can, whether this inclusion of the perpetrator's perspective in their narrative accounts can shape their subsequent judgments. Relatedly, if children can be prompted to move from a self-focused narrative account to a dual focus that includes their experience and the perpetrator's intentions, emotions, and feelings, would the kinds of attributions that they make for the perpetrator's intentions, be it benevolent or malevolent, be differently associated with their judgments?

Although they did not directly seek to answer the above questions, McGregor and Holmes (1999) shed some light to the possibility that victims can consider other people's perspectives. They asked participants to provide a narrative account of an important conflict that they were involved in that had made them feel "hurt, upset, or angered." They were then randomly assigned to write about the incident from either the perspective of their own lawyer (e.g., tell a story that depicted themselves as innocent of any wrongdoing and the partner as being at fault), the perspective of the perpetrator's lawyer (e.g., tell a story that depicted the perpetrator as innocent of any wrongdoing and themselves as being at fault), or from the perspective of an unbiased reporter (e.g., tell a story that explained the incident impartially). Results showed that participants who narrated the story about the interpersonal incident from the perspective of the unbiased reporter reported feeling less upset and blamed the perpetrator less than those who

narrated the story from their own lawyer's perspective. Interestingly, almost half of the participants assigned to take the perspective of the other person's lawyer refused to provide the narrative and were thus removed from analysis. Their refusal presents an interesting question about which several assumptions can be made. Although their refusal to take the perspective of the other person's lawyer may suggest that the process of including a perpetrator's experience in the victim's narrative account of a conflict situation may be difficult, even for adults, caution should be taken in reaching that conclusion. In the McGregor and Holmes (1999)'s study, participants were asked to take the perspective of the perpetrator's lawyer – a position requiring the victim to exonerate the perpetrator, and to an extent, contradict their experience of hurt. Thus, we can alternatively conclude that although victims can incorporate another person's perspective in their narrative accounts, they find it uncomfortable to do when asked to replace their perspective with the retelling of the harm experience in a way that exonerates the perpetrator.

<u>Are the different ways that children make attributions about the</u>

<u>perpetrator's intentions related to their judgments about</u>

<u>the event, the perpetrator, and the self?</u>

There are many attributions that children make for a perpetrator's actions (see, Recchia, et al., 2013; Wainryb et al., 2005). For example, some children may attribute the perpetrator's intention as benevolent or neutral, that is, the perpetrator did not desire to cause them harm, while others may attribute malevolent intentions to the perpetrator, that is, the perpetrator committed the action with the objective of causing them harm. An

ongoing study in our lab demonstrates that children and adolescents make varying

attributions to the perpetrator's intentions, emotions, and thoughts when explicitly

prompted to do so. In this study, participating children (ages 6- to 17-years) were asked

to provide narrative accounts of times when a peer hurt them. A preliminary analysis of

their responses to the question of the perpetrator's intentions showed that some children

attributed 'benevolent/neutral' intentions to the perpetrator while others attributed

'malevolent' intentions to the perpetrator. Consider, as an example, the following

response to the question on the perpetrator's intentions given by Suzie (pseudonym), a

10- year-old girl:

> *Um- he probably took my markers to help the other person to finish their drawing coz I'm the only person that has another set of markers.*

Suzie clearly assigns benevolent/neutral intentions to the perpetrator's actions,

since, as she explains, the perpetrator wanted to help another child complete their

drawing. Although Suzie stated that she was hurt by the perpetrator's actions, on being

prompted to consider the perpetrator's intentions, she noted that the perpetrator did not

explicitly plan to hurt her. Instead, the perpetrator was pursuing what happened to be a

prosocial goal.

On the other hand, consider Ann's (pseudonym) response to the same question on

the perpetrator's intentions:

> *Um- I guess that we had high tension between us, we didn't really like each other… Um (sigh) I was a little fat back then, a little fatter back then (sigh), um, he probably just wanted to make me feel bad, that's basically it, and make me feel bad about myself.*

Similar to Suzie's response, Ann recounted a time when a peer hurt her. However,

when prompted to consider the perpetrator's intentions, she assigned malevolent

intentions to the perpetrator, since she believes that the perpetrator's goal was to make her feel bad about herself. In other words, according to Ann, the perpetrator knowingly acted in a way that would cause her distress.

Given these different intentions that children attribute to the perpetrator, one might expect that these differences in attributions would be related to children's judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self. This may be a valid assumption, considering that children judge intentional acts to be more wrong than accidental acts (Berndt & Berndt, 1975; Darley & Zanna, 1982; Karniol, 1978; Keasey, 1977; Nelson-Le Gall, 1985; Siegal & Peterson, 1998; Shultz et al., 1986). By extension, children who attribute benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator may judge the act less harshly than children who attribute malevolent intentions to the perpetrator. If this is true, then it might be problematic to broadly prompt children to consider the perpetrator's intentions, especially if they spontaneously attribute malevolent intentions to the perpetrator. It may be better to prompt children to specifically consider the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions. A related argument is that prompting children to consider the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions may reflect the perpetrator's attribution of their own intentions, since perpetrating children often depict themselves as engaging in the pursuit of their own goals or interests, rather than intending to harm the victim (Wainryb et al., 2005).

Prompting children to consider the perpetrator's benevolent or neutral intentions may however not be as straightforward or may not have the same effect as when children spontaneously make benevolent or neutral attributions to the perpetrator's intentions. Prompting children to consider the perpetrator's benevolent or neutral intentions, instead of allowing them to spontaneously make their own attributions, may inherently

communicate to the victim that their experience of hurt is irrelevant or highlight the fact that they had failed to consider the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions and these implicit interpretations may inadvertently promote the reverse effect of intensified negative experience. Indeed, although McGregor and Holmes's (1999) study on people's judgments of their own interpersonal conflicts did not include an analysis of people's judgments after being prompted to provide a narrative account that defended the perpetrator, participants' refusal to provide the narrative is striking. It is possible that this refusal may be due to the inherent dismissal of their experience that narrating in a way that exonerates the perpetrator requires. Therefore, although making benevolent or neutral attributions to the perpetrator may suggest that the victim will judge less harshly the event, the perpetrator, and the self, this may occur only if children spontaneously make the attribution, rather than being prompted.

Additionally, narrating the conflict situation in a way that includes the perpetrator's intentions may allow children to experience some emotional distancing as is the case when narrative accounts of past events are recounted from another person's perspective (e.g., Berntsen & Rubin, 2006; McIsaac & Eich, 2002; Nigro & Neisser, 1983). However, when children are prompted to consider the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions in their narrative accounts, they may report intensified negative emotions as this narrative account undermines their experience while endorsing the perpetrator's actions.

In conclusion, when children are prompted to consider the perpetrator's intentions, they may do so differently. Children's spontaneous attribution of the perpetrator's benevolent or neutral intentions may allow children to judge less harshly the

perpetrator's actions than when they spontaneously attribute malevolent intentions to the perpetrator. However, the same association between children's benevolent or neutral attributions to the perpetrator's intentions and their less negative judgments should not imply that children need to be prompted to make benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator.

The Present Study

As suggested from the above review of literature, children's narratives accounts of being hurt not only reveal their construal of the event, but through the process of narrating, their interpretations may be shaped. The present study seeks to examine whether the different ways that children (ages 10 – 11) narrate about a time when they were the target of harm are related to their judgments of the event, the perpetrator, and the self. 10- to 11-year-old children were selected for several reasons. First, by the age of 10 years, children are developmentally capable of understanding that people have different subjective perspectives, and can also take on the perspective of different people simultaneously (Chandler, 2001; Chandler & Helm, 1984; Feffer & Gourevitch, 1960; Flavell, 1968; see also, Wainryb et al., 2005). Second, despite this developmental achievement, 10- to 11-year-old children rarely make spontaneous reference to the perpetrator's intentions, thoughts, and emotions when providing narrative accounts about times when they were the target of harm (Wainryb et al., 2005). Third, 10- to 11-year-olds are very sensitive to peer relationships and conflicts (Berndt, 2004; Gottman & Mettetal, 1986; Komolova & Wainryb, 2011; Stafford, 2004).

Children were divided into three narrative conditions. The control, the *prototypical victim perspective* group, was asked to narrate about a time when a peer hurt them while focusing on their thoughts and feelings. They were asked to specifically focus on their thoughts and feelings in order for the narrative to be similar to children's prototypically self-referential victim narrative account. Although 10- to 11-year-olds rarely include the perpetrator's intentions, emotions, and thoughts in their victim narrative accounts, we specifically asked children to focus on their experience to examine how this focus may be associated with their judgments. The second group, namely, the *consideration of the perpetrator's experience* group, was asked to narrate about a time when a peer hurt them and consider the perpetrator's intention, emotions, and thoughts. This group was asked to broadly consider the perpetrator's intentions, emotions, and thoughts and they could make different attributions to the perpetrator's intentions. The third group, namely, the *consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions* group, was asked to narrate about a time when a peer hurt them and consider reasons that show that the perpetrator was not intending to cause them harm. Multiple studies show that attributing benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator may be associated with less harsh judgments. Therefore, this group was added to examine whether differences may exist if children spontaneously make these attributions (as in the case of children in the *consideration of the perpetrator's experience* group who end up attributing benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator) or children are prompted to only consider perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions.

To examine the relation of these different ways that children narrate about a time when a peer hurt them and their judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self,

several postnarrative questions were asked. For their judgments about the event, participants were asked to evaluate the perpetrator's actions and their current emotional state. The participants were asked to evaluate the perpetrator's actions since past research has shown that children who narrate about the time when they were the target of harm from the prototypical self-referential victim perspective do not consider the perpetrator's intentions in their narrative accounts (Wainryb et al., 2005). However, when children are asked to evaluate a perpetrator's actions, they judge less harshly actions that they attribute to be unintentional than those they attribute to be intentional (e.g., Harris & Nunez, 1996; Jones & Nelson-Le Gall, 1995; Nunez & Harris, 1998; Shultz et al., 1986; Siegal & Peterson, 1998). Similarly, participants were asked to report their present emotional state since past research in autobiographical narratives has shown that participants who narrate past events from their own perspective report those events as more emotional than when they recall the event from a third person's perspective (Berntsen & Rubin, 2006; McIsaac & Eich, 2002; Nigro & Neisser, 1983) and participants who narrate about a conflict event in which they were the target of harm report feeling sad and angry (Wainryb et al., 2005; see also, Baumeister et al., 1990).

Regarding participants' judgments about the perpetrator, participants were asked to make blame attributions, and evaluate their feelings about the perpetrator. Participants were asked to make blame attributions since past research has shown victims who narrate about their experience exclusively blame the perpetrator and do not consider other mitigating factors such as their own possible role (Baumeister et al., 1990). However, participants who are asked to take another person's perspective have been shown to be less likely to blame that person than those who maintain their own perspective

(McGregor and Holmes, 1999). Similarly, participants were asked to report their feelings about the perpetrator since past research has shown that participants are more likely to have positive feelings and less likely to have negative feelings about the perpetrator when they consider the perpetrator's perspective than when they interpret the conflict event from their own perspective (e.g., McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997).

Finally, participants were asked to make judgments about the self since narrative accounts have been shown to facilitate the process of self-development (e.g., Bird & Reese, 2006; Bohanek, Marin, Fivush, & Duke, 2006; Harley & Reese, 1999) and children's narrative accounts about being hurt may have implications about their self-evaluations (e.g., Pasupathi & Wainryb, 2010; Recchia et al., 2013). Specifically, participants were asked to make self-evaluations that were related to the specific conflict event, as well as evaluations about their overall prosocial and moral attributes.

METHOD

<u>Participants</u>

The sample consisted of 92 pre-adolescents (ages 10 – 11 years) that were randomly assigned to three narrative conditions as follows: 23 participants were in the *prototypical victim perspective* condition, 46 participants were in the *consideration of the perpetrator perspective* condition, and 23 participants were in the *nonmalevolent perpetrator perspective* condition. The consideration of the perpetrator's perspective condition was oversampled because we expected that this group would vary on the attributions they make about the perpetrator. Whereas some participants would attribute benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator, others would attribute malevolent intentions. Participants were of middle class and primarily Caucasian (67%), and attended local private and charter schools. Parental consent and participant assent were obtained for all participants.

<u>Design and procedure</u>

One narrative was elicited from each participant. To facilitate the nomination of a recent, well-remembered, important memory while also preventing participants from spontaneously narrating the event prior to narrative condition assignment, transgression cards were used. The transgression cards depicted pictures of three common transgressions namely physical harm, offensive behavior, and trust violation (see

Wainryb et al., 2005) and a general nonspecific transgression. Participants were shown the cards and told: "*You know how sometimes a kid will say something to you or will do something to you and you end up feeling hurt and upset about it? Well, today I want to talk to you about a time like that. So first of all, I want to ask you to think about a time when a kid you know did or said something and you ended up feeling hurt about it—see these cards here? They show times like that. So some kids talk about a time when someone they know said something mean, or yelled at them, and they ended feeling hurt by it (*offensive behavior transgression card*). Some people talk about a time when someone they know lied to them, broke a promise, spread a rumor, or talked about them behind their back, and they ended up feeling hurt by it (*trust violation transgression card*). Other times, kids have talked about a time when someone pushed them, hit them or tripped them, and they ended up feeling hurt by it* (physical harm transgression card*). So first, I want you to try and remember a time like this that happened not very long ago and that was really important to you. When you think of a time like this, what I want you to do is point to the card here that reminds you of it – or maybe if there isn't a card like what you remember, then point to this one (*nonspecific general transgression card*)*".

Following the nomination of the event, participants were asked 4 prenarrative questions. Two questions were asked to facilitate the interviewing process and also ensure that a specific and recent event has been nominated ("*Can you tell me, what was the name of the kid who did or said something to you and you ended up feeling hurt or upset about it? Okay, when did this happen between the two of you?*"). Two other questions were asked to examine whether differences existed among participants in the different conditions in their experience of hurt ("*How upset were you when that*

happened? How wrong was what [other kid] did or said to you?”). Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the three narrative conditions.

In the *prototypical victim perspective condition*, participants were asked: “*Now I want you to tell me about this time that you just remembered, when [other kid] did or said something and you ended up feeling hurt. I want you to tell me the whole story so I can understand what happened between the two of you. And when you're telling me what happened, tell me especially everything that you were thinking and feeling at that time.*”

In the *consideration of the perpetrator's perspective* condition, participants were asked: “*Now I want you to tell me about this time that you just remembered, when [other kid] did or said something and you ended up feeling hurt. I want you to tell me the whole story so I can understand what happened between the two of you. And when you are telling me what happened, tell me especially why you think [other kid] did what he/she did, what you think [other kid] may have been thinking or feeling at that time.*”

In the *nonmalevolent perpetrator perspective* condition, participants were asked: “*What I have learnt from talking to kids your age is that sometimes we feel hurt by what somebody does, but that person wasn't really trying to hurt us- you know what I mean? So now, I want you to tell me about this time that you just remembered, when [other kid] said something to you or did something to you and you ended up feeling hurt. I want you to tell me the whole story so I can understand what happened between the two of you. And when you're telling me what happened, try and think especially about anything that shows that when [other kid] did that, maybe [he/she] wasn't really trying to hurt you.*”

Narratives were elicited about incidents with friends or known peers as these experiences are more likely to be represented and remembered in rich and detailed ways

(Shantz, 1993). Furthermore, when children nominated a transgression between themselves and related children such as siblings and cousins, they were asked to think about a different time with a peer that was not related to them. We did that because we were specifically interested in peer relations and research on conflicts with siblings show that children construe these events differently than their peer conflicts (Recchia, Wainryb, & Pasupathi, 2013).

The interviewer encouraged participants to continue speaking by using general prompts ("*uh huh…*," "*and…?*") or by repeating verbatim part of what the child said ("*So Alicia ended up not playing with you…*"). This was done to ensure that the interviewer does not provide cues for the structure of the child's narrative (Peterson & McCabe, 1983; Wainryb et al., 2005). When the child appeared to have finished providing their narrative account, the interviewer first asked a general probe ("*Is there anything else you can tell me about that time?*"), and then a probe specific to their narrative condition. In the _prototypical victim perspective_ condition, participants were asked*: "Do you remember anything else that you thought or felt when [other kid] [describe harmful action]?*" In the _consideration of the perpetrator's experience_ condition, participants were asked: "*Can you think of anything else that [other kid] may have been thinking or feeling when he/she [describe harmful action]?*" In the _consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intention_ condition, participants were asked: "*Can you think of anything else about what happened at that time that shows that [other kid] maybe wasn't trying to hurt you?*"

Following the narrative, participants were asked several questions assessing their judgment of the event, the perpetrator, and the self. Each question was asked with an

accompanied by a 5-point scale that had circles ranging in size. These questions were preceded by a short introduction: "*Okay, what you just told me about what happened between you and [other kid] was really helpful. Now I would like to ask you some more questions about it, to make sure I understand how you think and feel and about what happened.*"

Judgments about the event

1. <u>Act evaluation</u>: "*When you think back about what [other kid] did, do you think it was okay or not okay for him/her to [describe action]?*"

2. <u>Act justification</u>: "*Why do you think it was [okay/not okay] for [other kid] to [describe action]?*"

3. <u>Present emotions</u>*: "When you think back about what happened between you and [other kid],*

   a. *How sad do you feel <u>right now</u>? Do you feel not sad at all (1), very, very sad (5), or somewhere in between?*

   b. *How mad do you feel <u>right now</u>? Do you feel not mad at all (1), very, very mad (5), or somewhere in between?*"

Judgments about the perpetrator

1. <u>Blame attribution</u>: "*Now I want to ask you about whose fault it was that you ended up feeling hurt. You know how when something upsetting happens, sometimes it is one person's fault, and sometimes it can be the fault of more than*

one person? Okay – so when [other kid] [describe action] and you ended up

feeing hurt or upset about it,

   a. *How much was it his fault that you ended up feeling hurt? Was it not his/her*

       fault at all that you ended up feeling hurt or upset (1), was it totally his/her

       fault that you ended up feeling hurt or upset (5), or was it somewhere in the

       middle?

   b. *How much was it your fault that you ended up feeling hurt? Was it not your*

       fault at all that you ended up feeling hurt or upset (1), was it totally your fault

       that you ended up feeling hurt or upset (5), or was it somewhere in the

       middle?"

2. <u>Feelings about the perpetrator</u>: "*Now I want to ask you about how you feel right*

   now towards [other kid]. When you think about [other kid] <u>right now</u>,

   a. *How mad do you feel at him/her? Do you feel <u>not</u> mad at him/her (1), <u>very,</u>*

       <u>very</u> mad at him/her (5), or somewhere in the middle?

   b. *When you think about [other kid] <u>right now</u>, how much do you like him/her?*

       Do you not like him/her <u>at all</u> (1), do you like him/her <u>a lot</u> (5), or somewhere

       in the middle?"

3. <u>Forgiveness</u>: "*Thank you- your answers are helping me understand how you think*

   about this. Now I want to ask you a few more questions about how you feel about

   what happened. First, I want to know if you sometimes think about getting back at

   [other kid] for what he/she did. When you think back about the time when [other

   kid] [describe action] and you ended up feeling hurt,

a. *Do you feel like you don't want to get back at him/her at all (1), like you would really want to get back at him/her for what he/she did (5), or is it somewhere in between?*

b. *And when you think back about what [other kid] did to you, do you feel that you have, not forgiven him <u>at all</u> (1), <u>totally forgiven</u> him/her (5), or somewhere in between?*

Judgment about the self

1 Feelings and thoughts about the self:

a. *When you think back about that time between you and [other kid], does what happened between the two of you make you think that you are not powerless (1), very, very powerless (5), or somewhere in between?*

b. *Does what happened between the two of you make you think that you not at all easy to get along with (1), you are really easy to get along with (5), or somewhere in between?*

c. *And again, thinking back about what happened between you and [other kid], does that make you think that most kids don't like you that much (1), that most kids like you really well (5), or somewhere in between?*

d. *When you think back about what happened between you and [other kid], does that make you think that you are not a very kind and caring person (1), that you are a very kind and caring person (5), or somewhere in between?*

e. *And finally, when you think back about what happened between you and*

[other kid], does that make you think that you are not a very fair person (1),

that you are a very fair person (5), or somewhere in between?

Finally, to end the interview on a positive note, participants were asked to narrate a 'Happy' event. This event was not scored, but served as a mood manipulation. Participants were told: "*Now we're almost done, but before you leave I want to ask you about another time – this time, I want you to think about a time when another kid you know did or said something to you and you ended up feeling happy about it. I want you to try and remember a time that was really important to you. When you think about a time like that, I want you to tell me the whole story so I can understand what happened between the two of you.*"

All the participants were individually interviewed in a private room at their school, home, or in the Social Development lab at the University of Utah. Interviews were audiotaped, and were subsequently transcribed.

Scoring and Reliability

Narratives from the consideration of the perpetrator's experience condition were coded according to the different ways that children spontaneously attribute the perpetrator's intentions. Whereas some participants attributed benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator, others attributed malevolent intentions (see Appendix A). Participants who could not be coded into one of the 2 categories either because they could not make any attributions to the perpetrator's intentions (e.g., "*Well, I don't really know. I think... uh... I'm trying to figure this out... but I don't know why she would do that*") or participants who made ambiguous attributions (e.g., "*He has an older brother*

that sometimes pushes him around and bosses him around, so maybe that is why he pushed me") were dropped from subsequent analysis because we could not ascertain from their responses whether they attributed benevolent/ neutral or malevolent intentions to the perpetrator.

The assessment of children's judgment of the act included both evaluation ("Was it okay/not okay") and justifications ("Why was it okay/not okay"). Children's justifications of the acts were scored using categories adapted from previous moral research (Davidson, Turiel, & Black, 1983; Wainryb et al., 2005). Justifications (see Table 1) included such categories as harm to victim (e.g., "It wasn't okay because it hurt my feelings"), harm to relationship (e.g., "It wasn't okay because we have been best friends since like forever and she shouldn't have ruined it"), trust violation (e.g., "It wasn't okay because it was a promise and we shouldn't break promises"), rules and authority (e.g., "Our school policy's like don't harm others and be respectful, and be responsible and safe. And I think he broke one of those rules"), and no intent to harm (e.g., "She didn't do it on purpose so I thought it was kind of okay").

Scoring reliability was assessed through independent scoring of all the justifications by a second judge. Interrater reliability of justification was Cohen's k =,89, p <.001 for harm to victim, Cohen's k = .75, p <.001 for harm to relationship, Cohen's k = .71, p <.001 for trust violation, Cohen's k = .85, p <.001 for rules and authority, and Cohen's k = 1, p <.001 for the scoring of no intent to harm.

Table 1

Categories used for scoring act justifications

Categories	Descriptions and Examples
Harm to victim	References to harmful consequences to the victim (e.g., "It wasn't okay because it hurt my feelings").
Harm to relationship	References to harmful consequences to the relationship with the perpetrator and other peers (e.g., "It wasn't okay because we have been best friends since like forever and she shouldn't have ruined it").
Trust violation	References to the violation of issues of trust (e.g., "It wasn't okay because it was a promise and we shouldn't break promises").
Rules and authority	Appeals to expectations of authorities or the existence of rules (e.g., "Our school policy's like don't harm others and be respectful, and be responsible and safe. And I think he broke one of those rules").
No intent to harm	References to perpetrator's actions being accidental, intended to aid the victim, or intended to avoid negative outcomes (e.g., "She didn't do it on purpose so I thought it was kind of okay").

RESULTS

The preliminary analyses yielded no significant effect or interaction for gender; gender was therefore dropped from subsequent analyses. Checks for skewness and kurtosis were conducted and it was shown that the different narrative condition groups were normally distributed on the dependent variables. Analyses were conducted using ANOVA-based procedures. For all analyses, *post hoc* comparisons using a Bonferroni *t*-test were performed to test for significant between-subjects effects.

Manipulation Check

In order to examine whether participants' narratives in each condition included features relevant to their narrative condition, such that, (a) participants in the *prototypical victim perspective* condition maintained a self-referential focus, (b) participants in the *consideration of the perpetrator's experience* condition included the perpetrator's intentions, thoughts and feelings, and (c) participants in the *consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions* condition included reasons that show that the perpetrator was not trying to hurt them, their narrative accounts were examined for the presence of several narrative features. These narrative features included the presence of the narrator's thoughts and feelings, the presence of the perpetrator's intentions, thoughts, and feelings, and the presence of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions. To examine the differences among the narrative conditions on the various narrative features, three

chi-squared tests were conducted. As expected, findings revealed significant differences between the narrative condition groups in the presence of the narrator's thoughts and feelings, $\chi2$ (3, N=74) = 18.25, $p < .001$, presence of the perpetrator's intentions, thoughts, and feelings, $\chi2$ (3, N=74) = 55.51, $p < .001$, and presence of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions, $\chi2$ (3, N=74) = 70.11, $p < .001$ by narrative condition. Therefore, participants in the various narrative conditions provided narrative accounts that significantly differed in the presence of the various narrative features. Relatedly, whereas no participant in the *consideration of the perpetrator's perspective* condition – whether they attributed benevolent/ neutral intentions to the perpetrator or they attributed malevolent intentions to the perpetrator – failed the manipulation, 5 participants in the *consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent* condition, and 1 participant in the *prototypical victim perspective* condition failed the manipulation (see Table 2). These participants were thus removed from further analysis.

<u>Were children in different narrative conditions narrating similarly</u>

<u>distressing and morally relevant events?</u>

It will be recalled that participants were asked four prenarrative questions that were used to facilitate the interviewing process and examine whether differences existed among participants in the conditions on their experience of hurt. Participants nominated events whose time since the event ranged between a few hours to 2 years prior to the interview (see Table 3). To examine whether differences existed between the narrative conditions in the elapsed time, a chi-square test was conducted. No significant differences existed among the conditions, $\chi2$ (3, N=71) = 7.43, $p > .05$.

Table 2

Manipulation check elements by narrative condition (raw count)

	VP	PP-B/N	PP-M	Non-Mal
Narrator's thoughts and feelings	23	5	16	14
Perpetrator's thoughts and feelings	1	13	21	11
Perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions	0	13	0	18
Passed manipulation	22	13	21	18
Failed	1	0	0	5

Note. VP = Prototypical victim perspective condition, PP-B/N = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of benevolent/neutral intentions, PP=M = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of malevolent intentions, Non-Mal = Consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions.

Table 3

Elapsed time since the conflict event by narrative condition (raw count)

	VP	PP-B/N	PP-M	Non-Mal
Less than a week	2	1	2	4
More than a week, less than a month	1	4	3	3
More than one month, less than one year	16	6	14	10
More than one year	1	1	2	1

Note: VP = Prototypical victim perspective condition, PP-B/N = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of benevolent/neutral intentions, PP=M = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of malevolent intentions, Non-Mal = Consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions.

Responses to the remaining questions (i.e., "How upset were you when that happened? How wrong was what [other kid] did or said to you?") were analyzed by means of MANOVA by condition. A MANOVA was conducted on these responses since they were moderately positive correlated, r (69) = .50, p < .001. As expected, the MANOVA revealed no significant difference among the groups on the two prenarrative questions, F (6, 132) = .666, p > .05, η_p2 = .030. Participants reported having felt kind of upset at the time of the event, and thought that what the perpetrator did was kind of wrong. The mean distribution of the participants' responses regarding the prenarrative questions by condition is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Children's mean ratings about level of distress and wrongness of the conflict event by narrative condition

	VP Mean (*SD*)	PP-B/N Mean (*SD*)	PP-M Mean (*SD*)	Non-Mal Mean (*SD*)
Upset	3.67 (.73)	3.54 (.66)	3.3 (.86)	3.41 (.94)
Wrong	3.57 (.93)	3.12 (1.36)	3.4 (1.14)	3.29 (1.16)

Note: Means based on 5-point scale. Upset, 1 = not upset at all, 5 = very, very upset. Wrong, 1 = not wrong at all, 5 = very wrong). VP = Prototypical victim perspective condition, PP-B/N = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of benevolent/neutral intentions, PP=M = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of malevolent intentions, Non-Mal = Consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions.

How are the different ways in which children narrate about a time

when they were the target of harm related to their

judgments about the event, the perpetrator,

and the self?

Several MANOVAs were conducted on responses to questions that were

moderately positive or negative correlated with each other. Table 5 shows the correlation

matrix of all dependent variables on a likert rating scale. As you can see in the table, "Act

evaluation" and "Perpetrator blame" were correlated with each other and were thus

analyzed as multiple dependent variables in a MANOVA. Secondly, "Sad," "Mad," and

"Mad at perpetrator" were significantly correlated with each other and were thus

analyzed as multiple dependent variables using MANOVA. Thirdly, "Get back at

perpetrator" and "Forgive" were significantly correlated with each other and were

analyzed as multiple dependent variables in another MANOVA. Fourthly, "Like

perpetrator" and "Most kids like you" were significantly correlated and were analyzed as

multiple dependent variables in a MANOVA. Finally, "Easy to get along with," "Kind

and caring," and "Fair" were significantly correlated and were analyzed as multiple

dependent variables in a MANOVA. Table 6 shows the MANOVAs carried out on all

dependent variables that are moderately negative or positive correlated by narrative

condition.

First, a MANOVA conducted on the responses to the act evaluation and

perpetrator blame attributions questions revealed no significant differences among the

conditions, $F(6, 136) = 1.28$, $p > .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Generally speaking, across the different

conditions, the majority of children (88%) thought that the perpetrator's actions depicted

in their narratives accounts were wrong – 62% thought the actions were very wrong and

Table 5

Correlations of all dependent variables on a likert-scale rating

	Act eval.	Sad	Mad	Perp. blame	Self-blame	Mad at perp.	Like perp.	Get back at perp.	Forgive perp.	Power less	Easy to get along	Most kids like you	Kind and caring	Fair
Act eval.	1													
Sad	.02	1												
Mad	.08	.49***	1											
Perp. blame	.27*	.1	.13	1										
Self-blame	-.03	-.10	-.003	-.08	1									
Mad at perp.	.21	.42***	.30***	.07	.21	1								
Like perp.	-.07	-.21	-.53***	-.17	-.03	-.39**	1							

Note. *p <.05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 5 (*continued*)

	Act eval	Sad	Mad	Perp. blame	Self-blame	Mad at perp.	Like perp.	Get back at perp.	Forgive perp.	Powerless	Easy to get along with	Most kids like you	Kind and caring	Fair
Get back at perp.	.12	.14	.39**	.06	.14	.30**	-.18	1						
Forgive perp.	-.17	-.33**	-.57***	.07	-.07	-.59***	.59***	-.39***	1					
Powerless	.13	.25*	-.1	.13	-.14	.30	.01	.25*	-.18	1				
Easy to get along	.06	-.25*	-.26**	.13	-.1	-.29*	.23	-.05	.32*	-.17	1			
Most kids like you	-.08	.04	-.23	.04	-.09	-.12	.33**	-.11	.33**	-.04	.34**	1		
Kind and caring	.05	.08	-.03	.21	-.22	-.07	-.19	-.10	.05	-.19	.35**	.25*	1	
Fair	.15	-.11	-.09	.13	-.2	-.19	.07	-.04	.21	-.05	.24*	.2	.38***	1

Note. *p <.05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 6

MANOVAs on dependent variables that are moderately negative or positive correlated by narrative condition

	VP Mean (*SD*)	PP-B/N Mean (*SD*)	PP-M Mean (*SD*)	Non-Mal Mean (*SD*)	df	*F*	η_p^2	Power
MANOVA 1					6, 136	1.28	.05	.49
Act evaluation	4.68 (.48)	4.31 (.95)	4.52 (.81)	4.49 (.93)	3,69	.85	.04	.23
Perpetrator Blame	3.82 (.8)	3.12 (1)	3.8 (.93)	3.33 (1)	3,69	2.22	.09	.54
MANOVA 2					9,165.65	1.06	.04	.42
Sad	2.59 (1.26)	1.92 (.95)	2.29 (1.27)	2.28 (1.13)	3,70	.88	.04	.23
Mad	2.28 (1.07)	1.46 (.78)	2.19 (1.25)	2.22 (1.06)	3,70	.05	.05	.23
Mad at perpetrator	2.3 (.96)	2 (1.15)	2.67 (1.35)	2.64 (1.23)	3,70	1.8	.07	.45
MANOVA 3					6,138	1.02	.04	.39
Get back at perpetrator	1.82 (1.26)	1.5 (.76)	1.62 (1.07)	1.67 (1.03)	3,70	.26	.01	.10
Forgive	3.22 (1.6)	4.39 (1.04)	3.5 (1.3)	3.39 (1.46)	3,70	2.02	.08	.50

Note. *p <.05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Means are based on 5-point scale. Act evaluation, 1 = okay, 5 = not okay at all. Perpetrator blame, 1 = not [other kid]'s fault at all, 5 = very much [other kid]'s fault. Sad, 1 = not sad at all, 5 = very, very sad. Mad, 1 = not mad at all, 5 = very, very mad. Mad at the perpetrator, 1 = not mad at the perpetrator, 5 = very mad at the perpetrator. Get back at perpetrator, 1 = I do not like the perpetrator at all, 5 = I want to get back at the perpetrator. Forgive, 1 = I have not forgiven the perpetrator, 5 = I have forgiven the perpetrator. VP = Prototypical victim perspective condition, PP-B/N = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of benevolent/neutral intentions, PP=M = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of malevolent intentions, Non-Mal = Consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions.

Table 6 (*continued*)

	VP Mean (*SD*)	PP-B/N Mean (*SD*)	PP-M Mean (*SD*)	Non-Mal Mean (*SD*)	df	*F*	η_p^2	Power
MANOVA 4					6,138	2.97**	.11	.89
Like perpetrator	2.27$_a$ (1.03)	3.85$_b$ (1.21)	2.76 (1.48)	2.83 (1.1)	3,70	4.55**	.16	.87
Most kids like you	4 (1)	3.77 (.93)	3.79 (1.23)	3.7 (1.07)	3,70	.27	.01	.10
MANOVA 5					9,165.65	2.70**	.11	.87
Easy to get along with	4 (1.02)	4.12 (.96)	3.21 (1.31)	3.61 (1.14)	3,70	2.43	.09	.58
Kind and caring	4.27$_a$ (.70)	4 (.71)	4.1 (.77)	3.56$_b$ (1.04)	3,70	2.69*	.10	.63
Fair	4.18 (.8)	4.46 (.78)	4.52$_a$ (.68)	3.83$_b$ (.86)	3,70	2.97*	.11	.68

Note. *p <.05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Means are based on 5-point scale. Easy to get along with, 1 = not easy to get along with, 5 = you are very easy to get along with. Kind and caring, 1 = you are not a kind and caring person, 5 = you are a kind and caring person. Fair, 1 = you are not a fair person, 5 = you are a very fair person. Like perpetrator, 1 = I do not like the perpetrator at all, 5 = I like the perpetrator a lot. Most kids like you, 1 = most kids don't like you that much, 5 = most kids like you. VP = Prototypical victim perspective condition, PP-B/N = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of benevolent/neutral intentions, PP=M = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of malevolent intentions, Non-Mal = Consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions.

27% thought the actions were kind of wrong. Similarly, participants thought that the perpetrator was mostly to blame for their experience of hurt.

Second, a MANOVA was conducted on responses to questions that tapped into the narrator's emotional state and feelings about the perpetrator (i.e., "How sad do you feel right now? How mad do you feel right now? How mad do you feel at the perpetrator right now?"). Findings revealed no significant differences among the conditions, F (9, 165.65)=1.06, p >.05, η_p^2 = .04. When asked about their present emotional state, most participants reported feeling a little sad and a little mad. Similarly, participants across the narrative conditions reported feeling a little mad at the perpetrator participants.

Third, a MANOVA conducted on responses related to forgiveness and revenge revealed no significant differences among the narrative conditions, F (6,138)=1.02, p >.05, η_p^2 = .04. Across the narrative conditions, participants reported having little desire to get back at the perpetrator, and feeling like they have mostly forgiven the perpetrator.

Fourth, a MANOVA conducted on responses to the questions "How much do you like the perpetrator right now? Does what happened make you think that most kids like you?" found significant differences among the conditions, F (6,138)=2.97, p = .009, η_p^2 = .11. Post hoc tests revealed significant differences between participants in the narrative conditions on the responses to the question "How much do you like the perpetrator?" and follow-up ANOVAs revealed that participants in the _consideration of the perpetrator's experience_ condition who attributed benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator reported liking the perpetrator more than participants in the _prototypical victim perspective_ condition, F (3, 70) = 4.55, p = .006, η_p^2 = .163.

Fifth, a MANOVA conducted on responses to the questions "Does what happened

make you think you are easy to get along with? Does what happened make you are a kind and caring person? Does what happened make you think you are a fair person" revealed significant differences among the conditions, $F(9,165.65) = 2.70$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$.Follow-up ANOVAs and post hoc tests showed that participants in the *consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intention* condition, as compared to participants in the *prototypical victim perspective* condition were more likely to report that they were less kind and caring, $F(3, 70)=2.69$, $p=.05$, $\eta_p^2 = .104$ and participants in *the consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intention* condition, as compared to participants in the *consideration of the perpetrator's perspective* who spontaneously attributed malevolent intentions to the perpetrator were more likely to report being less fair, $F(3, 70)=2.97$, $p=.038$, $\eta_p^2 = .113$. Across the groups, most kids think they are easy to get along with.

A MANOVA conducted to analyze the proportion of children's act justification by condition revealed no significant difference among the groups, $F(15, 182.598) = 1.6$, $p > .05$, $\eta_p^2 = 11$. When asked to justify their evaluations, the majority of children across conditions responded that it was wrong because of the resulting harm to the victim (67.6%), 2.7 % thought it was wrong because of the harm to the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, 5.4% thought it was wrong because it violated trust, 1.4% thought it was not wrong because the perpetrator had no intent to harm the victim, and the rest of the participants (22.9%) had mixed justifications (see Table 7).

Finally, two separate ANOVAs were conducted on the responses to the questions "How much was it your fault that you ended up feeling hurt?" and "How powerless do you feel right now." Both ANOVAs yielded no significant differences among the groups, $F(3, 70) = .5$, $p = .68$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$ and $F(3, 70) = 1.48$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, respectively.

Table 7

Proportions of types of justification by narrative condition

	VP Mean (*SD*)	PP-B/N Mean (*SD*)	PP-M Mean (*SD*)	Non-Mal Mean (*SD*)
Harm to victim	.82 (.36)	.73 (.39)	.9 (.2)	.61 (.4)
Harm to relationship	.02 (.1)	0 (0)	.05 (.15)	.17 (.4)
Trust violation	.11 (.31)	.08 (.28)	0 (0)	.08 (.26)
Rules and authority	0 (0)	.07 (.19)	.02 (.11)	0 (0)
No intent to harm	0 (0)	.12 (.3)	.02 (.11)	.08 (.19)

Note: Mean proportions may not add up to 1.00 because of rounding. VP = Prototypical victim perspective condition, PP-B/N = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of benevolent/neutral intentions, PP=M = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of malevolent intentions, Non-Mal = Consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions.

Most participants thought that they had little to do with their experience of hurt and reported feeling somewhat powerless (see Table 8).

Table 8

Children's responses to how much it was their fault and how powerless they felt by narrative condition

	VP Mean (*SD*)	PP-B/N Mean (*SD*)	PP-M Mean (*SD*)	Non-Mal Mean (*SD*)
Self-blame	1.82 (.8)	1.96 (.43)	1.95 (.8)	2.14 (1.05)
Powerless	2.96 (1.53)	2.46 (1.66)	2.81 (1.44)	2.06 (1.16)

Note: Means are based on a 5-point scale. Self-blame, 1 = not my fault at all, 5 = very much my fault. Powerless, 1 = not powerless at all, 5 = very, very powerless. VP = Prototypical victim perspective condition, PP-B/N = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of benevolent/neutral intentions, PP=M = Consideration of the perpetrator's perspective- attribution of malevolent intentions, Non-Mal = Consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions.

DISCUSSION

The main goal of the present study was to examine whether the different ways that children narrate about a time when a peer hurt them are related to their judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self. In some ways, our results revealed that children's victim narrative account do indeed shape some judgments but not all judgments. Specifically, narrating did not appear to shape children's judgments about the event, in that, irrespective of the ways in which children recounted their victim narrative accounts, they judged harshly the perpetrator's actions and mostly based these judgments on their experience of harm. Consider the following examples of the evaluations and justifications given from children from the various narrative conditions (all names are pseudonyms):

> *It was not okay at all because like, if you're playing with someone and they just sort of made fun of you, it is not okay because, like it will hurt your feelings and like maybe, you friendship will go away and like you wont talk to each other for a long time, and you wont be able to-, you'll still be able to play, but just not the same because you're not friends like you used to be* (10-year-old girl, prototypical victim perspective).

> *We were playing around and fooling around and he called me stupid and it was not okay because that was, um, that hurt my feelings* (11-year-old boy, consideration of the perpetrator's perspective, benevolent or neutral intentions).

> *It was not okay at all [for Kelsey to spread rumors about me] because maybe if she told me friends they would bully me and then they would not like me anymore and that would really hurt my feelings because, well, I really like my friends and then I don't want us to get into fights or anything* (11-year-old girl, consideration of the perpetrator's perspective, malevolent intentions).

It was not okay at all [for Kelsey to spread rumors about me] because maybe if she told my friends they would bully me and then they won't like me anymore and that would really hurt my feelings because, well, I really like my friends and then I don't want us to get into fights or anything (11- year-old girl, consideration of the perpetrator's perspective, malevolent intentions).

I think that she maybe didn't realize that she was doing it and um, she was trying to get everybody's attention but it kinda hurt my feelings when she did it. Because she didn't really have the right to yell at any of us even though she was upset (10-year-old girl, consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions).

From the above narratives, one can see that children's evaluation of the perpetrator's actions was based on their experience of hurt as well as the negative consequences to the relationship with the perpetrator and other peers. Although past research has shown that children tend to judge less harshly harmful actions that they attribute to be unintentional than those they attribute to be intentional (e.g., Berndt & Berndt, 1975; Darley, Klosson, & Zanna, 1978; Feldman, Klosson, Parsons, Rholes, & Ruble, 1976; Nelson-Le Gall, 1985; Shultz, Wright, & Schleifer, 1986), that distinction may occur when children make these judgments from conflict situations in which they were not personally involved, such as in the case of hypothetical events. However, in the case whereby children are asked to make judgments in which they were the targets of the harm, children rely on their experience of hurt to make these judgments irrespective of whether they consider the perpetrator's experience and attribute accidental or benevolent intentions to the perpetrator.

Relatedly, although by the age of 10 to 11 years old, children can take into consideration the perpetrator's intentions while making judgments about the perpetrator's actions (e.g., Shaw & Wainryb, 1999; Wainryb & Brehl, 2006), these children do not seem to be capable of integrating the perpetrator's intentions with their experience of hurt

and are thus led to make categorical judgments of behavior based on their experience. This is furthermore supported by evidence that shows that 16- year-olds are more likely than younger children to make mixed judgments about the perpetrator's actions after providing narrative accounts about a time when they were the target of harm (Wainryb et al., 2005). It is therefore our view that 10- to 11-year-olds attribution of the perpetrator's intentions as nonmalevolent is conflated by children's experience of hurt when making judgments about the perpetrator's actions.

Similarly, children's present emotional states do not appear to be shaped by children's narrative accounts. Across the different narrative conditions, children reported feeling a little sad and a little mad after narrating about a time when a peer hurt them. Although children reported feeling distressed at the time of the event, children's report of feeling a little sad and mad after providing their narrative account could be because of the lapse of time between the conflict event and day of the interview. That negative emotions fade with time has been found with numerous studies that have shown that negative affect to unpleasant events has a tendency to fade over time (e.g., Gibbons, Lee, & Walker, 2011; Walker, Skowronski, Gibbons, Vogl, & Thompson, 2003). Indeed, the majority of children recounted events that had happened more than a month prior to the time of the interview.

Importantly, although children's judgments about the perpetrator's actions and their emotional state at the time of narration did not appear to be shaped by the different ways that children can narrate about their victim experience, children's judgments about the perpetrator, and to a greater extent, the self, revealed that these different ways of narration are in fact related to children's judgments. For instance, consistent with

previous research that has shown that the consideration of another person's perspective promotes positive feelings towards that person (e.g., Batson, 1990; Batson et al., 1997), children who were prompted to consider the perpetrator's perspective reported liking the perpetrator more than children who narrated from their own victim perspective. Although an alternative explanation could be that children who like the perpetrator are more likely to spontaneously attribute benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator when prompted to consider the perpetrator's experience in their narrative accounts of being hurt, and indeed our data do not make a causal relationship between narrating and judgments, the fact that differences existed specifically between children who were in the *consideration of the perpetrator's perspective* condition and spontaneously attributed benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator and children in the *prototypical victim perspective* condition shows that, at the very least, inclusion of the perpetrator's experience in children's narrative accounts is differentially related to children's positive feelings about the perpetrator than narrating from an exclusive self-referential focus.

However, not all the judgments about the perpetrator are related to how children narrate about their victim experience. For instance, children's judgments about whether they were mad at the perpetrator, had the desire to get back at the perpetrator, or had forgiven the perpetrator were similar irrespective of how children narrated about their victim experience. There are several reasons for why some particular judgments about the perpetrator may be shaped by children's narrative accounts while others are not. For instance, it may be that some judgments about the perpetrator are more malleable to change while others come about as a result of complex interaction of several preceding features. More specifically, judgments such as whether the narrator liked the perpetrator

may be more subjective and influenced by whether the narrator spontaneously judges the perpetrator's intentions as benevolent. On the other hand, children's reported forgiveness and little desire to get back at the perpetrator may be influenced by other features of the interaction with the perpetrator than the different ways that children make sense of the event. Indeed, McCullough and his colleagues have reported that people's ability to forgive the perpetrator occurs due to a complex interaction of features such as the extent of the victim's vicarious experience of the perpetrator's emotional state as well as the victim's generous attribution of the perpetrator and the extent to which victims ruminate about the transgression (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; McCullough et al., 1997). Relatedly, like most negative feelings that dissipate with time (e.g., Gibbons, Lee, & Walker, 2011; Walker, Skowronski, Gibbons, Vogl, & Thompson, 2003; see also, Wainryb et al., 2005), anger towards the perpetrator may dissipate with time and children's different ways of narrating about their victim experience is not associated with children's expressed anger towards the perpetrator.

Similar to judgments about the perpetrator, the process of narrating about a victim experience is also associated with children's judgments about the self, especially when these judgments about the self are related to children's prosocial or moral attributes. Consistent with research that has shown that children's narrative accounts about their interpersonal conflicts can help or hinder the development of moral agency (e.g., Pasupathi & Wainryb, 2010; Recchia et al., 2013), children who are prompted to narrate about their victim experience while focusing on the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions reported being the least kind and caring and the least fair compared to children who narrated from the prototypical self-referential focus and children who considered the

perpetrator's experience and made spontaneous attributions about the perpetrator's intentions. A possible reason to why children's sense of themselves as moral and prosocial beings suffers in relation to being prompted to consider the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions could be that when adults prompt the child to consider the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions, the child may interpret their inability to make spontaneous attributions of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions to mean that they are less kind and caring or less fair. However, caution should be taken before coming to the inaccurate conclusion that adults should not prompt children to consider the possible benevolent or neutral intentions to the perpetrator. In situations where the adult can deduce that the perpetrator may have not intended to harm the narrator, adults can prompt children to consider the perpetrator's intentions and allow them to make their own attributions. Alternatively, adults can prompt children to consider the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions but explicitly reassure the child that their oversight of the perpetrator's possible nonmalevolent intentions does not mean that the child is less kind and caring or less fair.

Although children's prosocial and moral attributes about the self appear to be associated with how children construct their narrative accounts of being hurt, other types of self-judgments were not similarly associated. More specifically, the many ways that children construct their narrative accounts of being hurt does not appear to be related to children's judgments about the self in relation to their peer relationships. There are several reasons as to why that may not be the case. First, it may be that children's judgments reflected the overall positive tenor of their peer relationships and indeed, pre-adolescent children report having good relationships with peers (e.g., Buhrmester, 1992;

Cleary, Ray, LoBello, & Zachar, 2002). Secondly, although children are highly attuned to the needs of others (e.g., Komolova & Wainryb, 2011), most children recognize that interpersonal conflicts in which they end up being hurt are ubiquitous in peer relationships and thus their narrative about a time when they were the targets of harm does not reflect their overall view of themselves as likeable or easy to get along with.

Conclusions

The present study was designed to examine whether the different ways that children narrate about a time when they were the target of harm are related to their judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self. With this goal in mind, we asked children to furnish narrative accounts in one of the three narrative conditions – the *prototypical victim perspective* condition where children provided narrative accounts that were self-referential, the *consideration of the perpetrator's perspective* condition where children were prompted to include the perpetrator's intentions, emotions, and thoughts in their narrative accounts, and the *consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intention* group where children were prompted to include the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions in their narrative accounts. After providing these narrative questions, we asked children several questions that sought to tap into their judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self. Our findings revealed that children's narrative accounts are indeed related to their judgments about the perpetrator, and the self but not the judgments about the event.

Due to methodological constraints, our data cannot be used to make the case that the process of narrating does indeed shape children's judgments about the event, the perpetrator, and the self. An alternative and possible case can be made for how children's

judgments shape children's narrative accounts about their victim experience. Although participants were prompted to narrate in specific ways (i.e., self-referential victim perspective, consideration of the perpetrator's experience and consideration of the perpetrator's nonmalevolent intentions), children's inclusion of specific features in their narrative accounts such as the case whereby they made spontaneous attributions to the perpetrator's intentions when prompted to consider the perpetrator's experience could be influenced by prior judgments. Experimental research is therefore needed to examine this relationship. Further, future work is needed to examine the developmental differences in children's narrative accounts and how these differences may be related to the judgments they make about the event, the perpetrator, and the self.

Nevertheless, the present study makes a number of key contributions to research on children's interpersonal conflicts. First, our study builds on past research delineating how children make sense of a time when they were the target of harm (e.g., Wainryb et al., 2005) and how narrative accounts about interpersonal conflicts are related to the judgments formed about the event, the perpetrator, and the self (e.g., Libby, Eibach, & Gilovich, 2005; McGregor & Holmes, 1999; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Ross & Wilson, 2003). Finally, our findings have implications for how parents, educators, and other significant adults can intervene in children's interpersonal conflicts – by scaffolding children to consider the perpetrator's intentions but not forcing them to attribute nonmalevolent intentions to the perpetrator.

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