AMERICAN HANDBOOK OF PSYCHIATRY

YOUTH AND ITS IDEOLOGY

KENNETH KENISTON

YOUTH AND ITS IDEOLOGY

Kenneth Keniston

e-Book 2015 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *American Handbook of Psychiatry: Volume 1* edited by Silvano Arietti

Copyright © 1974 by Basic Books

All Rights Reserved

Created in the United States of America

Table of Contents

YOUTH AND ITS IDEOLOGY

The Psychohistorical Contingency of Life Stages

From Adolescence to Youth

Major Themes in Youth

Affective and Interpersonal Transformations in Youth

Ideology in Youth

Psychopathology in Youth

Social and Historical Implications

Bibliography

Notes

YOUTH AND ITS IDEOLOGY

Kenneth Keniston

Most discussions of the life cycle assume a certain fixity of life stages.[1] Psychiatrists, social scientists, and laymen in the Western world take for granted that life can be divided into a definite series of "stages," beginning with early infancy, continuing with two or three further stages during the preschool years, followed by a stage of "childhood" that extends until puberty, then by adolescence, early adulthood, and so on until old age and death. These are, after all, the stages of life that are acknowledged, sanctioned, and institutionalized in modern industrial societies.

The Psychohistorical Contingency of Life Stages

It has gone relatively unnoticed until recently that other societies and other historical eras segment the life cycle in different ways. As Erikson notes in his discussion of Indian concepts of the life cycle, there are indeed parallels between his own theory of human development and the traditional wisdom of Indian culture. But equally impressive are the differences—the "failures" of Indian tradition to recognize developmental milestones that are considered critical in Western society, the Indian emphasis on developmental issues that pass virtually without notice in the West. Similarly Eisenstadt, in his discussion of age-grading in the life cycle, underlines the enormous variability between societies in the extent to which they place children in narrowly

defined age-grades.

Historians, too, have recently pointed out that even in medieval European societies such apparently universal stages of life as childhood and adolescence were not recognized. For example, Aries, in his study of medieval concepts of the life cycle, shows that nothing like the modern notion of childhood existed. Instead, the medieval child at birth entered a stage of life called infancy, which lasted six or more years. After infancy he was simply considered a small adult, expected to dress and act like what we would today consider a grown-up. Obviously, medieval Western society must have recognized that those whom we call children were in some ways different from those whom we call adolescents and young adults. But this recognition was nowhere institutionalized or sanctioned. For example, insofar as schools existed at all, they were graded by ability, not age: the same medieval classroom might contain within it students from eight to 45, grouped on the basis of their mastery of the classical curriculum. Aries argues that a "sentimental" view of childhood only began to emerge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this new view children were thought to possess an "innocence" that required protection from the adult world; age- grading increasingly dominated the widening network of schools; and a stage of life corresponding to what we call "childhood" was gradually recognized and sanctioned.

Aries’s intent is largely to describe rather than to explain. But it is noteworthy that the recognition and sanctioning of childhood as a stage of life overlaps with social, technological, and economic changes that drastically altered medieval life. Specifically, childhood emerged and flourished alongside mercantile capitalism, which produced an increasingly large and prosperous bourgeoisie that could exempt its children from the work previously necessary for family economic survival. A mercantile society also required of an ever growing minority of the young a new fluency with written language and numbers that rarely could be taught at home. For the new clerks and merchants of the seventeenth century, education was no longer simply a kind of training for virtue through knowledge of the classical curriculum and the Scriptures. Increasingly it became a prerequisite for social mobility, wealth, and power. Furthermore, the development of an entrepreneurial society in Europe seems to have been impelled by the psychological qualities summarized in the concept of the Protestant ethic. And it may be that the development of these qualities requires a period of “protection” from adulthood that extends well beyond the medieval period of infancy. Clearly, then, the emergence of a concept of childhood is correlated with changes in the social and economic structure of Western Europe, which, in turn, transformed the matrix of opportunities and expectations within which children grew up.

If the widespread acceptance of childhood as a separate stage of life is

no more than three centuries old in Western societies, the concept of adolescence is even more recent. Freud, writing at the turn of the century, spoke of the "transformations of puberty," but did not discuss adolescence as a separate stage. Indeed, before the twentieth century it is hard to find references to a stage of life like our contemporary adolescence. John and Virginia Demos, reviewing nineteenth-century writings on childrearing and the family, note the virtual absence of mention of anything like modern adolescence until the latter part of the century. And even then those whom we would call adolescents were often discussed as a new problem, as what one writer called the "dangerous classes" who made up the street gangs that terrorized many nineteenth-century American cities. It was not until the twentieth century, and in large part because of the work of G. Stanley Hall, that adolescence was finally recognized, sanctioned, and culturally approved as a separate stage of life.

Once again the discovery of a "new" stage of life corresponded with major social and economic changes. Industrialization in a half a dozen nations began to transform the social, economic, and familial structures of those societies. The old working family, where parents and children labored side by side in fields and factories, gradually began to disappear. Urbanism increasingly supplanted an agrarian way of life. The growing productivity of industrialized societies made it possible to "excuse" ever larger numbers of postpubescent men and women from the requirements of work. In addition,

an industrial society required far more than rudimentary education from any young man or woman who aspired to status, respect, or wealth. Increasingly society demanded higher level skills that could rarely be taught at home, but that became the special province of the secondary schools that opened by the tens of thousands throughout America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In all these ways the "discovery" of adolescence corresponded with major social and economic changes that drastically affected the lives of children as they grew up.

The "discovery" of childhood and adolescence in Western societies during the last three or four centuries suggests that the segmentation of the life cycle is not a psychological or cultural constant, and that the way life stages are distinguished and defined is intimately related both to the social, economic, and technological conditions of a society and to the actual environment in which children grow up. To be sure, this correspondence between definitions of the life cycle, socioeconomic context, and the actual experiences of growing individuals is far from perfect. But the "discovery" of childhood and adolescence at times of major socioeconomic change suggests that concepts of life stages tend to correspond with, reflect, and sanction actual changes in the modal experience of young people as they grow up in any given society and historical era.

If these surmises be correct, they have far- reaching implications for the

understanding of human development. We have tended to assume that the development of all men and women is in some fundamental respect similar to that of those middle-class, relatively prosperous, and advantaged young men and women who constitute the source material for most contemporary theories of development. We have seen the life cycle as a kind of escalator, onto which the child steps at birth and up which he continues willy-nilly until he has passed through all the stages until death. This escalator model is a tempting one, for it corresponds with what we know of physiological maturation, which, barring the grossest of insults to the organism, tends to be relatively invariant in sequence regardless of social and historical conditions. The escalator model also corresponds with the fact that every society, however it defines the life cycle, does segment life in some way: age-grading, accompanied by different expectations concerning those in each age-grade, is culturally universal.

But human development, though related to both maturation and age-grading, is identical to neither. It entails qualitative changes in psychological functioning, presumably based upon what Anna Freud' calls the increasing “structuralization” of the personality or what Piaget calls the development of ever more complex and inclusive schemata. The escalator model does not correspond with our growing knowledge concerning the contexts, environments, or matrices that promote human development, when development is distinguished from both physiological maturation and social

age-grading.

Recent research has made clear that true psychological development is anything but automatic. On the contrary, development in every area, sector, or “developmental line” that has been examined turns out to be contingent upon what have been variously called environmental nutriments, supports, confirmations, or challenges. The most vivid example of developmental arrest in the absence of environmental facilitation comes from studies of institutionalized children who, if deprived of the necessary environmental supports and challenges during the first few years, suffer severe and probably irreversible retardations. " Furthermore, the utility of developmental concepts like fixation, foreclosure, arrest, retardation, and lag indicates the frequency of failures of development that occur either because of the absence of a facilitating environment or because of the presence of obstructions to psychological growth. At every stage of life and in every area of development, therefore, psychological development must be considered problematic rather than inevitable.

The contingency of human development may help us understand the large differences in the way different societies segment and organize the life cycle. For example, in many nonliterate and subsistence societies children are routinely expected to join their parents in adult work at around the age of seven or eight. What little we know about the conditions that stimulate

development in childhood suggests that such societies should have drastically different effects on the final cognitive and affective development of the typical adult, when compared with societies that insist on prolonged schooling during the same years. Literacy alone appears to have massive effects on development. For example, Bruner and his colleagues, working with nonliterate groups in Senegal, have shown that nonliterate children and adults cannot understand the question, “Why did you say that?” Bruner argues that only with literacy does there emerge a capacity to reflect upon language itself, to discuss propositions as objects of discourse.

If development is contingent, there may well be important developmental potentials that remain largely unactualized in some or most societies because these societies do not provide the needed developmental facilitations or because they place active obstructions in the way of development. Furthermore, we may discover that many definable adult “achievements” are not attained by many or most people in any given society. Such, indeed, seems to be the case. For example, the psychoanalytic concept of “genitality” refers to a psychosexual orientation that is often not realized. Similarly Kohlberg’s work on moral development (see below) has demonstrated empirically the existence of high level structures of moral reasoning that are not attained by most Americans. Hauser’s” studies of noncollege-bound, working-class black and white adolescents suggest that identity foreclosure rather than development may be the rule, especially

among blacks. And other recent research suggests that a near majority of adult Americans lack certain aspects of the cognitive capacity for formal operations that in Piaget's work is said to emerge around the age of puberty.

Other examples abound, but the general point is surely clear. If we consider development contingent, and view the life cycle in a developmental sense not as an escalator but as a pitted and problematic path, then it becomes more comprehensible why some societies should recognize stages that others ignore. It is, of course, possible that some societies are simply "blind" to real developmental changes that actually occur in their young. But an alternative hypothesis is also opened: developmental stages may commonly occur in some societies, but these same stages (or the developmental changes and issues that define them) may be infrequent or virtually absent in other societies. Thus, major changes in the social, economic, technological, and familial matrix within which children grow up may either encourage the foreclosure of development or stimulate development to higher levels in any of a number of sectors or developmental lines.

The existing evidence—anthropological, historical, and scientific—therefore supports the hypothesis that shifting historical definitions of the life cycle reflect not merely shifting cultural fashions but actual changes in the developmental matrix within which the typical child grows up, and, thus, real

changes in the type and level of development actually experienced by typical children. It is unlikely that any stage will be recognized, approved, and sanctioned until a significant portion of the young have begun to pass through that stage. Furthermore, if we assume that developmental potentials are universal, while their actual unfolding is contingent, the variability of environments in all societies makes it likely that some rare individuals will pass through any given stage of life, even in a social context that makes entry into that stage very unlikely. Thus, once a stage is culturally recognized, we can look back in history and discover men and women who passed through it long before it was named and sanctioned. But the cultural "discovery" of a stage of life tends to coincide with a time when ever more young men and women are, in fact, entering this stage, exhibiting the visible hallmarks that accompany it, and developing—at least in certain areas—in different ways and perhaps to a greater extent than had previous generations.

From Adolescence to Youth

Today the concept of adolescence, first defined and disseminated by G. Stanley Hall, is unshakably enshrined in our view of human life. To be sure, the precise nature of adolescence still remains controversial. Some observers believe that Hall, like most psychoanalytic observers, vastly overestimated the inevitability of turbulence, rebellion, and upheaval in this stage of life. But whatever the exact definition of adolescence, no one today doubts its

existence. A stage of life that barely existed a century ago is now universally accepted as an inherent part of the human condition.

In the seven decades since Hall made adolescence a household word, American society has once again transformed itself. From the industrial era of the turn of the century, we have moved into a new era without an agreed upon name—it has been called postindustrial, technological, postmodern, the age of mass consumption, the technetronic age. And a new generation, the first born in this new era of postwar affluence, television, and the Bomb, raised in the cities and suburbs of America, socially and economically secure, is now coming to maturity. Since 1900 the average amount of education received by children has increased by more than six years. In 1900 only 6.4 per cent of young Americans completed high school, while today almost 80 per cent do, and more than half of them begin college. In 1900 there were only 238,000 college students: in 1970 there were more than seven million, with ten million projected for 1980.

These massive social transformations are today reflected in new public anxieties. The "problem of youth," "the now generation," "troubled youth," "student dissent" and "the youth revolt" are topics of extraordinary concern to most Americans. No longer is our anxiety focused primarily upon the teen-ager, upon the adolescent of Hall's day. Today we are nervous about new "dangerous classes"— those young men and women of college and graduate

school age who can't seem to "settle down" the way their parents did, who refuse to consider themselves adult, and who often vehemently challenge the existing social order. In mid-1970 "campus unrest" was considered America's foremost problem.

The factors that have brought this new group into existence parallel in many ways the factors that produced adolescence: rising prosperity, the further prolongation of education, the enormously high educational demands of a postindustrial society. Behind these measurable changes lie other trends less quantitative but even more important: a rate of social change so rapid that it threatens to make obsolete all institutions, values, methodologies, and technologies within the lifetime of each generation; a technology that has created not only prosperity and longevity but power to destroy the planet through warfare or violation of nature's balance; a world of extraordinarily complex social organization, instantaneous communication, and constant revolution. The "new" young men and young women emerging today both reflect and react against these trends.

But if we search among the concepts of psychology for a word to describe these young men and women, we find none that is adequate. Characteristically they are referred to as "late adolescents and young adults"—a phrase whose very mouth-filling awkwardness attests to its inadequacy. Those who see in youthful behavior the remnants of childhood

immaturity naturally incline toward the concept of “adolescence” in describing the unsettled twenty-four-year-old, for this word makes it easier to interpret his objections to war, racism, pollution, or imperialism as “nothing but” delayed adolescent rebellion. To those who are more hopeful about today’s youth, “young adulthood” seems a more flattering phrase, for it suggests that maturity, responsibility, and rationality lie behind the unease and unrest of many contemporary youths.

But in the end neither label seems fully adequate. The twenty-four-year-old seeker, political activist, or graduate student often turns out to have been through a period of adolescent rebellion ten years before, to be all too formed in his views, to have a stable sense of himself, and to be much further along in his psychological development than his fourteen- year-old high school brother. Yet he differs just as sharply from “young adults” of twenty- four whose place in society is settled, who are married and perhaps parents, and who are fully committed to an occupation. What characterizes a growing minority of postadolescents today is that they have not settled the questions whose answers once defined adulthood: questions of relationship to the existing society, questions of vocation, questions of social role and life style.

Faced with this dilemma, some writers have fallen back on the concept of “prolonged” or “stretched” adolescence—a concept that suggests that those who find it hard to settle down have failed the adolescent developmental task

of abandoning narcissistic fantasies and juvenile dreams of glory. Thus, one remedy for "protracted adolescence" might be some form of therapy that would enable the young to reconcile themselves to abilities and a world that are rather less than they had hoped. Another interpretation of youthful unease blames society, not the individual, for the "prolongation of adolescence." It argues that youthful unrest springs from the unwillingness of contemporary society to allow young men and women, especially students, to exercise the adult powers of which they are biologically and intellectually capable. According to this view, the solution would be to allow young people to "enter adulthood" and do "real work in the real world" at an earlier age.

Yet neither of these interpretations seems quite to the point. For while some young men and women are indeed victims of the psychological malady of "stretched adolescence," many others are less impelled by juvenile grandiosity than by a rather accurate analysis of the perils and injustices of the world in which they live. And plunging youth into the "adult world" at an earlier age would run directly counter to the wishes of many youths, who view adulthood with all of the enthusiasm of a condemned man for the guillotine. Far from seeking the adult prerogatives of their parents, they vehemently demand a virtually indefinite prolongation of their nonadult state.

If neither "adolescence" nor "early adulthood" quite describes the young

men and women who so disturb most highly industrialized societies today, what can we call them? My answer is to propose that we are witnessing today the emergence on a mass scale of a *previously unrecognized stage of life,* a stage that intervenes between adolescence proper and adulthood. I propose to call this stage of life the stage of *youth,* assigning to this venerable but vague term a new and more specific meaning. Like Hall's adolescence, "youth" is in no absolute sense new: indeed, once having defined this stage of life, we can study its historical emergence, locating individuals and groups who have had a "youth" in the past.* But what is "new" is that this stage of life is today being entered, not by tiny minorities of unusually creative or unusually disturbed young men and women, but by millions of young people in all the nations of the world.

Like all stages youth is a stage of transition rather than of completion. In the remarks that follow I will attempt to define this emergent stage in several ways. First, I will comment on some of the major themes that dominate consciousness, development, and behavior during this stage. But human development rarely if ever proceeds on all fronts simultaneously: instead, we must think of development as consisting of a series of sectors or "developmental lines," each of which may be in or out of phase with the others. Thus, an account of youth must include an account of the more specific transformations in feeling, behavior, and personal relationships that occur during this stage. Third, youth is of all stages of life that in which issues of

ideology, built on cognitive, intellectual, and ethical development, play the most visible and central role. Fourth, youth, like all stages of life, has its own stage- specific psychopathology, just as disturbances common to other stages of life may take a specific youthful form. And finally I will try to make clear what youth is not, in order to underline what it is. What follows, then, is a preliminary sketch of the issues that seem important to understanding youth as an emergent stage of life.

Major Themes in Youth

Perhaps the central conscious issue during youth is the *tension between self and society.* In adolescence young men and women tend to accept their society's definitions of them as rebels, truants, conformists, athletes, or achievers. But in youth the relationship between socially assigned labels and the "real self" becomes more problematic and constitutes a focus of central concern. The awareness of actual or potential conflict, disparity, lack of congruence between what one is (one's identity, values, integrity) and the resources and demands of the existing society increases. The adolescent is struggling to define who he is; the youth begins to sense who he is and thus to recognize the possibility of conflict and disparity between his emerging selfhood and his social order.

In youth *pervasive ambivalence* toward both self and society is the rule:

the question of how the two can be made more congruent is often experienced as a central problem of youth. This ambivalence is not the same as definitive rejection of society, nor does it necessarily lead to political activism. For ambivalence may also entail intense self-rejection, including major efforts at self-transformation employing the methodologies of personal transformation that are culturally available in any historical era: monasticism, meditation, psychoanalysis, prayer, hallucinogenic drugs, hard work, religious conversion, introspection, and so forth. In youth, therefore, the potential and ambivalent conflicts between autonomous selfhood and social involvement, between the maintenance of personal integrity and the achievement of effectiveness in society, are fully experienced for the first time.

The effort to reconcile and accommodate these two poles involves a characteristic stance vis-a-vis both self and world, perhaps best described by the concept of the *wary probe.* For the youthful relationship to the social order consists not merely in the experimentation more characteristic of adolescence, but with more serious forays into the adult world, through which its vulnerability, strength, integrity, and possibilities are assayed. Adolescent experimentation is more concerned with self-definition than are the probes of youth, which may lead to more lasting commitments. This testing, exacting, challenging attitude may be applied to all representatives and aspects of the existing social order, sometimes in anger and expectation of disappointment, sometimes in the urgent hope of finding honor, fidelity,

and decency in society, and often in both anger and hope. With regard to the self, too, there is constant self-probing in search of strength, weakness, vulnerability, and resiliency; constant self-scrutiny designed to test the individual's capacity to withstand or use what his society would make of him, ask of him, and allow him.

Phenomenologically youth is a time of alternating *estrangement and omnipotentiality.* The estrangement of youth entails feelings of unreality, absurdity, isolation, and disconnectedness from the interpersonal, social, and phenomenological world. Such feelings are probably more intense during youth than during any other period of life. In part they spring from the actual disengagement of youth from society; in part they grow out of the psychological sense of incongruence between self and world. Much of the psychopathology of youth involves such feelings, experienced as the depersonalization of the self or the derealization of the world.

Omnipotentiality is the opposite but secretly related pole of estrangement. It is the feeling of absolute freedom, of living in a world of pure possibilities, of being able to change or achieve anything. There may be times when complete self-transformation seems possible, when the self is experienced as putty in one's own hands. At other times, or for other youths, it is the nonself that becomes totally malleable; then one feels capable of totally transforming another's life, or of creating a new society with no roots

whatsoever in the mire of the past. Omnipotentiality and estrangement are obviously related: the same sense of freedom and possibility that may come from casting off old inhibitions, values, and constraints may also lead directly to a feeling of absurdity, disconnectedness, and estrangement.

Another characteristic of youth is the *refusal of socialization* and acculturation. In keeping with the intense and wary probing of youth, the individual characteristically begins to become aware of the deep effects upon his personality of his society and his culture. At times he may attempt to break out of his prescribed roles, out of his culture, out of history, and even out of his own skin. Youth is a time when earlier socialization and acculturation are self- critically analyzed, and when massive efforts may be made to uproot the now alien traces of historicity, social membership, and culture. Needless to say, these efforts are invariably accomplished within a social, cultural, and historical context, using historically available methods. Youth’s relationship to history is therefore paradoxical. Although it may try to reject history altogether, youth does so in a way defined by its historical era, and these rejections may even come to define that era.

In youth we also observe the emergence of *youth-specific identities* and roles. These contrast both with the more ephemeral enthusiasms of the adolescent and with the more established commitments of the adult. They may last for months, years, or a decade, and they inspire deep commitment in

those who adopt them. Yet they are inherently temporary and specific to youth: today's youthful hippies, radicals, communards, and seekers often recognize full well that, however reluctantly, they will eventually become older and that aging itself will change their status. Some such youth-specific identities may provide the foundation for later commitments; but others must be viewed in retrospect as experiments that failed or as probes of the existing society that achieved their purpose, which was to permit the individual to move on in other directions.

Another special issue during youth is the enormous value placed upon change, transformation, and *movement,* and the consequent abhorrence of *stasis.* To change, to stay on the road, to retain a sense of inner development or outer momentum is essential to many youths' sense of active vitality. The psychological problems of youth are experienced as most overwhelming when they seem to block change: thus, youth grows panicky when confronted with the feeling of "getting nowhere," of "being stuck in a rut," of "not moving."

At times the focus of change may be upon the self, and the goal is then to be moved. Thus, during youth we see the most strenuous, self-conscious, and even frenzied efforts at self-transformation, using whatever religious, cultural, therapeutic, or chemical means are available. At other times the goal may be to create movement in the outer world, to move others: then we may

see efforts at social and political change that in other stages of life rarely possess the same single-minded determination. On other occasions the goal is to move through the world, and we witness a frantic geographic restlessness, wild swings of upward or downward social mobility, or a compelling psychological need to identify with the highest and the lowest, the most distant and apparently alien.

The need for movement and terror of stasis often are a part of a heightened *valuation of development* itself, however development may be defined by the individual and his culture. In all stages of life, of course, all individuals often wish to change in specific ways: to become wittier, more attractive, more sociable, or wealthier. But in youth specific changes are often subsumed in the devotion to change itself—to “keep putting myself through the changes,” “not to bail out,” “to keep moving.” This valuation of change need not be fully conscious. Indeed, it often surfaces only in its inverse form, as the panic or depression that accompanies a sense of “being caught in a rut,” “not being able to change.” But for other youths change becomes a conscious goal in itself, and elaborate ideologies of the techniques of transformation and the *telos* of human life may be developed.

In youth, as in all other stages of life, *the fear of death* takes a special form. For the infant to be deprived of maternal support, responsiveness, and care is not to exist; for the four-year-old nonbeing means loss of body

intactness (dismemberment, mutilation, castration); for the adolescent to cease to be is to fall apart, to fragment, splinter, or diffuse into nothingness. For the youth, however, to lose one's essential vitality is merely to stop. For some even self-inflicted death or psychosis may seem preferable to loss of movement; and suicidal attempts in youth often spring from the failure of efforts to change and the resulting sense of being forever trapped in an unmoving present.

The youthful *view of adulthood* is strongly affected by these feelings. Compared to youth, adulthood has traditionally been a stage of slower transformation when, as Erickson has noted, the relative developmental stability of parents enables them to nurture the rapid change of their children. This adult deceleration of personal change is often seen from a youthful vantage point as concretely embodied in apparently unchanging parents. It leads frequently to the conscious identification of adulthood with stasis, and to its unconscious equation with death or nonbeing. Although greatly magnified today by the specific political disillusionments of many youths with the "older generation," the adulthood=stasis (= death) equation is inherent in the youthful situation itself. The desire to prolong youth indefinitely springs not only from an accurate perception of the real disadvantages of adult status in any historical era but from the less conscious and less accurate assumption that to "grow up" is in some ultimate sense to cease to be really alive.

Finally, youths tend to band together with other youths in *youthful countercultures*, characterized by their deliberate cultural distance from the existing social order, but not always by active political or other opposition to it. It is a mistake to identify youth as a developmental stage with any one social group, role, or organization. But youth is a time when solidarity with other youths is especially important, whether the solidarity be achieved in pairs, small groups, or formal organizations. And the groups dominated by youth reflect not only the special configurations of each historical era but also the shared developmental positions and problems of youth. Much of what has traditionally been referred to as “youth culture” is, in the terms used here, adolescent culture; but there are also groups, societies, and associations that are truly youthful. In our own time, with the enormous increase in the number of those who are entering youth as a stage of life, the variety and importance of these youthful countercultures is steadily growing.

This compressed summary of themes in youth is schematic and interpretative. It omits many of the qualifications necessary to a fuller discussion, and it neglects the enormous complexity of development in any one person in favor of a highly schematic account. Specifically, for example, I do not discuss the ways the infantile, the childish, the adolescent and the truly youthful interact in all real lives. Perhaps most importantly, my account is highly interpretative, in that it points to themes that underlie diverse acts and feelings, to issues and tensions that unite the often scattered experiences of

real individuals. The themes, issues, and conflicts discussed here are rarely conscious as such; indeed, if they all were fully conscious, there would probably be something seriously awry. Different youths experience each of the issues considered here with different intensity. What is a central conflict for one may be peripheral or unimportant for another. These remarks, then, should be taken as a first effort to summarize some of the underlying configurations that characterize youth as an ideal type.

Affective and Interpersonal Transformations in Youth

A second way of describing youth is by attempting to trace out the various psychological and interpersonal transformations that may occur during this stage. Once again only the most preliminary sketch of youthful development can be attempted here. Somewhat arbitrarily I will distinguish between development in several sectors or areas of life, noting only that, in fact, changes in one sector invariably interact with those in other sectors.

In pointing to the *self-society relationship* as a central issue in youth, I also mean to suggest its importance as an area of potential change. The late adolescent is only beginning to challenge his society's definition of him, only starting to compare his emerging sense of himself with his culture's possibilities and with the temptations and opportunities offered by his environment. Adolescent struggles for emancipation from external family

control and internal dependency on the family take a variety of forms, including displacement of the conflict onto other “authority figures.” But in adolescence itself, the “real” focus of conflict is 011 the family and all of its internal psychic residues. In youth, however, the “real” focus begins to shift: increasingly the family becomes more paradigmatic of society rather than vice versa. As relatively greater emancipation from the family is achieved, the tension between self and society, with ambivalent probing of both, comes to constitute a major area of developmental “work” and change. Through this work young people can sometimes arrive at a synthesis whereby both self and society are affirmed, in the sense that the autonomous reality-relatedness yet separateness of both is firmly established.

There is no adequate term to describe this “resolution” of the tension between self and society, but C. G. Jung’s concept of *individuation* comes close. For Jung the individuated man is a man who acknowledges and can cope with social reality, either by accepting it or by opposing it with revolutionary fervor. But he can do this without feeling his central selfhood overwhelmed. Even when most fully engaged in social role and societal action, he can preserve a sense of himself as intact, whole, and distinct from society. Thus, the “resolution” of the self-society tension in no way necessarily entails “adjusting” to the society, much less “selling out”—although many youths see it this way. On the contrary, individuation refers partly to a psychological process whereby self and society are differentiated internally. But the actual

conflicts between men and women and their societies remain and, indeed, may become even more intense.

The meaning of individuation may be clarified by considering the special dangers of youth, which can be defined as extremes of *alienation*, whether from self or from society. At one extreme is the total alienation from self that involves abject submission to society, "joining the rat race," "selling out." Here society is affirmed but selfhood denied. The other extreme is a total alienation from society that loads not so much to the rejection of society as to its existence being ignored, denied, and blocked out. The result is a kind of self-absorption, an enforced interiority and subjectivity, in which only the self and its extensions are granted reality, while all the rest is relegated to a limbo of insignificance. Here the integrity of the self is purchased at the price of a determined denial of social reality and the loss of social effectiveness. In youth both forms of alienation are often assayed, sometimes for lengthy periods. And for some whose further development is blocked, they become the basis for lifelong adaptations—the self-alienation of the marketing personality, the social alienation of the perpetual drop-out. In terms of the developmental polarities suggested by Erikson, we can define the central developmental tension of youth as individuation versus alienation.

Sexual development continues in important ways during youth. In modern Western societies, as in many others, the commencement of actual

sexual relationships is generally deferred by middle-class adolescents until their late teens or early twenties: the modal age of first intercourse for American college males today is around twenty, for females about twenty-one. Thus, despite the enormous importance of adolescent sexuality and sexual development, actual sexual intercourse often awaits youth. In youth there may occur a major shift from masturbation and sexual fantasy to interpersonal sexual behavior, including the gradual integration of sexual feelings with intimacy with a real person. And as sexual behavior with real people commences, one sees a further working through, now in behavior, of vestigial fears and prohibitions whose origins lie in earlier childhood—specifically, of oedipal feelings of sexual inferiority and of oedipal prohibitions against sex with one's closest intimates. During youth, when these fears and prohibitions can be gradually worked through, they yield a capacity for genitality, that is, for mutually satisfying sexual relationships with another whom one loves.

The transition to genitality is closely related to a more general pattern of *interpersonal development.* I will term this the shift from "identicality" to mutuality. This development begins with adolescence[2] and continues through youth. It involves a progressive expansion of the early adolescent assumption that the interpersonal world is divided into only two categories: first, me and those who are identical to me (potential soul mates, doubles, and hypothetical people who "automatically understand everything"), and,

second, all others. This conceptualization gradually yields to a capacity for close relationships with those on an approximate level of “parity” or similarity with the individual.

The phase of parity in turn gives way to a phase of “complementarity,” in which the individual can relate warmly to others who are different from him, valuing them for their dissimilarities from himself. Finally the phase of complementarity may yield in youth to a phase of “mutuality,” in which issues of identicality, parity, and complementarity are all subsumed in an overriding concern with the other as other. Mutuality entails a simultaneous awareness of the ways in which others are identical to oneself, the ways in which they are similar and dissimilar, and the ways in which they are absolutely unique. Only in the stage of mutuality can the individual begin to conceive of others as separate and unique selves and relate to them as such. And only with this stage can the concept of mankind assume a concrete significance as pointing to a human universe of unique and irreplaceable selves.

Relationships with elders may also undergo characteristic youthful changes. By the end of adolescence the hero worship or demonology of the middle adolescent has generally given way to an attitude of more selective emulation and rejection of admired or disliked older persons. In youth new kinds of relationships with elders become possible: psychological apprenticeships, then a more complex relationship of mentorship, then

sponsorship, and eventually peership. Without attempting to describe each of these substages in detail, the overall transition can be described as one in which the older person becomes progressively more real and three-dimensional to the younger one, whose individuality is appreciated, validated, and confirmed by the elder. The sponsor, for example, is one who supports and confirms in the youth that which is best in the youth, without exacting an excessive price in terms of submission, imitation, emulation, or even gratitude.

Comparable changes continue to occur during youth with regard to *parents.* Adolescents commonly discover that their parents have feet of clay and recognize their flaws with great acuity. Childish hero worship of parents gives way to a more complex and often negative view of them. But it is generally not until youth that the individual discovers his parents as complex, three-dimensional, historical personages whose destinies are formed partly by their own wishes, conscious and unconscious, and partly by their historical situations. Similarly it is only during youth that the questions of family tradition, family destiny, family fate, family culture, and family curse arise with full force. In youth the question of whether to live one's parents' life, or to what extent to do so, becomes a real and active one. In youth one often sees what Ernst Prelinger has called a "telescoped reenactment" of the life of a parent—a compulsive need to live out for oneself the destiny of a parent, as if to test its possibilities and limits, experience it from the inside, and (perhaps)

free oneself of it. In the end the youth may learn to see himself and his parents as multidimensional persons, to view them with compassion and understanding, to feel less threatened by their fate and failings, and to be able, if he chooses, to move beyond them.

Every developmental stage tends to re- evoke, often in a highly selective fashion, themes and conflicts that date from earlier stages. In each individual the weight and origin of the reevoked past will vary, depending on the idiosyncrasies of his experience. But beyond idiosyncratic variations common links seem to join postpubescent development with prepubescent development. For example, the stage of early adulthood involves entry for the first time into the world of work; it thus re- evokes isomorphic issues of competence, industry, and inferiority that were experienced in childhood upon entry for the first time into the world of school.

If we differentiate adolescence from youth, we must reconsider those formulations that see revivified oedipal themes as central to adolescence. More common in adolescence, I believe, is the reawakening of preoedipal concerns focused on the “anal” stage, with its conflicts over autonomy, will, order, control and impulsivity, mossiness and neatness. If we define adolescence, in oversimplified fashion, as involving, above all, emancipation from dependency on and control by the family, then the isomorphism between the anal phase and adolescence becomes clearer. Each stage entails,

at a different level, an effort to move away from controlling and dependency-inducing others toward a more self-controlling and independent position. Thus, during adolescence, behavior and fantasy are commonly dominated by struggles for independence and thinly veiled wishes for dependency, by provocativeness and negativism, by sloppiness and compulsive neatness, by willfulness coupled with irresponsibility—all of which most resemble psychologically the toddler’s early efforts to establish self-control and to avoid total control by his parents. Even the proverbial embarrassment of the adolescent, now focused upon his or her incipient adult sexuality, resembles the “shame” of the child during the anal stage.

In youth these anal issues recur, but they are increasingly overshadowed by oedipal themes. In Erickson’s terms, the toddler establishes that he has a will of his own; during the oedipal period he learns to take initiative, using that will. In a parallel way the adolescent hopefully achieves emancipation and independence from his family; during youth he confronts the issue of how, where, and when his independent and autonomous selfhood is to be exercised. In the normal course of youthful development, a whole series of conflicts, complexes, and inhibitions whose origins lie in the oedipal phase are therefore reevoked. When youthful development falters, it is often because the inhibitions of the oedipal stage remain so powerful that the individual is compelled either to reenact them repetitively or to regress to modes of functioning (including cognitive functioning) more characteristic of

the three- to five-year-old than of the stage of youth itself.

The tendency among youth to defer actual sexual relationships until the twenties also helps explain the centrality of oedipal themes in this stage of life. Although oedipal issues obviously recur in different forms throughout life, they tend to be reexperienced and reenacted with particular intensity at the point in life when the individual attempts to unite intimacy and sexuality in a real, instead of a fantasied, relationship. At this juncture the powerful, if usually unstated, taboos laid down within the child's family, prohibiting the joining of overtly erotic and affectionate ties, are powerfully reawakened. For this reason the first real sexual relationships are more often than not psychologically triadic rather than simply dyadic. Same-sex friends and rivals are often as much in the forefront of consciousness during the beginning of sexual relationships as is the sexual partner himself or herself. Indeed, the sexual partner may remain shadowy or vague in comparison to the dreaded and feared rivals with whom one competes for his or her affection; just as often, the initiation of sexual relationships appears to require a permissive contemporary, perhaps more sexually experienced or perceived as more "mature," to whom one reports in more or less graphic detail the sexual and interpersonal complexities of the new sexual relationship.

These triadic relationships often appear flagrantly neurotic, and can be, if they do not eventually yield to a more truly dyadic sexual relationship in

which the real existence of the partner is central rather than peripheral. But the longitudinal clinical study of young men and women in the process of beginning sexual relationships suggest that such triadic "oedipal" relationships are so frequent as to be virtually normal in educated youth. Indeed it may be that this reenactment of triangular love relationships permits some youths to work through in actual behavior childhood feelings of inferiority in love relationships or childhood fears that heterosexual relationships will result in devastating reprisals from same sex rivals.

Having emphasized that these analytically separated lines of development are, in fact, linked in the individual's experience, it is equally important to add that they are never linked in perfect synchronicity. If we could precisely label one specific level within each developmental line as distinctively youthful, we would find that few people were "youthful" in all lines at the same time. In general, human development proceeds unevenly, with lags in some areas and precocities in others. One young woman may be at a truly adolescent level in her relationship with her parents, but at a much later level in moral development; a young man may be capable of extraordinary mutuality with his peers, but still be struggling intellectually with the dim awareness of relativism. Analysis of any one person in terms of specific sectors of development will generally show a simultaneous mixture of adolescent, youthful, and adult features. Once again the point is that the concept of youth here proposed is an ideal type, a model that may help

understand real experience but can never fully describe or capture it.

Ideology in Youth

Of all stages of life, youth is the most ideological. The potential for the development of ideology rests upon affective and cognitive changes that may begin in adolescence but that extend far beyond it. In the ideological preoccupations of youth are focused, condensed, and expressed concerns of diverse origins: psychosexual and historical, interpersonal and societal, defensive and generational, affective and ethical. It is therefore arbitrary and misleading to separate ideology formation from those affective, psychosexual, and interpersonal transformations discussed in the previous section. All are intertwined in the effort, often vehement and agonized, to develop what Erikson, quoting George Bernard Shaw, termed "a clear view of the world in the light of an intelligible theory."

As commonly used, "ideology" has two distinct meanings. Sociologists and intellectual historians use it to refer to a public body of shared doctrine, belief, evaluation, and exhortation, transmitted from one individual or one generation to another and embodied in collective values, symbols, theories, and norms. For psychologists and psychiatrists, however, the term has a primarily individual referent: it points to the individual's developing world view, conscious or unconscious, shared or idiosyncratic, especially seen as a

defensive and expressive system. Thus, on the one hand, the intellectual historian may interpret ideology only as a cultural cement that binds together a society, while the individually-oriented psychiatrist may consider ideology only a “projective system” that expresses the complexes and conflicts of early childhood.

An adequate understanding of ideology during youth must include both perspectives. The sociologist is right in underlining that most of the ingredients of any individual’s ideology are borrowed from others, from his historical tradition, from his culture. But the psychologist is right in emphasizing that the synthesis of these “borrowed” elements is built around enduring and often idiosyncratic themes, conflicts, defenses, and talents within the individual himself. The development of a world view is thus a battleground on which individual and sociohistorical issues come together and are sometimes resolved. Ideology lies at the juncture between the individual and his society and history; ideology formation entails at best a synthesis of elements that are uniquely personal with ideas, symbols, and values that connect the individual to his community and to his historical tradition.

The realm of abstract ideas, interpretative principles, theories, and symbols, being farthest from observable reality, is most intimately related to the deepest themes of the psyche. Those who have studied the

psychodynamics of individual ideologies have shown that they integrate, synthesize, and to a degree “rationalize” intrapsychic issues ranging from deeply rooted conflicts to preferred adaptive styles. The assumptions and perspectives from which any individual perceives and interprets the world indeed perform important defensive functions of intellectualization and rationalization.- But to stress only the expressive or defensive element in ideology development neglects the roots of this process in cognitive, intellectual, and ethical developments that are themselves powerfully adaptive; it only ignores the functional role of ideology in orienting the individual in a world that might otherwise be overwhelming in its chaotic complexity. Ideology thus provides not only a defense against unacceptable impulses or a way of explaining away unattractive impersonal characteristics, but a framework within which the individual can relate himself simultaneously to his own personal history and to the history of his society and generation.

The development of an ideology that transcends the internalized prescriptions, prohibitions, and perspectives of childhood is made possible and necessary by cognitive, intellectual, and ethical restructurings of the personality that can occur after adolescence. The most crucial of these is what Inhelder and Piaget term the capacity for formal operations— namely, the ability to perform hypothetico- deductive operations whereby the observable and concrete world of the real comes to be seen as a subset of the world of the

possible. In Piaget’s middle-class Swiss subjects this capacity is generally attained in rudimentary form around the time of puberty. But as Piaget notes, the full integration of the capacity for formal operations is often long deferred. At issue in this integration is a gradual “decentering,” a transition from an exclusively egocentric mode of formal operations to an exercise of this capacity in a context that includes some acceptance of the gap between the real and the possible, the actual and the ideal.

Many of the ideological struggles of youth are built around the painful process of attaining a more integrated use of formal operations. It is as if the emergence of this capacity overwhelmed many adolescents with the terrifying awareness of desirable personal and societal possibilities that are not, and may never be, actualized. During youth this conflict between the ideal and the actual is worked on, and at best worked through, with regard to both self and society. Vis-a-vis the self, the conflict entails an awareness of all that one might conceivably be (and become) but is not (and will never be). It therefore involves a growing awareness and acceptance of one’s human limitations. At the level of society the struggle involves confrontation with the gulf between societal creed and deed, a gulf probably widest in societies like America whose ideals are so frequently and nobly stated but so rarely achieved. In most societies “mature adults” are ordinarily expected to have accepted the gap between the real and the ideal with regard to both self and society.

In youth such a “mature acceptance” of the nonideal nature of psychological and social reality has not been achieved. For this reason youth is the stage of life where the demand for both psychological and social change is most compelling. Nor should this demand be automatically dismissed as a sign of immaturity. On the contrary, one may ask whether the acceptance of the imperfection of self and society expected of adults does not constitute a real retrogression from the idealism of youth. In many adults this “acceptance” has been so excessive as to leave them with a lifelong fear that they have betrayed the best in themselves or “compromised” their own youthful vision of a better society. Paradoxically, how one later reacts to “youthful idealism” and its common subsequent waning depends largely on the ideological position attained in youth, for one of the central functions of ideology formation is to come to terms with the gap between the real and ideal. And how one does this determines where on the spectrum between revolutionary and organization man one is likely to spend the remainder of one’s life.

In some youths there also occurs a further stage of cognitive development that goes beyond the integration and consolidation of formal operations. Jerome Bruner has suggested that beyond the stage of formal operations there may lie a further stage of “thinking about thinking.” In practice just such a stage can be observed in some intellectual and introspective youths. It involves a breaking away of thought from specific

mental processes, a consciousness of consciousness, a separation of the phenomenological “I” from the contents of thought.

This breakaway of the phenomenological ego permits youth to engage in phenomenological games, intellectual tricks, and kinds of creativity that are rarely possible during adolescence itself. And as consciousness becomes an object of consciousness, it also becomes a potential target of manipulation, a state to be changed through transformations of self and environment. Throughout history there have always been some rare youths who deliberately sought to alter consciousness, using the instruments provided by their culture and their technology. Today this focus on alternation of consciousness involves not only agents like hallucinogenic drugs but a return to ancient forms of consciousness-changing like meditation, yoga, and Zen. Finally the consciousness of consciousness makes possible one of the most frightening states experienced in youth, the disappearance of the phenomenological ego in an endless regress of awareness of awareness of awareness.

Given a cognitive capacity for formal operations, regular stages of intellectual and moral development can be observed. William Perry has recently provided a description of the stages of potential intellectual development that may occur during late adolescence and youth. Perry’s work emphasizes the complex tradition from epistemological dualism to an

awareness of multiplicity and to the realization of relativism. Relativism, in turn, may give way to a more "existential" sense of truth, culminating in what Perry terms "commitment within relativism." Thus, during youth we expect to see a passage beyond simple views of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil to a more perspectival view. And as youth proceeds, we may look for the development of commitment within a universe that remains epistemologically relativistic. The stages defined by Perry—dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment within relativism—are a description of a developmental line that most individuals clearly do not complete to its end. In particular Perry underlines that the transition to the stage of relativism is fraught with difficulty, and that many young men and women, vaguely sensing the uncertainties of a relativistic universe, may temporize or return to earlier certainties.

Lawrence Kohlberg's work on moral development provides another paradigm of changes that occur only in youth if they occur at all. Summarized oversimply, Kohlberg's theory of the development of moral reasoning distinguishes three broad stages. The earliest or *preconventional* stage involves relatively egocentric concepts of right and wrong as that which one can do without getting caught or as entailing primitive notions of reciprocity ("I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine"). This stage is followed, usually during later childhood, by a stage of *conventional* morality, during which good and evil are identified with the concept of a good boy or a good girl (that is,

with conformity to role expectations), or, at a somewhat higher level, with standards of the community and concepts of law and order. In the conventional moral stage, which parallels Perry's dualistic stage, morality is perceived as objective, as existing "out there." Kohlberg's third and highest stage of moral reasoning is termed autonomous or *postconventional*—if development into this stage occurs at all, it is most likely to occur during youth. This stage involves more abstract moral reasoning that may lead the individual into conflict with conventional morality. The lower level of the postconventional stage involves the definition of right and wrong in terms of the long-term welfare of the community. This type of reasoning can be called the social contract level, in that it construes moral rules and moral behavior as ultimately determined by considerations of the well-being of all members of a society. Unlike conventional moral reasoning, this level views moral codes, rules, and laws not as objective and eternal, but as manmade, changeable, and amendable.

In the highest (and final) postconventional level, the individual affirms general moral principles that may transcend not only conventional morality but even the social contract: this level confronts the possibility that even rules made in the public interest may be unjust. At this level general precepts, stated at a high level of generality, are seen as personally binding, though not necessarily "objectively" true. However these precepts are stated—as the Golden Rule, the sanctity of life, the Kantian categorical imperative, the

promotion of human development, or the concept of justice itself—they share their universalism and their search for moral structures that are applicable to all situations and persons regardless of time, place, society, station, and situation. At the level of personal principles the individual not only may find himself in conflict with existing concepts of law and order but also may at times consider democratically arrived at laws unjust if they violate his universalistic principles.

The work of Piaget, Perry, and Kohlberg is not intended as a comprehensive account of development, or even as an inclusive analysis of the development of ideology. Each sets itself a more limited task: the delineation of the sequences of development in a particular sector. For this reason the parallels between the three accounts are the more striking. All three accounts emphasize the centrality of the transition from the empirically, culturally, or morally "given" to a new mode of functioning that transcends the given. Stated more psychodynamically, all three suggest the limitations of "internalization" as a mechanism of learning beyond adolescence and point to the possibility of "synthetic" developments that go beyond and may be in conflict with inductive generalizations, received truths, or community moral standards.

Equally important, all three accounts emphasize the hazards that accompany the transition from the given to the synthetic, from the traditional

to the formulative. Perry notes that the movement from dualism to relativism is fraught with special dangers that result from renouncing the certainty inherent in a dualis- tic perspective for the uncertainty of a universe where truth is perspectival, and where a commitment to a perspective requires an “existential” affirmation for which the individual must accept personal responsibility. Confronted with an imminent awareness of relativism, Perry argues, many young men and women temporize, stagnate, or retreat to earlier forms of dualism, now the more dogmatically held because dimly apprehended relativism threatens to undercut certainty. It follows that no dogmatism is more fierce than that of the man who has paused on the threshold of relativism to reassert the verity of the world view from which he was moving or the transcendental truth of some new ideology.

Kohlberg describes a similar process in moral development. In longitudinal studies of young American men, Kohlberg and his associates have observed a phenomenon they term the “Raskolnikov Syndrome”—a moral regression that may occur as the individual begins to question the adequacy of conventional moral structures. To be sure, many young men and women seem to make the transition to post- conventional moral reasoning with little apparent difficulty. But among those who begin to challenge conventional moral codes, a number “regress” to preconventional moral structures rather than (or before) moving on to the affirmation of autonomous postconventional moral principles. In Perry’s terms it is as if

confrontation with the relativism, and to that degree the arbitrariness, of the moral structures accepted by the socializing community (and until then internalized) pushes some people back to a kind of “anything goes,” preconventional moral framework. Both Perry and Kohlberg are thus describing, in different terms, a process whereby the transition from the “conformist” or “conscientious” position to a more “autonomous” or “individuated” perspective is aborted, resulting not in further development but in a return to more familiar, primitive structures that also negate the validity of conventional moral norms and dualistically conceived truths.

Although the language in which this “cognitive regression” is described may be unfamiliar to the clinician, the process itself is observed in clinical practice and constitutes the cognitive core for much of the ideological and psychological turmoil seen in youth. Especially in times of cultural crisis and widespread exposure of injustice, abrupt confrontation with the arbitrariness and hypocrisy that exist in the social world (or in the individual) may “force” a youth back to the only nondualistic, nonconventional position he knows, namely, an earlier view of truth as that which is convenient and of morality as that which avoids punishment and increases pleasure. When this regression occurs in large numbers of young men and women, it tends to become ideologized at a collective level and institutionalized in youthful countercultures. The consequence is a scathing collective attack on conventional pieties, and an explicit sanctioning of behavior that scandalizes

the most sacred norms and taboos of those who adhere to dualistic truths and conventional moralities. In a society that traditionally emphasizes the sanctity of property, for example, property is likely to be singled out for special attack by the destruction of property as an act of ideological affirmation, by the deliberate avoidance of possessions, or by a view of theft (the "rip-off") as a morally justified or noble act.

Accounts of the cognitive, intellectual, and moral aspects of ideology formation necessarily exclude all those other noncognitive conflicts and confrontations that serve as catalysts for and are intertwined with cognitive, intellectual, and ethical development in youth. But if we study real individuals in depth over an extended period, they rarely speak in exclusively cognitive, intellectual, or moral terms; and if they do, we rightly suspect that we are hearing only a part of the story, which serves as a "cover" for that which is left unmentioned. In practice, then, the cognitive, intellectual, ethical changes that underlie ideology formation are intertwined with the psychosexual, interpersonal, and affective developments discussed earlier. What psychologists conveniently separate into "affective" and "cognitive" are interdependent at all stages of life. For example, to imagine and strive toward a truly mutual relationship with another person presupposes the cognitive capacity of formal operations; but to achieve some degree of mutuality with a loved one, in turn modifies, "decenters," extends and consolidates that purely cognitive capacity.

As a rule the catalysts for intellectual and moral development in youth are found in realms other than the purely intellectual and moral: they may include an ambivalent realization that one’s parents are limited, unhappy people; a prolonged immersion in an alien culture; falling in love with someone whose world view is very different from one’s own; membership in a countercultural group devoted to an attack on conventional truths, policies, or moral codes; realizing (from friends, enemies, drugs, or psychotherapy) that one’s pretensions to virtue are fraudulent; growing awareness of one’s interpersonal, sexual, moral, or physical inhibitions; a concrete confrontation with the gap between public practice and public preaching; and so on. In the end human development is neither affective nor cognitive, but both; only as a matter of analytic convenience or research strategy can we separate its aspects—and then, hopefully, as a preface for showing their relationship.

To describe further the vicissitudes of the development of ideology during youth is simply to describe youth itself. Erikson’s' insightful accounts of identity, ideology, and ideological innovators illustrate and expand the points made here: the interweaving of the uniquely personal with the generational, historical, and universal; the way in which the emergence of new cognitive, intellectual, and ethical capacities spurs new confrontations, advances, and regressions; the agonized and often prolonged shock that follows the “discovery” of the relativism of truth and the arbitrariness of conventional moral structures; the possibility of a return to old dogmatisms

(or the creation of new ones) in the search for a world view to replace the dualistic security of childhood; the crucial role of ideology in uniting the members of youthful groups who are undergoing parallel developmental struggles.

The foregoing discussion of ideology development should be read in the light of my earlier comments on the contingency of psychological development, for there is clear evidence that the majority of young men and women between the ages of 18 and 30 do *not* pass through most of the stages I have outlined. For most adult men and women it is most precise to say that ideology is borrowed rather than developed. These are those whom William James long ago termed the "once-born," who accept with little anguish or reexamination the cultural traditions learned in their early lives.

The evidence for the contingency of development is especially conclusive in the realm of ideology. Kohlberg and his associates have found that only a minority of teen-agers possess the cognitive capacity for formal operations; and if higher levels of this capacity are measured, then a majority of all contemporary middle-class American adults lack it. Studies in a rural Turkish village indicate that virtually no adults posses this capacity. It follows, as Kohlberg notes, that the majority of chronological teen-agers in America arc not cognitive adolescents—if, that is, we accept the prevailing view that cognitive development is both a companion and a catalyst for psychological

adolescence. Since all the ideological developments of youth discussed here presuppose a highly developed capacity for formal operations, we must conclude that real ideology development occurs only in a minority of young Americans.

This conclusion is empirically substantiated in the work of both Perry and Kohlberg. Perry found that only a few of the college students he studied had moved to his highest level of intellectual functioning, commitment within relativism. And Kohlberg, whose research methods enable him to measure the individual's level of moral reasoning, finds that the majority of middle-class college students have not moved beyond conventional structures at the age of 24. Among working-class subjects (and their fathers) the proportion using postconventional moral reasoning is even lower. Other studies indicate that for both male and female college students, the modal moral position is the conventional position.

Studies like these require us to define both adolescence and youth as "contingent" from a cognitive, intellectual, moral, and ideological point of view—and probably in other respects as well. They remind us again that "youth" as here defined is in no sense a universal stage of development, even among the advantaged, educated young men and women in economically advanced societies who occupy so much of psychiatrists' time. These studies further impel us to remember that it is possible and normal for men and

women to live—and to live well, healthily, and happily—at the stage of concrete operations, with the dualistic view of truth, and with a conventional morality. It seems that most of mankind has always lived this way and that, as a result, most men and women have not experienced the full force of the ideological tensions that constitute a central part of youth. Youth involves the actualization of the usually latent human potential for departure from societal certainty, for questioning of conventional moral codes, for imagining a world different from that which exists, and for thinking about thought.

Psychopathology in Youth

The developmental component in psychological disorders is often neglected or discussed solely by noting that the origin of pathological symptoms often lies in crises, conflicts, or feelings that date from earlier developmental stages. But psychological disturbances are also related to, organized around, and precipitated by the psychological issues and conflicts of the developmental stage *during which they occur.* Thus, the relationship between development and psychopathology is at least fourfold. First, developmental "work" left undone or incompletely consolidated at one stage of life compromises later development and may produce significant psychopathology during later stages. Second, psychological disturbances necessarily occur during a stage of life, and their content is therefore shaped by stage- specific themes, changes, and conflicts; third, psychopathology is

often triggered by blockings, foreclosures, or impasses in the developmental work faced by the individual at a given stage of his life; and finally, normal development entails what Anna Freud and Peter Bios have termed “regression in the service of development” and therefore involves a recapitulation, reenactment, and re- experiencing of the past that, if it proves too deep and enduring, may be termed pathological. A comprehensive discussion of psychopathology during any stage of life should ideally consider all of these relationships.

During youth such protean human disturbances as *depression* are both precipitated by and organized around the themes that assume special prominence in this stage of life. I earlier noted the centrality to youth of continuing movement, the consequent abhorrence of stasis, and the unconscious identification of immobilization with death. Depressions during youth are strongly influenced by these themes. The immediate catalyst of many youthful depressions is a sense of development impasse, stasis, or stagnation, a feeling of being “stuck,” “trapped,” or “blocked”—whether spatially, temporally, or developmentally. Especially dysphoric is the experienced failure of efforts to move, however movement may be defined by the individual. For example, in those imbued with an achievement ethic, achievement itself may be equated with motion, and failures to achieve are therefore seen as portents of a life without further mobility. Similarly, when efforts at self-reform and self-improvement fail, they may produce

depressions associated with a sense of being “locked into” an abhorred personality style or character structure. Such depressions far exceed “realistic” reactions to failure: they evoke deeper fears of immobilization and reawaken primitive anxieties associated with deprivation. The individual feels himself unresponsive, frozen, immobilized, effectively “dead.”

Whatever the underlying etiology of youthful depressions, the most common response is to attempt to regain momentum. All types of movement are unconsciously equated: geographic movement and social mobility can be a substitute for psychological change; the effort to move others may be a response to the fear of being trapped oneself; the pressure for social reform and revolution may be animated by a sense of personal impasse and stagnation. Because movement is the quintessential youthful antidepressive maneuver, youthful depressions tend to be agitated, restless, jittery, and frantic, often accompanied by hypomanic ideation or activity. Today, with the ease of transportation, geographic motion— across the continent or around the world—is a favored and sometimes successful self-therapy. So, too, is rapid motion—the fast car, the racing motorcycle, the fleeting jet. And finally, the contemporary availability of a variety of drugs, from marijuana to amphetamines, which speed up experience or relieve the depressive flattening of affect and perception, provides yet another way of overcoming, at least temporarily, the loss of a sense of motion that is central to a feeling of vitality in youth.

Serious thoughts of *suicide,* suicidal gestures, and suicide attempts in youth are commonly related to these issues. Few young men and women pass through this stage of life without considering, whether distantly or concretely, the possibility of suicide. Serious suicidal thoughts or attempts are often animated by the fantasy that suicide will produce change, relieve an unbearable sense of being immobilized, and thus generate new movement. In working with severely depressed youths, it is, of course, necessary to explore the varied idiosyncratic meanings of suicide. But it is equally important to acknowledge that suicidal thoughts may be an (irrational) expression of the feeling that to remain “stuck” in one’s present situation is untenable, that it is essential somehow to move. Indeed, the two most common causes of death among youth— accidents caused by speeding and suicide— must be understood not only as efforts to end life but as misguided attempts to regain a sense of inner momentum, and with it a feeling of “really being alive.” If so, then it is the inner sense of already being psychologically dead that paradoxically impels many youths into activities that lead to physical death.

The special youthful potential for phenomenological estrangement also influences psychological disturbances during this stage. Especially for interpersonally isolated youths, estrangement may reach pathological proportions of acute *depersonalization and derealization.* The individual searches desperately for efforts to connect up with others, with himself, with meaningful groups, admired persons, or valued historical traditions. Even to

the casual observer these efforts may seem frantic and driven not by affirmative developmental goals but by a growing sense of unreality and disconnection. The outcome of periods of acute estrangement depends mostly on the actual availability to the individual of others who are capable of understanding him, for the only lasting remedy for feelings of estrangement is the experience of real relationships. Those who are severely inhibited in their dealings with others therefore run a special danger of an acute sense of estrangement, sometimes culminating in periods of truly psychotic depersonalization.

The normal omnipotentiality of youth also may be incorporated into psychological disturbances. Driven by a fear of estrangement, a young man or woman may be impelled to *omnipotent fantasies of total transformation* of himself, others, or the world. Youth is capable of a special grandiosity that rests on the need to possess total control over one's destiny or over the fates of others. Adult recognition of limitations on personal ability and power tend to be absent from much youthful thought and planning. In working with youths who assume a kind of infantile omnipotence in dealings with the world, it is important not to undercut these fantasies too harshly, for these may be desperately needed to escape far more frightening feelings of estrangement, helplessness, and alienation.

In discussing ideology in youth, I emphasized the possibility of

regression in ideological development. Clinicians are often too quick to apply pathological labels to youthful ideologies that seem strange, unfamiliar, or provocative. The search for a comprehensive world view may lead to ideas that seem bizarre, schizoid, or even psychotic to an outside observer. Such ideologies often bear little relationship to the "consensual reality" of most adults or to the "mature perspective" of most psychotherapists. Especially today, any attempt to define pathology in the realm of ideology must rest on a thorough knowledge of the prevailing variants of the youth culture. For example, an intelligent youth who in 1950 took astrology as a serious guide to life would have been considered psychotic; in the 1970's he is more likely to be simply a faithful member of the counterculture.

None of this should blind us to the existence of truly *disturbed ideology formation,* which may be part and parcel of bizarre, destructive, or self-destructive behavior. Just as the formation of ideology cannot be separated from other aspects of development during youth, so disorders in development, thought, and functioning are almost invariably reflected in ideology. Today the proliferation of exotic countercultural groups, cults, and communes allows many disturbed youths a more or less sanctioned ideological expression of their own conflicts, and at times a protected context where they can navigate an unusually troubled stage of development.

The greatest danger for clinicians who work with ideological youth,

however, is the temptation to view ideology solely in its “psychological,” expressive, and defensive role. It is indeed accurate to say that each youth “uses” the ideological alternatives of his world as an arena on which he can “act out” his developmental conflicts. But if we say no more than this, we neglect all the positive functions of ideology in individual as well as collective life. At an individual level the development of an ideology beyond dualism and conventional moralism makes possible, indeed demands, personal commitment to a world view that transcends the circumstances of childhood and of the previous generation. And as Erikson has pointed out, ideology at a collective level can express and give meaning to widespread conflicts, common character traits, and a shared awareness of the disparity between the real and the ideal. Thus, the therapist who works with youth does well to recognize that, whatever the pathologies of ideology in a patient, the goal of therapy must not be the eradication of ideology, but support for those processes that will enable the individual to develop an ideology that both expresses his unique selfhood and unites him to the rest of mankind.

Perhaps the most common disturbance in youth lacks any diagnostic label: I will call it an *interpersonal imbroglio.* Characteristically involving at least three people, it fuses feelings of rivalry, identification, competition, symbiosis, sexuality, ambivalence, splitting, projection, and obsessionality in one embroiled relationship—all strongly influenced by oedipal fantasies and reenactments.

These interpersonal situations have a number of common features. They generally involve a core dyad locked in ambivalent intimacy and hostility, together with a third person who may be friend, rival, and competitor (or all of these things) of one or both of the core partners. All parties involved are likely to acknowledge that the situation is a “mess”: the partners generally believe that they are temperamentally incompatible; the third party may be explicitly being “used” by both partners; or the couple itself may be organized primarily around shared fantasies about the “outsider,” who is psychologically more important to them than their own relationship. A sense of doom hangs over such relationships, with everyone sensing that a rupture must eventually come. But even though the impossibility of the relationship is openly acknowledged, it tends to drag on interminably, with no one able to make (or sustain) a real break. Guilt, neediness, identification, genuine affection, fears of isolation, the hope of change, the fantasy of omnipotentiality, and a host of other factors are the glue that makes these triads so sticky.

When it is possible to explore in depth the fantasies that animate and are evoked by such imbroglios, oedipal themes predominate. A young woman who alternates between two lovers—one assertive and aggressive, the other quiet and sensitive—may be struggling to unify a split in her image of her father, all the while avoiding the guilt that would be aroused by a relationship with a “whole man.” The young man who sustains an unhappy affair with a

married woman often turns out to be far more preoccupied with his fantasies about the husband than with his lover. Finally these situations tend to be obsessionally preoccupying to everyone concerned, evoking and focusing conflicts at every psychological level from every stage of life. Sleepless nights, tears of pain, rage, and frustration, anxiety-laden reunions, and joyous if brief reconciliations are the stuff of which they are made.

Viewed developmentally, the interpersonal imbroglio can be a way station on the road to greater intimacy and mutuality. But so happy an outcome is never assured; and even at best, the participants tend to experience enormous anguish in the process. Because oedipal themes play so central a role in these relationships, those involved often persist in impossible relationships almost indefinitely, and if the relationship finally ends, they may compulsively seek out another equally entangled imbroglio. At times, however, working oneself out of such a relationship may also permit a working through of the inner conflicts enacted in it, enabling the individual to enter into less conflict-filled love relationships. Viewed several months or years later, then, such imbroglios (retrospectively recalled as “unhappy affairs”) may be seen to have performed a positive role in freeing a youth from oedipal fears, inhibitions, and fantasies that stood in the way of any prolonged intimacy.

The most dramatic psychological disturbance in youth is the *acute*

psychotic break. Psychotic episodes in youth often have a sudden onset in young men and women with no previous history of overt psychological disorder. A careful reconstruction of the events that led up to the psychotic break, however, often reveals a common pattern. The beginning of disturbance dates from an experience of acute upheaval following a loss or separation. The individual reacts to the loss by isolating himself from anyone who might enable him to express or test his fantasies, ideas, and feelings. Upset and isolated, he becomes even more ideational; reads, writes, or introspects with extraordinary intensity; and is at times manically productive. As time passes, he experiences flights of ideas accompanied by a sense of “breakthrough”—of achieving extraordinary and often genuine insights into himself, others, or society. The sense of breakthrough, however, may lead to a loss of inner control: ideas come too fast, sleep is impossible, the mind races, the insights achieved cannot be verbalized. Often within a period of hours or days, there follows a more drastic sense of breakdown of previously established boundaries between self and world, inner and outer, conscious and unconscious, fantasy and reality. As these boundaries crumble, confusion mounts and the earlier sense of omnipotentiality, movement, breakthrough, and insight gives way to a feeling of confusion, disorientation, and even suicidal panic. The process may culminate in florid delusions, convincing hallucinations, and organized paranoid ideation.

An account of the prepsychotic experience of those who have acute

schizophrenic episodes in youth is not an adequate account of the etiology of these disturbances.[3] But an effort to understand the immediate precursors of a psychotic episode may be vitally important in therapy, for the insights achieved in the prepsychotic period may contain important truths about the individual’s problems and conflicts, however indirectly, symbolically, or incommunicably they were stated. The sense of “too much, too fast” in the prepsychotic phase may be a precise description of the experience of being overwhelmed by recollections and reexperiencings of episodes and fantasies that are crucial in his development. It is therefore important not simply to write off psychotic thoughts and behaviors as “crazy.” If we study those many individuals for whom a “prepsychotic” phase does not culminate in a psychotic episode, one factor that differentiates them is their capacity to formulate, organize, and communicate the excitement and breakthroughs of the “prepsychotic” period. Even as the therapist explores the more distant antecedents of the psychotic episode, he should try to help the patient to unravel, decipher, and communicate whatever was valid in the psychotic experience itself.

Finally, no discussion of disorders in youth today can be complete without mentioning the interweaving of individual disturbances and youthful countercultures. As more and more of those between the ages of 18 and 30 enter this stage of life, we have witnessed the flowering of an enormous variety of youthful countercultures, often transient in ideology, membership,

and existence. These countercultures, whose existence is rapidly disseminated by the mass media, provide a haven and at times a kind of therapy for many youths, including some whose development is highly disturbed. What Erikson aptly termed a “psycho-social moratorium” has always been a characteristic of youths whose growth was uneven and troubled. But in the past such moratoriums tended to be individually negotiated and culturally unsanctioned (unless we consider higher education a form of moratorium, which it clearly still is for some). But today such moratoriums are increasingly collective rather than private. Countercultural groups and movements act as special magnets for two kinds of youths: those whose development is more “advanced” than that of their contemporaries, and those whose development requires a shorter or longer period of “regression,” recapitulation, and reexperiencing, preferably in the company of others navigating a comparable developmental course.

Contemporary countercultural groups tend to define themselves by opposition to or isolation from the surrounding culture. As a result they share many of the commonly observed tendencies of all small groups: encapsulation, lack of reality testing, rejection of outgroup members, the development of special characteristics of their youthful members, often producing at a group level behavior and ideology that would be considered pathological if it occurred at an individual level. To some outsiders many such groups appear to demand acceptance of a delusional group ideology, to

encourage provocative, destructive, or dangerous behavior, and to promote pathological interpersonal relationships. Highly disturbed individuals are indeed drawn to such groups; but so, too, are youths who are in other contexts quite sane. The result may be a kind of group-induced “pathology,” even in the absence of individual psychopathology in group members.

Immersion in a countercultural group obviously may be anything but helpful for some disturbed (or not so disturbed) youths. But for others these groups may in the long run serve an adaptive and developmental role. One study of young men and women involved in the East Village “hippie” community in the late 1960’s found that the average member stayed less than two years, that the majority eventually returned to their homes and reentered the educational process from which they had dropped out, and that only those who were highly disturbed or highly creative (or both) remained for longer periods. For the remainder the “hippie” world seems to have served as a collective psychosocial moratorium, a shared “developmental regression” that permitted them to work out and work through some of their inner conflicts. The rapid turnover in youthful communes, political groups, and the like suggests that these may perform a comparable developmental role for certain of their members.

I hope that these comments on the psychopathology of youth have made clear the fuzziness of the boundary between significant disorder and normal

developmental turmoil during this stage of life. Much that would be considered ominous at other stages is routine and without prognostic implications during youth. At all stages of life, development proceeds from conflict, entails turmoil, and often requires the capacity to regress before moving forward. But during youth conflict, turmoil, and regression may last not for weeks or months but for years. Schizoid ideation, hypomanic locomotor restlessness, acute depression, an exaggerated sense of illumination, grandiose but unrealistic plans to change the world, serious suicidal thoughts, tormented interpersonal relationships—all are common. They themselves, their peers, and their elders do much harm to those in this phase of life by prematurely labeling as "pathological" routine developmental turmoil and retrogression. During youth, even more than during other stages, a step forward may have to be preceded by a step backward, and the absence of turmoil may be a symptom not of serenity but of foreclosure.

As a rule most disturbances during youth have a good prognosis; many and perhaps most work themselves out without special therapy. The study of youths who are not patients provides examples of young men and women whose self-prescribed "therapies," however remote from the traditional modalities of formal psychotherapy, prove highly successful. People were helping themselves and each other long before "psychotherapy" was invented; and they continue to do so, even today, in ways that often defy the explanatory power of our psychological theories.

Those who do work as therapists with troubled youths may therefore need certain special qualities: humility with regard to formal psychotherapy as the preferred modality of treatment; respect for the ultimate integrity of the patient, however disturbed his behavior may be; a capacity to focus on the stage-specific ingredients in the patient's disturbance along with its more distant etiology; a willingness to be fallible, direct, and honest with the patient; and, above all, an absence of any illusions of omniscience or omnipotence. Whatever the therapist's own ideological persuasion and techniques, it may be that he helps his youthful patients most by providing them with a real and honest human relationship with another person who has more or less successfully weathered the turmoil of youth.

What Youth Is Not

A final way to clarify the meaning of youth as a stage of life is to make clear what it is not. For one thing youth is not the end of development. I have described the belief that it is—the conviction that beyond youth lie only stasis, decline, foreclosure, and death—as a characteristically youthful way of viewing development, consistent with the observation that it is impossible truly to understand stages of development beyond one's own. On the contrary, youth is but a preface for further transformations that may (or may not) occur in later life. Many of these center around such issues as the relationship to work and to the next generation. In youth the question of vocation is crucial, but the issue of work—of productivity, creativity, and the

more general sense of fruitfulness that Erikson calls generativity—awaits adulthood. The youthful attainment of mutuality with peers and of peerhood with elders can lead to further adult interpersonal developments by which one comes to be able to accept the dependency of others, as in parenthood. In later life, too, the relations between the generations are reversed, with the younger now assuming responsibility for the elder. Like all stages of life, youth is transitional. And although some lines of development, such as moral development, may be "completed" during youth, many others continue throughout adulthood.

It is also a mistake to identify youth with any one social group, role, class, organization, or position in society. Youth is a *psychological* stage; and those who are in this stage do not necessarily join together in identifiable groups, nor do they share a common social position. Not all college students, for example, are in this stage of life: some students are psychological adolescents, while others are young adults—essentially apprentices to the existing society. Nor can the experience of youth as a stage of life be identified with any one class, nation, or other social grouping. Affluence and education can provide a freedom from economic need and an intellectual stimulation that may underlie and promote the transformations of youth. But there are poor and uneducated young men and women, from Abraham Lincoln to Malcolm X, who have had a youth, and rich, educated ones who have moved straightaway from adolescence to adulthood. And although the experience of

youth is probably more likely to occur in the economically advanced nations, some of the factors that facilitate youth also exist in the less advanced nations, where comparable youthful issues and transformations are expressed in different cultural idioms.

Nor should youth be identified with the rejection of the status quo, or specifically with student radicalism. Indeed, anyone who has more or less definitively defined himself as a misanthrope or a revolutionary has moved beyond youthful probing into an "adult" commitment to a position vis-a-vis society. To repeat: what characterizes youth is not a definitive rejection of the existing "system," but an ambivalent tension over the relationship between self and society. This tension may take the form of avid efforts at self-reform that spring from acceptance of the status quo, coupled with a sense of one's own inadequacy vis-a-vis it. In youth the relationship between self and society is indeed problematical, but rejection of the existing society is not a necessary characteristic of youth.

Youth obviously cannot be equated with any particular age range. In practice most young Americans who enter this stage of life tend to be between the ages of 18 and 30. But they constitute a minority of the whole age- grade. Youth as a developmental stage is emergent; it is an "optional" stage, not a universal one. If we take Kohlberg's studies of the development of postconventional moral reasoning as a rough index of the "incidence" of

youth, less than 40 per cent of middle-class (college-educated) men, and a smaller proportion of working-class men, have developed beyond the conventional level by the age of 24. Thus, “youths” constitute but a minority of their age group. But today those who are in this stage of life largely determine the public image of their generation.

Admirers and romanticizers of youth tend to identify youth with virtue, morality, and mental health. But to do so is to overlook the special youthful possibilities for viciousness, immorality, and psychopathology. Every time of human life, each level of development, has its characteristic vices and weaknesses, and youth is no exception. Youth is a stage, for example, when the potentials for zealotry and fanaticism, for reckless action in the name of the highest principles, for self-absorption, and for special arrogance are all at a peak. Furthermore, the fact that youth is a time of psychological change also means inevitably that it is a stage of constant recapitulation, reenactment, and reworking of the past. This reworking can rarely occur without real regression, whereby the buried past is reexperienced as present and, one hopes, incorporated into it. Most youthful transformation occurs *through* brief or prolonged regression, which, however benignly it may eventually be resolved, constitutes part of the psychopathology of youth. And the special compulsions and inner states of youth—the euphoria of omnipotentiality and the dysphoria of estrangement, the hyperconsciousness of consciousness, the need for constant motion, and the terror of stasis—may generate youthful

pathologies with a special virulence and obstinacy. In one sense those who have the luxury of a youth may be said to be “more developed” than those who do not have (or do not take) this opportunity. But no level of development and no stage of life should be identified either with virtue or with health.

Finally youth is not the same as the adoption of youthful causes, fashions, rhetoric, or postures. Especially in a time like our own, when youthful behavior is watched with ambivalent fascination by adults, the positions of youth become part of the cultural stock-in- trade. There thus develops the phenomenon of *pseudoyouth:* preadolescents, adolescents, and frustrated adults masquerade as youths, adopt youthful manners, and disguise (even to themselves) their real concerns by the use of youthful rhetoric. Many a contemporary adolescent, whether of college or high school age, finds it convenient to displace and express his battles with his parents in a pseudoyouthful railing at the injustices, oppression, and hypocrisy of the Establishment. And many an adult, unable to accept his years, may adopt pseudoyouthful postures to express the despairs of his adulthood.

To differentiate between “real” and pseudoyouth is a tricky, subtle, and unrewarding enterprise. For, as I have earlier emphasized, the concept of youth as defined here is an ideal type, an abstraction from the concrete experience of many different individuals. Furthermore, given the unevenness

of human development and the persistence throughout life of active remnants of earlier developmental levels, conflicts, and stages, no one can ever be said to be completely “in” one stage of life in all areas of behavior and at all times. No issue can ever be said to be finally “resolved”; no earlier conflict is completely “overcome.” Any real person, even though on balance we may consider him a “youth,” will also contain some persistent childishness, some not outgrown adolescence, and some precocious adulthood in his makeup. All we can say is that, for some, adolescent themes and levels of development are *relatively* outgrown, while adult concerns have not yet assumed full prominence. It is such people whom one might term “youths.”

Social and Historical Implications

If the hypotheses stated in this essay are correct, we have experienced and will continue to witness a growth in the proportion of young men and women in their late teens and twenties who pass through that postadolescent stage I have called youth. If this be true, it will become the more important to recognize the differences between adolescence, youth, and early adulthood, viewing youth as neither prolonged adolescents nor young adults who have not quite been able to navigate the passage to adulthood. Clearly these comments on youth will require further qualification and elaboration. We must examine in greater detail the way sociohistorical change enables more young people to enter a period of youth, yet at the same time defines for them

the alternatives available during that stage of life. We must learn to identify the factors that make each of the characteristic transformations of youth more or less probable. And we must learn to understand and cope better with the hazards, disturbances, and pathologies that inhere in the possibility of youth.

The emergence of an ever larger proportion of young people who exhibit the characteristics of youth will also have important social, cultural, and political implications. I earlier suggested that throughout human history the great majority of men and women have been concrete in their cognitive functioning, conventional in their moral judgments, and dualistic in their views of truth. It can be argued that cultural, social, and political stability, along with the secure transmission of culture from one generation to the next, has required these psychological characteristics. If so, then the emergence of an ever larger group of nondualistic, postrelativistic, postconventional youths will have major effects upon all of those institutions, from the family to the churches, from the political system to the schools, that have traditionally been charged with social stability and the transmission of culture.

Similarly that “cake of custom” that has, at a psychological level, bound societies together and insured their continuity may today be crumbling, with implications we begin to see in the sense of social and cultural malaise in all the industrially advanced nations. Psychological research suggests that,

however widespread the ideal of the autonomous man and woman, this ideal has rarely if ever been historically actualized on a mass scale. It may be that modern conditions—the increase in cross- cultural contact, the age of affluence, the impact of the new media, the prolongation of education, the deferral of adult responsibilities, the rapidity of social change, and so on— are creating an ever larger minority (perhaps eventually a majority) of autonomous men and women. A society of such men and women would be vastly different from any we have known. It may not be too early to begin imagining how it could be a better society than ours.

Finally one established principle of cognitive psychology is that all individuals find it impossible to comprehend the mental processes of those whose cognitive development is much advanced beyond their own. For example, the conventional, law-and-order moralist described by Kohlberg finds it impossible really to understand autonomous, principled moral reasoning. Instead, he has no choice but to identify principled reasoning with the preconventional, egocentric, “anything goes” morality that he outgrew as a child. A similar principle appears to hold in other sectors of development. For example, the concept of interpersonal mutuality, defined as care for another person because of his or her irreplaceable individuality, tends to be incomprehensible to people who can care only for those whom they consider like themselves. Those who are related to their parents through bonds of authoritarian submission will tend to confuse a three-dimensional

relationship to parents with childish rebellion and disrespect.

The general principle that higher levels of development are incomprehensible to those who have not experienced them has important implications for therapists, as for others who deal with youth. It is, of course, possible to understand empathically many aspects of another's experience that one has not experienced oneself: a therapist need not have been psychotic himself in order to understand a patient who has been or is. Furthermore, the common complaint of youths that their therapists do not understand them is often a true transference reaction that must be traced back to earlier feelings about their parents.

But the possibility remains that, just as able and complex high school students are often misunderstood by teachers less able and less complex than themselves, so some youthful patients may encounter therapists who misunderstand their behavior and thought processes, confusing higher levels of functioning with regressions. Psychotherapeutic training armors the therapist with powerful and often accurate ways of explaining away the patient's objections to his own interventions. In the end, however, the possibility remains that the patient may be right—that the therapist ma not only have failed to understand but be incapable of understanding. There is no sure-fire safeguard against this possibility. But we can at least hope that therapists themselves will be relatively "developed" human beings, that they

will not automatically equate their inability to understand with pathology in their patients, and that they will view the therapeutic process not only as a way of helping someone else to grow but as a human experience in which they, too, may develop.

Bibliography

Adelson, J., "The Mystique of Adolescence," *Psychiatry,* 1:1, 1964.

Apter, D. E. (Ed.), *Ideology and Discontent,* Free Press, New York, 1964.

Aries, P., *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life,* Random House, New York, 1962.

Berger, B. M., "The New Stage of American Man—Almost Endless Adolescence," *New York Times Magazine,* November 2, 1969.

Bernfeld, S., "Types of Adolescence," *Psychoanal. Quart.,* 7:243, 1938.

_____, "Uber eine typische Form der mannlichen Pubertat," *Imago,* 9, 1923.

Bion, W. R., *Experiences in Groups,* Basic Books, New York, 1961.

Blos, P., *On Adolescence,* Free Press, New York, 1962.

Bourne, R.

Bowers, M. B., "The Onset of Psychosis: A Diary Account," *Psychiatry,* 28:346, 1965.

_____, and Freedman, D. X., "Psychedelic Experiences in Acute Psychoses," *Arch. Gen. Psychiat.,* *1*5:240-248, 1960.

Bowlby, J., *Maternal Care and Mental Health,* World Health Organization, Geneva, 1951.

Bruner, J. S., "A Psychologist's Viewpoint: Review of Inhelder and Piaget, The Growth of Logical Thinking,' " *Brit. J. Psychol.,* 50:363-370, 1959.

_____, Olver, R. S., and Greenfield, P. M., *Studies in Cognitive Growth,* Chapters 11-14, John Wiley, New York, 1967.

Davies, A. F., *Private Politics: A Study of Five Political Outlooks,* Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1966.

Davis, N. Z., "The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France," paper presented at Sir George William University, March 5, 1970.

Demos, J., and Demos, V., "Adolescence in Historical Perspective," *J. Marriage & Fam.,* 31:632-638, 1969.

Deutsch, H., *The Psychology of Women,* Vol. 1, Grune & Stratton, New York, 1944.

Douvan, E., and Adelson, J., *The Adolescent Experience,* John Wiley, New York, 1966.

Eisenstadt, S. N., *From Generation to Generation,* Free Press, New York, 1956.

Erikson, E., *Childhood and Society,* 2nd ed., Norton, New York, 1963.

_____, *Gandhis Truth: On the Origins of Militant Non-Violence,* Norton, New York, 1969.

_____, "Identity and the Life Cycle," *Psychol. Issues,* 1, 1959.

_____, *Identity: Youth and Crisis,* Norton, New York, 1968.

_____, *Insight and Responsibility,* Norton, New York, 1964.

_____, "Reflections on the Dissent of Contemporary Youth," *Daedalus,* 99.154-176, 1970.

_____, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History,* Norton, New York, 1958.

Fishkin, J., Keniston, K., and MacKinnon, , "Moral Reasoning and Political Ideology," *J. Pers. & Soc.*

Psychol., 27:109-119, 1973.

Freud, A., “Adolescence,” in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child,* Vol. 13, International Universities Press, New York, 1958.

_____, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense,* International Universities Press, New York, 1946.

_____, *Normality and Pathology in Childhood: Assessments of Development,* International Universities Press, New York, 1965.

Freud, S., “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,” in Strachey, J. (Ed.), *Standard Edition, Complete Psychological Works,* Vol. 7, Hogarth, London, 1953.

Feuer, L. S., *The Conflict of Generations,* Basic Books, New York, 1969.

Friedenberg, E. Z., *The Vanishing Adolescent,* Dell, New York, 1962.

Greenfield, P. M., and Bruner, J. S., “Culture and Cognitive Growth,” in Goslin, A. (Ed.), *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research,* Rand McNally, Chicago, 1969.

Haan, N. Brewster Smith, M., and Block, J. H., “Moral Reasoning of Young Adults: Political-Social Behavior, Family Backgrounds, and Personality Correlates,” *J. Pers, & Soc. Psychol.,* 10:183-201, 1968.

Hall, G. S., *Adolescence: Its Psychology, and Its Relations to Psysiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education,* D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1904.

Harris, D. B. (Ed.), *The Concept of Development: An Issue in the Study of Human Behavior,* University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1957.

Hauser, S. T., *Black and White Identity Formation,* Wiley-Interscience, New York, 1971.

Hunt, D., *Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France,* Basic Books, New York, 1970.

Inhelder, B., “Some Aspects of Piaget’s Approach to Cognition,” *Monog. Soc. Res. Child. Dev.,* 27:19-

33, 1962.

_____, and Piaget, J., *The Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence,* (Tr. by Parsons, A., and Milgram, S.), Basic Books, New York, 1958.

James, W., *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* Longmans, Green, New York, 1902.

Jung, C. G., *Psychological Types: The Psychology of Individuation,* Random House, New York, 1962.

Kardiner, A., *The Psychological Frontiers of Society,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1945.

Katz, J., *et al., No Time for Youth: Growth and Constraint in College Students,* Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1968.

Keniston, K., "Postadolescence (Youtli) and Historical Change," in Zubin, J., and Freeman, A. (Eds.), *The Psychopathology of Adolescence,* Grune & Stratton, New York, 1970.

_____, "Psychological Development and Historical Change," *J. Interdisciplinary Hist.,* 2:329-345, 1971.

_____, "Student Activism, Moral Development and Morality," *Am. J. Orthopsychiat., 40:*577-59, 1970.

_____, *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society,* Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1965.

_____, *Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth,* Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1968.

_____, "Youth as a Stage of Life," *Am. Scholar,* 39:631-654, 1970.

Kohlberg, L., "The Child as a Moral Philosopher," *Psychology Today,* 25-30, 1968.

_____, "The Concept of Moral Maturity," paper read at NICHD Conference on the Development of Values, Washington, D.C., May 15, 1968.

_____, "The Development of Children's Orientations towards a Moral Order I: Sequence in the

Development of Moral Thought,” *Vita Humana,* 6:11-33, 1963.

_____, “Education for Justice: A Modern Statement of the Platonic View,” Burton Lecture on Moral Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, 1968.

_____, “The Relations between Moral Judgment and Moral Action: A Developmental View,” paper read at Institute of Human Development, Berkeley, 1969.

_____, “Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Socialization,” in Goslin, D. A. (Ed.), *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research,* Band McNally, Chicago, 1969.

_____, and Gilligan, C., “The Adolescent as a Philosopher: The Discovery of the Self in a Postconventional World,” *Daedalus,* 100.1051-1086, 1971.

_____, and Kramer, R., “Continuities and Discontinuities in Childhood and Adult Moral Development,” *Human Dev., 12:* 93-120, 1969.

Kramer, R., “Changes in Moral Judgment Response Pattern during Late Adolescence and Young Adulthood,” Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1968.

Krebs, R. L., “Some Relationships between Moral Judgment, Attention and Resistance to Temptation,” Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1967.

Kuhn, D., Langer, J., and Kohlberg, L., “The Development of Formal-Operational Thought: Its Relation to Moral Development,” unpublished paper, Harvard University, 1971.

Lerner, M., “Personal Politics,” Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1970.

Lidz, T., “Egocentric Cognitive Regression and a Theory of Schizophrenia,” paper presented at the Fifth World Congress of Psychiatry, Mexico City, December 1971.

Loevinger, J., “The Meaning and Measurement of Ego Development,” Am. *Psychol.,* 21:195-206, 1966.

Mannheim, K., *Ideology and Utopia,* Harcourt Brace, New York, 1936.

Myrdal, G., *An American Dilemma,* Harper & Row, New York, 1944.

Offer, D., *Psychological World of the Teenager: A Study of Normal Adolescent Boys,* Basic Books, New York, 1969.

Parsons, T., and Platt, G. M., “Higher Education, Changing Socialization,” in Riley, M. W., Johnson, M. E., and Foner, (Eds.), A *Sociology of Age Stratification,* Volume III, *Of Aging and Society,* pp. 236-291, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1972.

Perry, W. G., Jr., *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years,* Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1970.

______, “Patterns of Development in Thought and Values of Students in a Liberal Arts College,” Harvard University Bureau of Study Counsel, Cambridge, 1968.

Prelinger, E., Personal Communication, 1969.

Provence, S., and Lipton, R. C., *Infants in Institutions,* International Universities Press, New York, 1962.

Pumpian-Mindlin, E., “Omnipotentiality, Youth and Commitment,” *J. Am. Acad. Child Psychiat.,* 4:1-18, 1965.

Reich, C. A., *The Greening of America,* Random House, New York, 1970.

Rest, J., “Developmental Hierarchy in Preference and Comprehension of Moral Judgment,” Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1968.

_____, Turiel, E., and Kohlberg, L., “Level of Moral Development as a Determinant of Preference and Comprehension of Moral Judgments Made by Others,” J. *Pers. ir Soc. Psychol.,* 37:225-252, 1969.

Roszak, T., *The Making of a Counterculture,* Doubleday, New York, 1969.

Shapiro, R. L., “Adolescence and the Psychology of the Ego,” *Psychiatry, 26:*77-87, 1963-

Silverstein, H., "Study of East Village Youth," unpublished ms., prepared for Joint Commission of Mental Health of Children, 1968.

Slater, P., *Microcosm: Structural, Psychological and Religious Evolution in Groups,* John Wiley, New York, 1966.

Spitz, R., "Hospitalism," in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child,* Vol. 1, pp. 53-75, International Universities Press, New York, 1945.

Sullivan, H. S., *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry,* Norton, New York, 1953.

White, R .W., *Lives in Progress,* Dryden Press, New York, 1952.

Notes

[1] Throughout this essay I assume some familiarity with the works of Erik Erikson, virtually all of which clarify the stage I term "youth." Portions of this essay were previously published in *The American Scholar.* The research on which it is based is supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation.

[2] Obviously interpersonal development, and specifically the development of relationships with peers, begins long before adolescence, starting with the "parallel play" observed at ages two to four and continuing through many stages to the preadolescent same-sex "chumship" described by Sullivan. But puberty in middle-class Western societies is accompanied by major cognitive changes that permit the early adolescent for the first time to develop hypothetical ideals of the possibilities of friendship and intimacy. The "search for a soul mate" of early adolescence is the first interpersonal stage built upon these new cognitive abilities.

[3] Research work with nonpatients suggests that the experiences I have termed "prepsychotic" are common among intellectual youth; that they are often precipitated by hallucinogenic drugs; and that they only occasionally lead to a truly psychotic episode.