BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Aspects of the transition from school to work

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To Kate and Nell, who have been part of my own prolonged transition from school to work.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

1 Introduction

2 The Development of the Project: Gaining Access to the Schools

3 Techniques of Intervention: Gaining Access to the Hidden Adolescent

4 Some Notes on Thomaston School

5 Thomaston School Group the Following Year

6 The Tutors' Pastoral Care Group at Thomaston

7 Lake School

8 South End School

9 The Adolescent in his Dilemma

10 Some Dilemmas of the Teacher

11 Mourning

12 The Careers Advisory Service And Careers Teachers: How Strong Is The Link Between School And Work?

13 Some Speculations on the Psychological Meaning of Work and its Implications For School

14 Reflections on the School as an Organisation
15 Postscript: The Special Dilemma of the Immigrant and Minority Child in the Transition from School to Work

16 Findings and Recommendations

References
Acknowledgments

I am chiefly indebted to two peoples John Hill, my director at the Centre for Applied Social Research of the Tavistock Institute, whose encouragement and guidance are in large part responsible for the creation of this book; and to Marion Davis, whose collaboration in the research project lent the support and skill of an able colleague. Much credit for this work is due to them. Edward Tejerian, on leave from Queens College, New York, helped generously by interviewing and testing most of the adolescents in our groups. His thoughtful work is reflected in many places.

The main link with each school was with the Deputy Head or Second Master and in all three schools we valued his help enormously. The
interest and support of the Head was vital as well. The numerous contributions of teaching and careers staff and of students are illustrated by the many references in the text. I have learned greatly from them and am grateful accordingly. The active support of the Inner London Education Authority is gratefully acknowledged, including the help of Dr. Marten Shipman, Director of the office of Research and Statistics, in reviewing the manuscript. Catherine Avent Careers Inspector, gave continued assistance in maintaining a basis for the project within the I.L.E.A.

I am grateful to many who were my teachers during the year I spent at the Tavistock Centre. John Bowlby's seminar in "attachment and loss" formed a foundation for my thinking about loss and mourning. Robert Gosling, Dugmore Hunter, Mildred Marshak and Isca Salzberger Wittenberg were helpful in the areas of individual and group
psychodynamics. I have learned what I know about the functions of anxiety in social systems from Isabel Menzies and Kenn Rogers. Many of my colleagues in the Adolescent Department of the Tavistock Clinic contributed to the development of my thinking and I must thank the Chairman, Dr. Arthur Hyatt Williams, for his enthusiastic support of the work.

Penelope Sykes consistently and energetically recorded group sessions, typed the several drafts and was a third collaborator in the entire project. Jill Savege read the manuscript critically at several stages. Cynthia Brown coordinated the effort within the Centre for Applied Social Research and between London and Washington D.C. In so doing she formed a network which sustained our co-operative venture. Grateful acknowledgment is made for the funds from the Philip Baxendale Charitable Trust which provided support for the
At the time of reprinting “Between Two Worlds” in 2018, I have added in two chapters by Jill Savege Scharff, who wrote in 1973-4 as Jill Savege before our marriage. These two chapters, also conducted with the oversight of John Hill of the Centre for Applied Social Research unit of the Tavistock Institute, continued the work at “Thomaston School” and add to the work I did there in the 1972-1973 school year, and so they belong with the book in an organic way.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"Leaving school is like being born. It's like being pushed out of your mother's womb and when you're out, you're useless."

Benjamin, 6th former.

The transition from school to work is a crucial stage in the life of an individual. How he handles it is a matter of great importance to him and to his society. In a relatively limited period he must, for the first time in his life, bring together his internal resources and those gained from adults at school and home, in order to make a choice. Although this choice is his first major independent one, it has lasting implications for his future. In the developed societies, academically able children
can delay this decision until they can garner more resources and sophistication. But those who have not been able to profit from the educational system must often leave at the earliest moment. Here is a paradoxical situation, in which those least able to cope with a complex world must begin to do so when they are youngest and least supported. Such young people have to cope with the personal turbulence inseparable from adolescence, while at the same time experiencing an abrupt change in their institutional environment. The transition is experienced as traumatic - undertaken by inadequately prepared, fearful adolescents with consequent maladjustment at work. Statistically, this is seen as "high juvenile labour turnover".\footnote{1} But for the non-academic early school leaver this time often represents an evident mismatch between the needs of the growing individual and the resources
provided by society for meeting these needs.

The problem comes specifically into focus at the present for several reasons. In Britain the school-leaving age has recently been raised from 15 to 16, provoking questions in many quarters about what to do with the extra year of "education", and about the relevance of traditional forms of education, derived largely from academic models. The survey "Young School Leavers" gives evidence of widespread hope among parents that the raising of the school leaving age will give children a chance to develop further before entering work. But many children and adolescents are heading for work which makes little or no use of traditional academic skills and may in fact require quite different ones. In the U.S.A. the problem has been exacerbated by racial issues, truancy and violence, and there is some evidence that these phenomena are increasing in Great
Britain, although to a lesser extent.

Thus the raising of the school-leaving age has spotlighted the problem of making this extra year productive for the academically less able. It is primarily these adolescents who are, in effect, forced to stay on. The reluctant school "stayer" often feels that the curriculum within which he is taught becomes increasingly irrelevant to the world he must enter and the skills he will require there. Both the adolescents and the school may feel it is they who are carrying a burden displaced on to them from the larger society. For the adolescent there may be the feeling of unnecessary delay during which school has nothing relevant to offer. And the school may feel it is being called on either to "child-mind" or to "child-mend", rather than to teach.

Middle-class teachers often sense little contact
between their own experience and that of their students. Their response is partially explained by the concept of cultural dissonance of Basil Bernstein (1971) which postulates a radically different culture and heritage for working class children. Bernstein argues that a cultural gap exists between working class children and middle class teachers, expressed by the use of two essentially different languages. On the other hand, a psychologically-derived explanation identifies the gap between teacher and child as stemming from the feeling of each that the other is "not like me" and from the common lack of identification of each with the other. The child thus cannot hope to grow up to become like a loved teacher, while the teacher may reject parts of the child which are felt to be either alien to him—or, more importantly, which are felt to be close to hated parts of himself.
Whatever the underlying reasons for the sense of distance between teachers and students, the "gap" only forms a context for the further study of the relevance or irrelevance of a given educational experience as preparation for taking up work roles. Teaching which would be helpful to the adolescent in bridging the school-to-work gap is of a kind which would help him realistically to anticipate work, learn about the process of *working* (not only about specific jobs) and to begin considering how to realise some of his fantasised hopes and ambitions for himself in the world of work. Anything which hinders understanding between himself and his teacher needs to be overcome as he is being helped. Furthermore, an understanding of the elements constituting the gulf between the teacher and himself can become a good area for study in itself—part of the process of narrowing the internal gap between "doing" and
"becoming". For instance, one common difference between them is that teachers have not "left school", and are therefore attempting to help the adolescent do something they did not do—whether by choice or default.

The transition from school to work is a unique transition in the life of an individual. Although previous transitions may be equally important, they are made either automatically or under the care and direction of a responsible adult. In the case of the transition from school to work, even if the adolescent has a supportive family or teacher, it may be difficult to accept help just at the time he is expected (and expects of himself) to stand on his own feet in a move towards independence, to "shake free" of the adults he still feels he needs. Many subsequent transitions which depend on personal decision can be avoided at the option of the individual. For instance, one can decide not to
undertake marriage or to have children. Other major experiences do not involve choice—as in the case of the death of a parent or spouse.

The transition from school to work involves the interface between the two worlds of school and work, and a passing from being a child at school to becoming a young adult in a larger society. During their terminal educational experience children express discontent about insufficient preparation for work roles. But they also feel ill-prepared to deal with new personal roles and social issues. Some of the school leaver's needs are clear. He needs to be able to develop the capacity to negotiate certain social systems such as social and health services, housing, and income tax. But beyond this there is a more general issue: the planning of a strategy to accomplish one's life goals and aims. "Vocational" or "career" decisions, in the sense of choosing which job to pursue,
represent only the narrowest aspect of overall life planning. But learning about the process of choice and achieving a strategy of personal development is relevant to all the kinds of choices and roles which will be encountered in late adolescence and young adulthood. A given job has consequences for one's over-all quality of life. So also does the kind of decision-making processes one learns to use. Education about job choice can be effective on both counts - touching on such widely varying areas as preparation for marriage,parenthood, leisure life, and relationships to aspects of the wider society.

We have already seen that adolescents with the greatest difficulties about leaving school are often the first to leave, and that they do so with the least preparation for work and for life-strategy planning. If they then step into a new situation with a personal sense of unpreparedness,
accommodations may be made which hamper future growth or adjustment. A study of "psychosocial transitions" (C.M. Parkes, 1971) tells us that transitions like the one from school to work are an opportunity either for psychological growth or for regression; the loss involved in a retreat at this time can be thought of as a double one. Not only can it represent backward movement in itself, but, more significantly, it represents the loss of an opportunity to grow as an individual.

The Dilemma of the Adolescent

Much recent writing about the predicament of the adolescent in a changing world has pointed to problems in identity formation, and the issues which must be resolved in growing through a series of overlapping, progressive steps and in focusing an identity out of a diffused life experience. 7
In considering the process of identity formation, we must encompass the narrowing of possibilities at an earlier stage of life than is usual; and "negative identity" a crystallization of "who I am" around destructive urges which pit the adolescent against those people he needs. These forms of truncated development are encountered in adolescents generally, but the modern adolescent with few skills is at high risk for early personality and identity closure in a way which tends to encapsulate him within a sub-culture of his peers - in isolation from, and with hostility to, the rest of society. In the service of further growth and self-realisation, he may set himself against society for lack of acceptable opportunities for an alliance with it.

Truancy, delinquency and violence have important roots here. When the adolescent feels it impossible to succeed along socially approved
lines, he may well adopt the negative solution. For example, he may shore up his self-esteem by saying in effect, "If I can't be somebody good, at least I'll be somebody who is noticed, even at the expense of punishment or jail." It should be noted here that many adolescents have periods of assuming such negative views of themselves as phases prior to the establishment of a more constructive identity when they can convert aspects of negative identity to positive goals. It is the closing out of new growth that is the stifling factor.

The process of identity formation has an optimum time span. Closure can occur too early, before the adolescent has a complete range of experience or adequate experience of his own potential, but it can also occur too late. An adolescent can avoid commitments which would define a course of expected development which he
fears, but which might yet be appropriate for him. Teachers speak of this phase frequently in discussing adolescents who stay on at school aimlessly. Without a positive goal for school work they stay in order to avoid facing the outside world. Such prolonged avoidance is often supported by parents who share the adolescent's fear of the world after school or who have been unable to give up unrealistic aspirations about their children. The making of an occupational choice has a central role in identity closure. It can serve as a longed for "seed crystal", allowing other aspects of identity to crystallize around it. Yet the attraction of crystallized identity contains also the threat that it will bind the adolescent to an identity with more constraints than he is willing to accept. (Erikson, 1968).

This suggests that the concept referred to above of "premature closure" or "foreclosure" of
personality development needs to be taken under the umbrella of the more general concept of "out of phase personality closure", referring to the defensive aspects and the avoidance of reality contained in a variety of states of adolescent identity formation. An adolescent who keeps a degree of openness appropriate to childhood but no longer appropriate to the facing of adulthood will experience as much difficulty facing reality as one who takes up a rigid or negative identity at an early phase of development. Both extremes hamper future development and both represent a reluctance to deal with current reality.

**The Adolescent's View of Himself**

From the perspective of the adolescent himself, at roughly the age of 16 (although with wide individual variations) his own body along with the bodies of most of his peers first reaches adult
stature and physical maturation. He looks like an adult for the first time, and is confronted with the loss of his childishness. He has a new body, a new body image and a new inner self-image. This leads him to share a frequent fear adults have about him—a fear of having "an immature mind in a mature body". Fears of long held but untested assumptions about becoming an adult are heightened in him, and reverberate in his peer group. Sixteen is a particularly vulnerable age in the development of the adolescent. It is the approximate age of the shift from thinking about himself predominantly as a child to thinking of himself largely as adult. The suddenly imposed task of negotiating a social transition, finding himself a place in a wholly new world while at the same time trying out new internal bearings can be overwhelming. Sixteen thus represents a psychological watersheds all that is behind and
known flows back into childhood; all that is ahead flows towards adulthood. Neither is safe. Both beckon.

**External Factors Influencing the Adolescent**

Several factors play into the internal psychological problems. Adults, both parents and teachers, project on to adolescents many of their own feelings and aspirations. Such projections may contain widely contrasting feelings, equally unreal in their extremes: adulation and envy, hope and despair, fear and love. It may include nostalgia for their own lost childhood and unrealised adolescent ambitions, and, simultaneously, anger about the frustrations of the adult world. Most adults have known the previously mentioned fear of the "immature mind in the mature body". The adult may see many feelings whose relevance to himself he must disown by marking them as only
pertaining to the adolescent: irrationality, potential for uncontrolled violence, and irresponsible sexuality. The adolescent, half-man, half-child, becomes a vehicle for hopes and fears too large for him to handle or contain; for as much as he holds them, they also belong to the adults around him.

Other aspects of projection involve reverberations of reciprocal blaming of the school by the parents and of the parents by the school; and everyone blames the adolescent and is blamed by him. All fear and half-expect the adolescent to fail, and all look for others to accuse. The more unprepared the adolescent is seen to be, or the more inhospitable the world, the greater is the amount of frustration, anger and guilt which feed the mutual projection. At this time too the adolescent may begin to realise that his parents and other adults are struggling with the residues
of their own uncompleted adolescence. The adult with unmet fantasies of his own often projects unfulfilled wishes for himself on to the child. If the adolescent, in striving for an independent identity and life, rejects these wishes, the adult may then suffer a feeling of—the loss of his own illusions. The adolescent senses that he is disappointing the adult, but feels angry at being coerced by the pressure to realise imposed fantasies. Ironically, this pressure and fear of disappointing may lead him to reject realistic expectations too.

In addition to interpersonal stresses, under modern urban conditions, several factors conspire to make the world increasingly inhospitable to the unprepared. The initial stress at work may be high. Mechanised jobs often require workers with few skills so that higher personal development and ambition is of no economic value? but considerable personal resources are required in
order to fend off boredom and personal constriction, or to qualify for work which is not boring and constricting. At the same time, it is extremely difficult, although not theoretically impossible, for the non-academic adolescent to re-enter the educational system once he has left. Leaving school is effectively a "one-way ticket". This not only operates to the disadvantage of adolescents who have left school already but heightens anxiety about initial decisions around school leaving.

It is not only the schools which make the barrier between school and work relatively unyielding, but the institutions of work as well. Most English apprenticeships must begin at a certain age (usually 16 to 17) and provide little or no further general education, but emphasise trade specific knowledge. There is little attempt to offer any further education to the holder of the very
lowest levels of employment, and there is great resistance to introducing more flexible entry criteria in respect of both age for and qualification for entering many fields. In addition, employers and personnel managers have little experience in providing for the psychological growth of immature, inarticulate and defensive adolescents.

A review by Michael Carter of estimates of job change rates among young workers reveals little consensus about exact figures, but general agreement that the rate is high, with perhaps 30-35% of adolescents changing jobs in the first year, and especially among school-leavers of lesser ability or achievement. (Carter, 1966) He suggests that a substantially greater proportion of 15 year old school leavers shift jobs during their first few years at work than those who leave school later. A study in Sheffield (Carter, 1962) showed that one third of boys and girls changed the place of
work at least once during their first year at work and that for well over half of these the move involved a substantial change of occupation. Lipschitz (1972) sampled 20 colleges and found that up to 50% of students studying a broad range of mechanical and engineering crafts dropped out in the first year.

Carter cites a lack of adequate counselling preparation for employment, and of "someone to turn to" as the factors in job dissatisfaction and employment turnover. But Lipschitz cites the difficulties students themselves may have in turning to teachers because of a persistent tendency to see them as disciplinarians who are not very helpful.

Thus it may be suggested that the interplay of the adolescent's development and factors in the world around him together result in impediments
to successful adjustment.

Psycho-Social Transitions

Increasingly, a view of human development is emerging which describes the process of growth as relatively short periods of turbulence and change interspersed with longer steady states. Some of the familiar periods of change include birth, early child development, entering school, the shift from primary to secondary school, school leaving or the movement into further education, marriage, divorce, mid-life crises, changing homes, the birth and growth of one's own children, the loss of children when they leave home, the coming of old age and the approach of one's own death. Even this list is far from complete. Which of these or other life events will have decisive turns for a given individual or family varies greatly and depends on an interplay of many factors.
Individual researchers have investigated some of the particular stages: Erikson (1959) that of adolescence, Parkes (1972) that of becoming a widow. Fried (1962) that of losing a home through urban development, Rogers (1974) the mid-life crisis period, to name a few. At any of these transitions, there are possibilities for growth and development, or for regression and fixation. Although temporary regression and fixation are common, normal psychological responses to stress, their prolongation is usually maladaptive. Examples of such maladaptive responses include school refusal, student "apathy", mid-life 'last tangoes' and pre-senile depressions. The support necessary to direct the turbulence and anxiety towards growth rather than regression requires a "containing environment". A loving family can help a child overcome anxiety and stay in school, and a secure marriage or the presence of supportive
children can help overcome a mid-life crisis. By "containing environment", then, I mean the sum of the people surrounding the individual, plus the institutions and social systems on which he relies for support in his usual life and under stress. The environment will be "containing" if it is felt capable of supplying additional resources to meet stressful situations.

Parkes (1971) uses the concept of "psychosocial transition" to include these major life shifts as the process of moving from a familiar life situation to a new, and therefore unfamiliar, one. Inherent in the notion of the psycho-social transition, or psychosocial crisis, is the view that it takes place over a relatively short time and affects large sectors of one's internal and external world. It is a concentrated period when life experience (the external reality) impinges upon the internal world of expectations and assumptions about
one's place and options in that wider world. Transitions involve the coming together of social pressures and individual issues of growth and development. They confront the individual with possibilities for progression or regression, growth or stagnation. The successful management of a transition is a prerequisite for the assumption of a new identity in a new role or a new world.

Of all these transitions, the one from school to work is among the most crucial in our society—fraught with possibilities of failure. It is usually an extremely abrupt step, and yet active thinking about the movement from the school world into the nonschool world is often delayed until the last few months before actual school-leaving. Gradual maturation into the process of choice and the planning of strategy, is not often allowed for. Stress is further heightened by the delay of choices until a time when anxiety is high, and the prospect
of movement out of school so immediate, that the choices cannot be appropriately weighed, considered and tested.

It is implicit in this concept that grieving is inseparable from the transition because it always involves the loss of the previous state. All the parts of the adolescent's old world of expectations which do not fit with what he perceives and fears before him will have to be given up. As he is obliged to relinquish each discordant element, he suffers the loss of an inner part of himself, and must deal with the experience as a loss, much as he would have to deal with the loss of a parent or a physical part of himself. Neither he nor those around him are accustomed to think of the process of change in these terms. Anxieties about the loss of one's childhood and fears long held but untested about becoming an adult are heightened inside the adolescent and reverberate in his peer
group. Yet it is just at this critical moment—at a time when he is still experiencing the loss of childhood and may possess fewer "tried and true" ways of mastering his daily life than he has ever had before—that he must negotiate the social aspects of the transition.

For the less able or the less "mature" adolescent who is not academically orientated, and therefore must leave school at the first opportunity, the transition occurs at a predetermined time. Pressure to relieve internal anxiety by an early choice may also trigger the identity foreclosure discussed earlier. Alternatively, strong anxieties about job choice and school leaving may prevent the crystallization of identity structure which would normally be occurring at about the age of 16. Inability to form a focused identity leaves the individual without an integrated centre from which to act. The resultant
problem of uneven identity development in the adolescent requires elaboration at this point.

**The Problem of Uneven Development**

The problem is emerging from the cocoon at the appropriate time. Although we have discussed some of the norms of adolescent development, focusing on the age of 16 as the time when adult physical stature, adult sexual development and the beginnings of adult autonomy are first achieved, human development is in reality an extremely uneven matter. Psychological growth is as uneven as physical growth. The elements contributing to the unevenness and to the back and forth quality of the progress are quite complex, and individuals vary widely in the pace at which they grow and develop. When we look at the process of vocational choice and the planning of life strategies we see a great deal of this unevenness.
To begin with, an imbalance is created when an individual moves backward to earlier modes of choice and earlier actual choices under stress. It is possible therefore to see various forms of defence against anxiety represented in premature or uneven* identity formation. For instance, an adolescent may form a narrow, rigid identity without much room for movement on the one hand, or a chaotic, unfocussed identity on the other. There will be examples of both in the material to follow.

In the developmental phases of the crystallization of personality there is a need for a degree of congruence in the phases of personality closure with the occupational life choices to be made. The optimal situation is one of the development of identity to a level adequate for the kinds of choices to be made. Since development consists of sequential steps, progress through one
stage is required before the next can be attempted. The adolescent who is held up at an early phase will not be able to proceed readily with the next one. There is a whole range of possible maladjustments. When crystallization of identity occurs too early or too late to help make a given decision, some form of educational or therapeutic intervention is indicated. To summarise: in the school-leaving adolescent we may have a chrysalis trying to fly in a butterfly's world, only to find that he has emerged from the cocoon too early. On the other hand, it is also possible to stay too long in the cocoon. The problem before us therefore is how to distinguish the appropriate time for emergence from school in the life of an individual, and how to support his early attempts at flight.

The adolescent's cocoon is not made up of thread, but of people. "School leaving" presents issues of life transition not only for the adolescent
directly involved, but also for the adults who have surrounded him. His parents and teachers are "losing a child". Therefore the adolescent and the adults around him too will be caught up in mourning the loss of each other at a time when that loss is sorely felt. These crucial reciprocal processes of loss and mourning which are part of the working through of all psycho-social transitions are demonstrated in much of the material to be presented, and will be discussed extensively in the chapter on mourning. (Chapter 11)

J.M.M. Hill has developed the concept of "occupational maturity" as the end stage of prolonged development. In this process, a child begins with many fantasies about the nature of work. Initially, these fantasies bear little relationship to the reality of work.
Growth towards occupational maturity involves the progressive synthesising of fantasy and reality into "an imaginative approach to work". Envisaging this synthesising activity as one of the developmental processes discussed a moment ago enables us to say that it is necessary to pass successfully through one stage of development before the next can be tackled. It is also, then, possible to slip back to an earlier level of occupational development or mode of operation if the adolescent is under stress. Choices about occupation and related life issues may be made at any stage and may become inappropriate at a later stage of development. It is possible for an early stage to prove a sticking point for an adolescent, or, alternatively, he may progress well, only to be thrown back to an earlier stage.

The net effect of uneven growth rates, fixation at intermediate points, and reversion to earlier
stages under stress is to produce, in any group, adolescents with widely varying levels of development. They cannot be treated as though they were homogenous. Unevenness and inconsistency is the acknowledged rule in the development of the single individual—but all the more so when individuals join to form a group. A classroom of 16 year olds contains adolescents at very different phases of physical and psychological maturation. And the same unevenness is to be found in the levels of "occupational maturity".

**Who Helps the Adolescent Bridge the Gap?**

There are two official groups existing within the school's authority, with the specific function of intervening in occupational decisions: *careers teachers*, who are members of school staff, and *careers officers*, located outside the school. It may be noted that a recent study by Roberts of the
Careers Advisory Service (1971) sheds general doubt on the availability and usefulness to the children of Careers Officers. The results from Hill's earlier work point in the same direction. The Careers Officers of the Careers Advisory Service generally offer specific careers advice to adolescents, but there is no attempt to teach them about the process of work, nor to fit information to the psychological development of the individual.

Careers teachers located within the schools know students over a longer period of time, although in most schools inadequate provision is made for their work. Often no more than a "job placement service" is offered. For the adolescent with difficulty in knowing who he is or where he is heading, there is often nothing more than an attempt to find a job that is not too debasing. In schools which are moving towards teaching about work, the strategy of doing so is generally in the
early stages of innovation—remaining often sporadic and without basic principles about how to teach about the process of work, how to measure the effectiveness of various kinds of intervention. Very little is known about gauging the needs of different kinds of children. For instance, the problems of the unevenness of development and the relevance of different forms of intervention to different situations have not yet been approached. Nor has the role of mounting anxiety in impeding healthy occupational choice as school leaving draws near. Nevertheless, there is a high degree of commitment to this kind of teaching by many able teachers and careers officers.15

The problems in gaining effective access to many urban adolescents raise grave questions about the relative success of various methods of intervention and facilitation of development.
There are, however, advances in the development of techniques for reaching out to inaccessible adolescents in both Britain and the United States.\footnote{16} While work-experience programmes for the young adolescent are subject to some legal constraints in Britain, a major experiment in this regard is going on at the School for Human Services in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.\footnote{17} In the present programme, where work and school are intertwined during secondary education, pupils with a career interest in the medical and social professions or occupations use school as an opportunity to explore their chosen world of work. A plan of half-day job placement, half-day school runs throughout the school. This experiment in breaking the rigid boundary between the worlds of school and work is attempting to explore the earlier placement into one kind of work and the integration of work and
school.

If we look at the adolescent once he has left school and entered the work force, we notice an absence of any systematic support and guidance of personal development. Rarely do industries and employers of adolescents, whose personal adjustment may be tenuous, offer opportunities for guiding continued growth. This is the case both in regard to development of job skills and to learning about the process of work—but it applies especially to more general aspects of growth in these children with the greatest need. If they had possessed sufficient resources to stay at school, they might have expected to obtain further help and support for development through a system of counselling. The troubling paradox exists that university and college students have increasingly elaborate counselling services available to them, while their less sophisticated peers who are
already at work and may have greater need for such intervention, have, with rare exceptions, no access to guidance.19

Towards a Bridging Process

All this points to the need for an institution, a series of procedures, or a person who will take on the responsibility for helping when adolescents are in the process of transition. Such an institution or person must cross the interface between the two worlds and be effective in both. Currently, the individual adolescent often crosses the gulf alone, for the institutions concerned with schooling and those concerned with work do not meet at the interface. There is a need for a new kind of help for the adolescent in containing the anxiety he must at present bear alone, it is a question to be considered as to whether this help might best come from a teacher, a Careers Officer, or an
altogether new *process* of facilitating a benign passage through the transition.

The existing institution whose mandate is to cross this boundary is the Careers Advisory Service, but as we have heard, the experience of adolescents and of workers in the CAS itself is that it provides a weak bridge at best. There is a need, therefore, either to strengthen this existing service or to devise an alternative bridging institution or process to promote the growth of ego skills in the adolescent.

In this book we shall suggest and support the proposal that new ways be found to help the adolescent negotiate the transition from school to work in a benign fashion. There are many possible ways of doing so. Some involve new roles for teachers and schools—and therefore entail new kinds of training or curriculum. Others may
involve the establishment of a new institution responsible for mediating the process. Before any of these can be undertaken, however, an increased understanding of the issues involved both for the developing adolescent and for the people and institutions around him is required.

We begin with introductory material on the setting, design and techniques of our investigative programme. In the succeeding section the findings are presented, followed by extensive discussion. Finally, a range of recommendations is presented in an incomplete form. This book will only establish a way-station for those who would accompany the adolescent as he moves between the two worlds of school and work. How further to speed his journey remains a matter of charting the unexplored together.
The important mechanism of the projection of disliked parts of oneself on to another, and the subsequent pushing away of the other in order to be rid of them will be dealt with more thoroughly in "The Teacher and the Adolescent".

Recognition of the relation between irreversible events which influence life course, and thoughts which understand them, is a process central to adolescent growth and identity formation. See Erikson, 1968.

In this connection, work done by J.M.M. Hill concerning "poverty-prone" individuals, points to difficulty in devising strategies of getting and spending - not only in terms of money but of a whole range of personal and emotional resources. These individuals show a continued inability to negotiate a broad range of life issues. J.M.M. Hill, A Pilot Study of Poverty, (forthcoming).


Lee Rainwater (1966) and Stuart Hauser (1971) have studied various aspects of value systems and identity formation in black adolescents in America. This group, denied access to positive values held in common with white, middle class Americans, often opt for a "negative
identity". Hauser has documented the early closure and fixation of such an identity in many black adolescents, calling it "identity foreclosure".

9 See Spruiell, 1972

10 Although there are several avenues to further education, the real likelihood that these adolescents will have the motivation or staying power to make up basic skills or to return to the system is remote for most.

11 This was a frequently expressed opinion of the careers personnel with whom we talked. Generally, they held that industry relied on young apprentices to provide "cheap labour", while older apprentices would have to be paid a "man's wage". Therefore a more flexible age of entry would cost the industry some of those years of cheap labour.

12 15 was the legal school leaving age at the time of these studies.

13 An analogy can be made to the take-offs and landings of an airplane which come between the long, relatively direct and preplanned flights. And like flying, the risks are greatest around these points between "flights". The analogy extends far enough to make the point that it is between flights that help is most available.

14 J.M.M. Hill, Personal Communication

15 While we stress the newness of approaches to the problem, we also note the first appearance of new material generated from several sources. Some well known examples include the "CRAC"—Careers Research &
Advisory Centre, Cambridge—curriculum and resource material and the programme begun by the Kingsway College of Further Education in conjunction with several London comprehensive schools. Training for the use of this material, and gauges of its relative efficacy, with different sorts of adolescents, have yet to be undertaken.

16 Some suggestions for programmes to meet adolescents' needs are given in the Schools Council Working Paper, No. 11, Society and the Young School Leaver. HMSO, 1967

17 I owe my acquaintance with this programme to a day's visit arranged by Norman Newberg, Head of Special projects for the Philadelphia Schools, in June, 1972.

18 Carter (1966) discusses the variation in training and pastoral guidance offered, stressing that it is especially uneven and lacking in the non-apprenticeship programmes. He goes on to describe a suggestion by Owen Whitney (1961) for a Youth Tutor who would help bridge the gap between school and work, monitor continued education, and provide pastoral care. The scheme has never been attempted, however.

19 This is not to say that many of the same discontinuities and difficulties do not exist in universities and colleges; they do. But at least these institutions now generally take it as their obligation to provide counselling aimed at helping those students with most difficulty.
CHAPTER 2

The Development of the Project: Gaining Access to the Schools

The Problem, Design and Goals

The original notion sparking this project was that we would follow John Hill's concept of "occupational maturity" by looking more closely at the problems of the school leaver during the terminal phase of his education. What were the particular forces which impinged on him then? Who was standing by him? How could one help to facilitate the transition?

We developed the following set of aims:

1. To explore the problems inherent in the terminal phases of education and the
transition from school to work for the non-academic adolescent, and to do so in greater depth than we had previously done.

2. To experiment with different forms of intervention aimed at facilitating the process of decision-making, occupational choice, and smoothing the transition when it did occur.

3. To try to measure the effects of these interventions.¹

4. To consider the implications of our findings for educational and employment policy.

**Methods**

1. **Group Interviewing of Adolescents**

   For several reasons, we decided to use the weekly small group meeting (or class) of adolescents as the basic research tool. While theoretical considerations on the use of the small group as an intervention are discussed in the next chapter, here I want to discuss the reasons for our choice of it to gather data while offering such an intervention.
We began our task with the formulation previously developed by John Hill—the importance of the developmental task of synthesising fantasy and reality into a strategy for both coping with reality and gratifying internal needs. As we seek to know more about the process by which this is accomplished in mid-adolescence, more intensive interviewing seems to be required. Our previous interviewing had been relatively static, a verbal one-time "snapshot" of each child. If we were interested in the process of development, interviewing over time and in increased depth was indicated. For such a task, we felt, adolescents would require a trusting, free-flowing relationship which did not over-stimulate anxiety, but which did allow varieties of anxieties to be explored. Either extensive individual interviewing or an unstructured group seemed to suit these requirements.
The weekly group interview offered a chance to observe the process of change itself.\(^2\) We planned to supplement our existing information about individuals by interviewing a few individuals in depth. But in general, rather than individual information, it made sense to look at an approach with new advantages. It was hoped primarily that the group could better articulate, explore and share individual experiences to produce more useful kinds of "data in process".

The group setting also offered the possibility of going beyond data-gathering. Could we, by this means, provide a setting which is growth-facilitating as a therapeutic group, here focussing not on psychopathology but rather on impediments to the achievement of "occupational maturity"? Group sharing and exploration are normal activities for adolescents, with a strength of influence perhaps unique to this age group.
information or perspectives from peers, feedback to each other, and a modicum of guidance might well be relevant to increasing group and individual ability to think imaginatively, realistically, and constructively about the move into the world beyond school. Such shared attitudes as pervasive and self-fulfilling pessimism, or mistrust of employers and authority figures could be explored and clarified, while alternative attitudes were considered. Work with adolescents in groups may demonstrate intra-group stimulation of anxieties, and defensive projections and empathies. But information assimilation can also be made easier as the group grapples together with the new material. In summary, the use of groups allowed us to test the development of techniques of intervention at the same time we gathered information.
2. Interviewing the School

We expected to begin learning in our experience with schools from the time we first contacted them. Initially, we did not tightly define techniques for continuing these contacts, expecting this to follow two paths.

1. Intensive, frequent contact with one or more representatives of administrative staff (i.e. at the level of deputy head or head.)
2. Gradually developing contact with guidance, pastoral and teaching staff, we did not define whether this would be formally arranged or not, and whether it would be with individuals or groups.

Nevertheless, we felt that in order to examine the broader context, we would need extensive meetings with school administration, groups of teachers and tutorial staff, careers teachers and careers officers and families. We did not define the nature of our interaction with these groups at the outset, noting that it should grow out of the
contact with the groups of adolescents.

We hoped to develop a network of contacts which would build a picture of the individual adolescent within his school, the issues confronting the teachers around hip, and the larger context within which the school operated. We considered our contact with the school sufficient for an early picture of the institutional environment surrounding the adolescent at the time of school-leaving, but our contact was not sufficient to expect any significant institutional change as a result of our efforts, we hoped the consultation we could provide during this initial year might lead to further programmatic development at the level of the school or the school system for ensuing years. In fact, our contact was extensive enough to explore the feasibility of a larger programme at the end of this year's work and, in some cases, to formulate
projects for following years. We viewed the contact with the school as the initiation of a programme of consultation at the same time as gathering information, just as we viewed our task with the children as offering an intervention while we learned from them.

**Some Factors Permitting Collaborative Research**

1. **Looking for Schools**

   We approached several comprehensive schools, hoping to find schools with a mixture of socio-economic and ethnic intake, in which the administration was both interested in the problems around the transition from school to work and supportive of our efforts. However we wanted to work in schools which were not already in the midst of any large-scale programme which would dwarf our own pilot efforts. In each case,
we discussed with the head the possibility of meeting weekly for an hour with a randomly selected group of 5th form students, discussing issues broadly relevant to the transition from school to work. Our increasing understanding would be used as a tool to make interventions which we believed would be useful to the students involved, although the primary aim would be research. In addition, as the meetings progressed, we would want to meet with interested members of staff to discuss our findings and learn from their reactions. This would also be part of the research protocol. We were looking for three small groups (10-15 members) of 5th form adolescents (age 15-16), hoping to choose them from the lower half of the academic group— that is those defined as non-academic by the school’s measurements or method of streaming.
2. Finding Groups of Adolescents

The adolescents we specifically wished to find were those who either would be leaving school at the end of the year, or who would be making some kind of active decision or effort in order to remain in the educational system. We therefore eliminated the highest stream of each class, hoping to choose at random from the lower two-thirds of each form. We wished to emerge with a mixture of adolescents from those entering working class jobs to those moving into colleges or staying on for 6th form. We expected thereby to concentrate on the issues surrounding the decisions about staying, since for those who did stay, the decision whether to stay in school would often be in the process of active consideration, and therefore available for exploration and examination.3

3. What Really Happened

In the field, there were modifications of the
original plan, both in finding schools in which to work, and in gathering group members. Some of the schools most eager to work with us had extensive programmes of their own, programmatically more extensive than what we proposed to do. We felt our initial contribution, and any chance to follow the adolescents compared to a group of their peers would be washed out, even though we later abandoned that effort. We elected to work more tangentially with these schools—observing their projects and talking with the involved teachers to broaden our own experience in the adolescent issues.

In other schools, we were usually greeted enthusiastically, but ran into priorities which conflicted with their wish to help us establish regular groups. The attempt to work out an actual meeting with adolescents became our principal chance to see whether a school was
prepared to make room for our programme. Some schools found it impossible to release fifth form children—on any kind of regular basis, although usually one or two meetings could have been arranged, and we later decided to try to take advantage of single meetings with some groups to gain more information on a wider range of children.

Reactions to attempts to schedule weekly meetings ranged from ready acceptance to rigid resistance. In one school, the head agreed readily and assigned a deputy to work out a time. In another, the head responded that "O" levels were the crucial concern of fifth form children and their parents, and therefore no regular time could be spared from them.

There was no general agreement about this issue however. Some teachers and heads felt the
"O" levels were not very critical for this group, even if parents thought they were. Some indicated that although neither they nor the students felt examinations were really important, the staff were unwilling to take a chance on scheduling less time for exam preparation, lest they be accused of doing an inadequate job. Others felt the classes we were offering might actually help a whole range of students do better in exams by increasing their understanding of their anxieties. As examples of these, one counsellor said, "We're supposed to be preparing our children for exams, but frankly the exams are not very important to these children. I teach one of the classes in social relations, and I think I can release them, and perhaps work a bit harder as exams approach." A head said, "I'd like to do it. The "O" levels aren't very important for this group." Later, the same man said, "I told you fifth form students can't spare any time from "O"
level preparation. It's what their parents expect."

In some cases higher administrative personnel agreed to our meetings, expecting rib difficulty in implementation of the groups, only to find that their staff felt undermined or that "crucial teaching time would be used". There was never any statement of personal disagreement with our goals, nor any overt objection to helping. Nevertheless, either at administrative levels, or at the level of the interface between staff and administration, it became clear that the functional priorities of several schools were other than ours, and that even in the schools which accommodated us, at least several priorities were in active conflict.

Where exam results were felt to be legitimately relevant to many children, these were named as of overriding importance without hesitation. But
when relevance seemed more questionable, one sensed a feeling that in the presence of confusion of goals for the education of non-academic children, the school had better at least go through the motions of preparing for exams, so that it could not be faulted on the "letter of the law". There was a general feeling of confusion of aims for children for whom exams were of marginal or no value—whether this constituted almost the whole population of the school, as in two cases, or only the lower streams, as in others.

No one professed to believe that counselling or increased tutorial work was unimportant. But for varying reasons, schools often behaved as though it had no place in their curriculum—delivering a functional message that the priorities were elsewhere. Necessarily, then, the schools we have been able to work in are those which we knew to value the exploration of and intervention in
"occupational maturation" because they provided us groups to work with, even though their own previous efforts had not been extensive. This is not to say that some of the same resistances did not arise as in the schools who could not provide groups. But when resistances arose they were surmountable ones.

Some Thoughts about Underlying Resistance

Like most organisations, schools seem to have a resistance to change regardless of the kind of change. Beyond this, certain specific reasons for resistance seemed present in varying degrees.

1. Despair and confusion about a feeling that the school was dealing inadequately with a group of vulnerable children. One head said, "These children don't have much of a chance anyhow. The crafts and small industries in this area are folding up.
Really, I don't see where they're going to turn, or what's in store for them." Another said, "I don't know what we're going to do for these children just by having them stay on for an extra year. It's just baby sitting." Yet it was this second school which finally opted for concentrating on exams, resolving a difficult question by guarding its flank from public criticism it expected would come. The problem seemed too vast to approach realistically.

2. Guilt about doing an inadequate job of preparation for working and living. Following on the confusion, staff were often left with a great deal of guilt about their inability to help. This was seen in the defensive attitude about guilt—i.e. guilt was denied when it had never been implied. There was therefore an attempt by the teacher to dissociate the child from himself, to split off the accusation of expected failure and deny personal responsibility—the denial itself being the greatest
evidence of guilt about it.

One teacher thought pupils were stopped from doing what they want to do by the way teachers answer questions. "If teachers were honest, they'd have to admit they often don't know—and instead they put the kids in a situation so they don't ask." Another thought the useful thing she had to teach would be "crap detecting" about the system, but a colleague said he was afraid the method would turn on them and on the school, exposing both as hypocritical. Frequently staff would blame the junior staff or children for a general problem, projecting blame and denying their own feeling of inadequacy. (See examples in Chapter 11)

3. Imagined constraints of superiors or governing organisations (not to discount the real constraints which are present). There was , a feeling that there was a higher set of people or
authority governing all actions. Often this was cast in the character of the exams and parents' expectations about them. This seemed to fit into super-ego constraints which became inflexible in times or doubt, representing parents who said "when in doubt, go by the book and you won't be caught short". The expectation of being hurt if found in an ambiguous situation pervades the operations of some schools. The remedy to this threat requires that the administration or teacher has internalised a flexible, benign set of parents who will allow him some space in which to innovate. I would cite here the headmasters who opted for exclusive exam orientation whether or not they believed in it.

For instance, some adolescents would be asked to sit for an examination when no one felt they had a chance of passing it. Despite the feeling that they might find the experience demeaning, the school
catered to the general expectation that they should take such an exam. One insightful teacher described his own conflict about these feared "constraints" which he knew to be no longer operative, but which he still found personally constricting.

Within each of the schools with whom we finally worked, there were further modifications of group selection. In Thomaston, we sat down with the careers teacher and made a random selection of group members from the entire pool of 5th form, leaving out only the top group of five academic ranks. The group composition shifted considerably over the first few weeks as individual members asked to drop out or to join. The group finally represented the bottom sector of the class (except that it contained no remedial children).

In Lake School, we began by taking an entire
group from one games activity, only to find it was entirely a west Indian group of girls. We then elected for a lower stream tutorial group, although that introduced two compromises. The group was large (19) and met for only 35-45 minutes. In South End School, we were only able to meet with a group of "lower" 6th form adolescents (age 16-17). While we accepted this initially as a one or two time event to broaden our scope, we soon felt the issues were so similar in this group of more academic adolescents, that it was worth continuing with them. This therefore, is a more academic, more highly selected group who are one year older, and are presented partly in contrast to the two 5th form groups. They demonstrate similarities and differences of the issues involved.

In summary, we were not able to select our groups as we would have liked, that is a sample truly representative of the school's non-academic
population. It required flexibility both on our part and that of the schools to establish groups at all. If the results of this year's pilot project are convincing, it will not be due to statistical validity, but to the resonance of our findings with the experience of teachers, employers, and others who deal with adolescents. It became clear that we could work only in those schools who were interested in moving more to a counselling approach through questioning and changing their current practices. Finally then, our principal group observations were located in three schools which were interested and responsive, but had not previously implemented such programmes. In these three schools, we worked closely with deputy heads after opening negotiations with the headmasters and the Inner London Education Authority. In all schools compromises were required. At Thomaston, we finally had to fit into a
social studies period which required our missing another research activity. At Lake School, numerous attempts failed initially to free a representative group of children for more than a few minutes a week, but there was a spirit of "keeping at it" which allowed us to arrive finally at a satisfactory solution.

Other Modifications

1. Family Studies

We ultimately had to eliminate any hope of extensive family interviewing as part of this pilot project, with regret, we decided to concentrate only on the schools. In the absence of specific accompanying family studies within the scope of the project itself, it seemed useful to exploit the knowledge of issues confronting families during the transition from school to work as they were seen in the setting of a psychiatric clinic to which
they had applied for psychotherapy. From the brief exploration of some of these families and adolescents, we have confirmed for ourselves the similarity of many adolescent developmental issues across social class lines, while developing a beginning paradigm of the family's interaction with the transition from school to work. The importance of this phase of experience for the adolescent is not to be underestimated. We simply felt that within the current study both school and family could not be adequately investigated. In Chapter 9, the exploration of the clinic experience with adolescents in their families is presented as an introduction to the problem which I hope will be pursued elsewhere.²

2. Statistical Studies

We had also planned to establish a control group, as stated previously, to compare with ours
in terms of job selection and early job turnover, estimates by the school of the appropriateness of job placement and choice, and to examine also demographic and sociological information to determine the effectiveness of the intervention we made. Because of the early modifications made in group selection, we felt these pieces of information would have little to add. While we plan to follow-up the adolescents after a year, the information derived from our small, non-random sample cannot be expected to yield statistically significant data.

We had also hoped the school records would yield enough information about residence, family education and employment, and essential historical material to enable us to draw on it as a resource. In reviewing records, we found this information so uneven that it would have required extensive interviewing of each student or family to
establish reliable data. In view of the limited value of such a study for our group, we did not pursue this avenue, although we note its importance for a larger study. We did find, however, that the records often contained some information about the student which allowed us to reconstruct a history of the school's relationship to him and his family. This information was sometimes invaluable.

What We Ended Up With

The total field of information finally emerged as follows:

We met with three groups of adolescents. Two were 5th form, one about 8-10 members for eight months, another 15-19 members for five months. The third was a first year 6th form group of 6-8 members which met ten times over a six month period. We met with several other 5th form
groups once each.

The contact with teachers, administrators, careers teachers, careers officers began around the core of student meetings, we met frequently with a deputy head in each school to discuss both practical issues about meeting, and to get reactions to our experience. He arranged meetings with heads of house (the pastoral system), other administrators, and careers teachers. In one school, we only had one formal meeting with such a group, although we expanded our contact by work with the head and by informal discussions. In the other schools, we had several meetings to share and explore issues with staff groups and individuals.

Beyond these contacts, we met with interested staff in four other schools, and had several lengthy discussions with careers officers, individually and
in groups, about our experiences and the comparison to theirs. The total field of our experience then, spans the adolescent's whole school experience, although it is most concentrated in the area of his own report of and reflection about his experience, and it is least concentrated on those most distant from him. The absence of direct experience with families and employers within the current study must be underscored, not because we do not find these important —they are both crucial—but because we elected to begin with the adolescent at school. We have used additional material, drawn from outside this experience, to discuss those contributions to our understanding, but expect to pursue both those aspects in further work.

I will now describe the five schools with which we worked most closely. Of these, we ran extended groups in the first three.
Thomaston School—a large, mixed comprehensive school, located in an area with a somewhat transient population. The school population includes children from over 40 nationalities and virtually the entire range of social class gradation. To an increasing extent, there are children of the educated middle class, due partly to prescribed catchment areas for schools, but partly to the efforts of this school itself.\textsuperscript{9}

Lake School—this is also a large mixed comprehensive, drawing its pupils from an area which is predominantly working class, and also contains a large number of West Indians and Asians. There are fewer of the other ethnic groups than at Thomaston. This school is not experiencing a change in surrounding population, but can no longer draw widely from outside its own area. Therefore the staff has to deal with a rapid fall in
the number of middle class, academically-orientated children. It has a dedication to maximising the possibilities for the children who attend, but must cope with the realisation that they have increasingly become a non-academic group.

Both these schools had, on the whole, a ready optimism about their role in the children's growth, with a notable absence of the kind of blind spots which often mark schools. The more experienced teachers and administrators were personally flexible, undaunted by reality, and yet aware of some of the more troubling aspects of it. They were tolerant of personal differences and cultural diversity. Especially important was their tolerance of the lack of experience and need for further growth in children and junior staff. The natural limitations of staff and students appropriate to the developmental stage of each were accepted and
South End School—a popular mixed comprehensive with a predominance of academically-orientated children, but a significant ethnic mix as well. Here it was felt that exams and their preparation took clear priority for 5th form children, and that this was a clear expectation of the parents, we were able to meet with a group of less academic sixth formers. Not surprisingly, this group was more articulate than any of the other groups we met with. What was surprising, was that they expressed many of the same fears of the outside world as the younger, less able children, who had, in fact, less potential for career choice. We therefore decided to meet with this group regularly.

Two of the schools with whom we met several times were ones in which the more extensive work
seemed inadvisable because they were already embarked on programmes of their own.

*Bradford School*—a girls' comprehensive school in a working class area, felt that exams were only of secondary importance to most of the girls and had introduced a large-scale tutorial programme running throughout the secondary school years, attempting to introduce children to the processes of choice, the negotiations of life in an urban environment, and transitional needs. We elected to meet a few times with the tutors to explore their view of the problems encountered in constructing and revising such a programme.

*Canady School*—a mixed comprehensive in a working class area, was in the early phases of a programme introduced this year of providing experience similar to the one we proposed as well as some others. We elected to join in a couple of
classes and discuss with the tutors involved their ideas of what was needed and the vicissitudes of trying to provide it.

**The Problems of the ROSLA Group**

Because the school leaving age was raised from 15 to 16 for adolescents who entered 4th form during the year of this study (1972-73) there was no group which left school *automatically* at the end of that year. 4th formers were compelled by law to stay on—although some of them expressed bitterness about having to remain. Those 5th formers who were available in school had already elected once to remain since they could have left the previous year. While this situation initially seemed to pose a significant problem for us, it turned out to be less significant than we feared it might be. There has been a strong trend over the last few years for adolescents to stay in school
voluntarily through 5th year, even before the raising of statutory school-leaving age. Speculation related this to economic and social conditions as well as to employment requirements and opportunity. We assumed therefore that many 15 year olds had remained only semi-voluntarily, even this year.

There were two other reasons for choosing this year's fifth form for our study. First, although some 4th form adolescents are bitter about the loss of the opportunity to leave at the end of this year, they are not faced with the anxiety about imminent school leaving. Our focus, in their changed situation, would no longer be a natural focus for them—while it remains one for the non-academic 5th former. If he is to stay in school, he must make a decision to do so.

Second, from now on the youngest school
leavers will leave after the 5th form at age 16.11 There is enough of a developmental difference between the adolescent at 14 years and 15 years that the experience with one would not necessarily inform us about the expected experience with the others.

The best place to get an idea of the issues for a 16 year old school leaver, we reasoned, was from that group. We therefore recognise that we did not study the group who will have the most difficulty in the future—those who would have left after 4th form in previous years, but will be "unwilling" captives in future years. Because of the year in which we began to study, we had to accept some compromise. We felt this one was the least crippling. We therefore decided to treat this group as a forerunner of the coming experience, and to keep in mind that things should be, if anything, more difficult when there is a larger percentage of
children in 5th form who are disaffected with school.

However, in several of our groups adolescents indicated that their peers who did leave after 4th form were dissatisfied and now wished they could return to school. It is possible that rather few 4th formers will continue to feel bitter about the extra year once the transitional group of adolescents has passed through the system. We can speculate that the anger of the current "trapped" group of 4th formers represents only half their conflict—that they are caught between dependency needs and wishes for independence. Their overt anger, once the issue of staying in school is settled by law, may hide their relief at being able to buy time for another year before facing work. Many from this year's 5th form have also stayed in school unwillingly, and have the same educational experience to show for it. They have the same
social and employment factors to face concerning apprenticeships, qualifications, age requirements, training and conditions of further education as next year's 5th formers. Many stayed in school more out of fear than by choice.

This study focuses on those adolescents having difficulty with the decisions. At its heart, therefore, are those who are on the borderline between staying and leaving. The ones who are in 5th form, but barely, or feeling dissatisfied, present the most difficult counselling problems, we may be able to make a difference in their life course. We did not see those who this year were on the borderline, and barely decided not to attend school. We will only be able to infer how they saw things, saving first hand examination of them for next year.  

**The School's Response to the Research**

Presenting our understanding and experience
to the staff for their reaction was a crucial part of the development of our ideas. In many cases there were initial inaccuracies they could correct for us, and points which needed further explanation as our questions developed. If things did not fit with the way they understood them, staff gave generously of their time and spent long and patient hours working with us. This was true, for instance, in trying to understand the dilemma the teacher or careers specialist faced in mediating between adolescent needs and the reality of the job opportunities. We also relied on the students for their reactions to our understanding of their experience.

However, there also was a level of explanation which we attempted which could not necessarily be verified by direct confirmation. When we tried to develop psychological and organisational ideas of the origin of difficulties, we would then be
presenting ideas which we knew would be fended off with the very defences we were attempting to understand. In these cases, our feedback would be much more indirect. A student might deny the validity of an observation, then go on within the next several minutes to verify it indirectly within the group session. Or an administrator might feel an interpretation of a situation was inaccurate, but we would be left with some tangential evidence that the disagreement touched on vulnerable areas. Most of these latter areas involved such notions as the function of mourning and guilt, or the meaning to the school of the unsuccessful student. With time, most of these areas could be explored further. When this situation occurred, either in the classroom or with staff, we were in a more delicate position of testing our ideas in the face of overt disagreement or resistance. Without wanting to be self-justifying, we also did not wish
to lightly abandon difficult concepts. An example of this with adolescents, was the presentation of the pain of the loss of school, hotly denied by one group, who then began talking about the examination room's 'morgue-like' qualities, and likening leaving school to various aspects of dying. Similarly, the staff might deny a feeling of guilt at doing an inadequate job with non-academic students, and quickly turn to discussing their successes and the need for adolescents to escape their working class origins by becoming academic.

While we took it as our responsibility to feed such notions back to the staff, we accept the responsibility for the ideas themselves. Much of our work with staff involved helping with the understanding of the function of such issues in a school. In general, we found the ideas won acceptance within a reasonable period of time. Nevertheless, we present these ideas in the
following chapters for testing. As statements about personality development in adolescence they must remain tentative and open to further modification.

APPENDIX

The Authority Relations Test

One ancillary technique requires brief description and explanation. During the latter part of the year, we administered a series of partial I.Q. tests (4 sub-tests of the WAIS) in order to get a rough estimate of the overall I.Q. of the groups, without any intention to obtain accurate information on any single student. Specifically, we had wondered if the greater amount of depression and hopelessness evinced in the group at Thomaston could be explained by a difference in I.Q. We found that the groups at Thomaston and Lake both had a comparable scatter of scores about the median. There were no definite
differences, but the Thomaston group did at least as well. Not surprisingly, the South End group scored slightly higher, a finding we explained by the fact that they were sixth formers and self-selected, therefore, as more academic.

We also administered projective tests to 24 adolescents. The majority of the cards were given as a pilot run of a series we are calling "The Authority Relations Test". Six cards depict situations of confrontation with various social authorities and situations: 1) a young man in a suit leaving a front door; 2) a couple facing a policeman; 3) a figure who could be male or female talking to a doctor; 4) a male teacher talking with a pencil upraised; 5) a man behind a desk who could be a hotel clerk or a personnel manager; and 6) a brightly-coloured card of people in a park, sitting, walking, talking and playing.
While we do not feel we have enough responses to report on the results in detail, I have freely incorporated individual stories into the detailed description of individual adolescents and groups. It does appear that such projective tests might be useful in defining the individual's position in relationship to varying social situations and particularly his ability to work with potential authority figures or his potential for developing an oppositional relationship with them.\textsuperscript{14}

The following chapter discusses the group techniques in detail, as a prelude to moving into the specific discussion of the groups and adolescents we focussed on (Chapters 4-10).

\textit{NOTES}

\textsuperscript{1} Of these, we persisted in all but aim 3. We found that the methods of group selection and the number of children involved made the quantitative measurement of this pilot programme of unlikely benefit. Accordingly, we have elected to defer quantitative measurement to the
next phase of the project. The plan for this phase is described in the final chapter.

2 The next chapter deals with the adolescent peer group and discusses techniques of group intervention.

3 Presentation of our findings to interested groups of teachers, careers workers, and psychotherapists has brought the reaction that the issues explored are equally relevant to academically-orientated adolescents and to the transition from secondary school to college or university. While I believe that to be true, most of the experience presented here is with working class and non-academic adolescents, and the application of our findings to more academic adolescents will rely on the experience of others. Chapter 9 does, indeed, discuss some experiences with a group of more middle class, academic adolescents seen for psychotherapy, but that is not comparable to the classroom setting of the non-academic groups.

4 In an approach to one school, however, we were unable to break through an administrative and secretarial barrier around the head - and never managed to talk with the head or to meet any deputy. We were referred instead to the careers teacher who, not surprisingly, expressed the opinion that careers work and the experience of non-academic children held a low priority in the school.

5 In one case an alternative time was proposed which came at one of the few times during the week we could not meet, and which would have pulled children from games time — something we felt would set up a very difficult motivational conflict for the adolescents.
One school had just completed a study of needed reforms in careers work but had not had sufficient time to develop the recommended changes.

I understand that Robert and Rhona Rapoport may be undertaking such an investigation.

It must, of course, be stressed that these and all other names are pseudonyms.

The 1971 ILEA policy for equalising the population and ability range throughout comprehensive schools has affected Lake and South End in one way and Thomaston in another. Lake School and South End which enjoy strong reputations but are situated in mixed or working class areas are experiencing a decline in the number of academically-orientated students. Thomaston had a generally poor reputation in a mixed neighbourhood and is gaining an increase in academically-orientated students.

Raising of the School Leaving Age.

We exclude here the truants who are in many senses the very first school leavers. In narrowing our focus we decided that although they share most of the issues we will discuss, they are a quite special sub-group of young school leavers.

Although school authorities in general agreed extending mandatory school by a year was beneficial, one head spoke for another current of feeling when he said, "I really don't know what we're going to do with these chaps besides keep them off the streets for another year".
I am indebted to Edward Tejirian, of Queens College, New York for the work of administration and interpretation of these tests which had originally been developed by J.M.M. Hill in connection with a programme of work on poverty.

For illustrations of responses, see discussions in Chapters 8 and 9.
CHAPTER 3

Techniques of Intervention: Gaining Access to the Hidden Adolescent

The problem approaching us in this chapter is how to gain access to the parts of the adolescent which are hidden from himself and from those who would wish to facilitate the transition from school to work. In the course of our research programme we groped towards effective intervention techniques which would both yield information and "data", and, at the same time, would stand a reasonable chance of being useful to the adolescents in the groups. What developed was an experience with a number of techniques beginning with an open-ended discussion group.
setting and leading into other possible avenues. But the dilemma before us constantly was one of how to help the adolescent represent, study, and contain within the classroom the experience which would be so difficult to handle in the future during the actual transition.

This chapter presents some processes of intervention which we found to help adolescents confront future decisions about school and work more realistically. These methods are presented, therefore, not only to describe the methods we used, but to demonstrate some kinds of proposed intervention which could be available to teachers. (This chapter is built around the group session which begins further in Chapter 3. The reader may want to look at that session before reading the introductory discussion).

Earlier I said that part of the difficulty is that
the non-academic student cannot buy the time he needs in order to continue to grow while facing anxiety-ridden situations. On the contrary, he often has the panic-ridden feeling that he has no time at all and must face things immediately. In the classroom, adolescents demonstrate a constriction in ability to plan for their lives. They confront us repeatedly with the feeling that they absolutely must, in the face of the anxiety of that moment, limit the number of options and plans available for consideration. They avoid facing the anxiety because they feel it to be intolerable.

Within the classroom then, we hope to give enough time and enough space to begin the process of encouraging the adolescent to tolerate anxiety. That means giving the space physically within the room for anxiety-laden themes to be acted out or discussed, and spending enough time exploring them, digesting new ideas, and coming
back to them for later reconsideration. Finally, we provide ourselves to help keep the boundaries clear around the classroom, around the class period and around the adolescent so that he can tolerate anxiety safely without threat, at least at that moment. This practice in anxiety tolerance can then operate as a model for tolerance over the longer period during the transition out of school and into work, as a vehicle for building skills and tolerances within the adolescent which will ultimately help him. Once the anxiety is felt to be manageable within himself in the classroom setting, he is ready to try managing it outside.

Practically, this means that within the classroom we will try out the issues which will confront the adolescent during the coming psycho-social transition. He will be able to discuss them, experience the anxieties as he begins to face them, share them with his peers, and get feedback from
them and us. A successful session will help him to rethink, reconsider, tolerate worry, and rehearse the whole thing again. In the coming week, the process can be repeated with some progression, either by himself or by one of his peers from whom he can learn alternate ways of facing issues. Just as we have come to think of the "choice of an occupation" as a process rather than a nodal moment of choosing, we have come to think of this intervention as the encouragement of that process by providing a context over a period of time within which to undertake a study of self and the world around one.

When we turn to more practical issues, we come to some paradoxical conclusions. Primarily, it seems to be our consistency which is important. It is a consistency of attitude and of availability which seems critical to helping the adolescent contain his anxiety without having to retreat from
it or rebel against it—in either case avoiding facing it directly. What is demanded is our consistent dedication to coping with this anxiety and to making the world a flexible place, which can be bent to human needs through the tools of human mastery already present in this group of adolescents.

On the other hand, we have also come to feel that one needs to be able to think about the particular needs of each group of adolescents distinguishing them from the needs of other groups within a school or within an age group. The needs of a given group of adolescents may evolve and change over time, and some of these needs will derive from the particular composition of the group. If it is a homogeneous group of low ability students carrying a good deal of depression and hopelessness, it may well be, as we found with one of our groups, that the best methods of
intervention involve some concrete techniques—for example role-playing, less emphasis on abstract thinking and require the teacher or other group leader to bear a good deal of anxiety about himself without expecting much immediate progress. If it is a group which is perhaps more middle class, slightly older and more optimistic, it may be that group discussion techniques offer as much in the way of real and meaningful experience as role-playing does for the first group, and that there is very little need ever to resort to the more dramatic representations of the processes to be studied.

What I want to emphasise here is the need for flexibility in the school and in the teacher. This is not a flexibility that comes from not knowing anything and, therefore, being at the mercy or whim of a class, but a flexibility that comes from being able to think "diagnostically" about the
needs of certain adolescents and certain groups of adolescents. To say this is to say that each group will be different, and that its needs must be understood through a process of interacting with it. This is not to suggest that the teacher abdicate his responsibility but rather that he must have some idea of the task, access 'to a variety of ways of carrying it out and dedication to its importance. He cannot be expected to include in his repertoire things with which he feels uncomfortable or which he feels to be anti-task, but he can be expected to use whatever methods he feels are effective and consistent with his goals.

The techniques involved are, then, ones for teaching a process rather than a subject. How a given teacher or staff specialist would teach this process will vary. In this chapter, I list some of the techniques with which I have become familiar, either through experience in the setting of this
project, or by hearsay, reading, and information from other educators. Some of these are listed quite briefly because my own experience with them is peripheral; others are mentioned only briefly here because the general experience with them is, great. This chapter is not intended to be a "how to do it", but it is intended to emphasise the availability of widely varying techniques, all of which offer pathways into the maze of adolescent development, anxieties and strengths, with any of them, what would be required is the constant participation of the teacher. At the same time it is required that he constantly be able to stand back with part of himself, observe the process that is going on, and ask the question whether it is moving towards the goal of containing anxiety and facilitating growth towards the ultimate transition from school to work and the wider world.

This book discusses one investigation of the
issues confronting the non-academic school leaver, and the exploration of some methods and issues raised in attempts to facilitate growth to a higher level of occupational and personal maturity. We specifically disclaim any notion that the methods we used are exclusive of any others. They are simply the ones for which we had resources and which occurred to us in the process of the work. Our claim, in fact, is exactly the opposite: there is an infinitely wide range of possible techniques. In any given situation, the use of several, suited to existing resources, needs to be fit for the requirements of the children or adolescents being taught.

What matters is not the form of the intervention, but its task—the understanding of what impedes the achievement of optimum occupational maturity, flexibility in the management of anxiety during the psycho-social
transition from school to work, and the maintenance of the ability to grow. The task of a school staff approaching this problem would be to take stock of the issues for their population of adolescents (both potential school leavers and remainers), match them to existing resources as thoughtfully as possible, and then decide which additional resources need to be imported or learned to fill the bill.

Let me first mention three programmatic approaches to the transition from school to work which take different avenues from ours.

The CRAC curriculum programme (Careers Research and Advisory Centre) is a Cambridge-based research and development programme specifically aimed at careers. One of the most useful resource materials developed by CRAC is a "comic book" presentation of some of the difficult
issues in approaching careers decisions.\textsuperscript{1} From conversations with careers teachers who have tried it, it is apparently of great use in stimulating thoughtful discussion about these issues in normally recalcitrant 4th and 5th formers. A range of materials is available which can, to a considerable extent, be fitted to the different needs of different groups of adolescents. It is precisely this flexibility which needs to be made actively available to a school staff.

Another significant development is a range of pilot programmes. At Kingsway College, London, for instance, a work experience programme makes a simulated experience of work available to a range of adolescents who are not able to relate well to the less immediate world of school, but who gain experience setting up a model factory and carrying through all the sample processes. In some ways this is like the "work experience week"
which is used by some schools, although it is usually limited to 6th form students because of existing labour laws. Both these programmes make the experience of work available for a thoughtful sharing between student and teacher.²

Already mentioned is the School for Human Services in Philadelphia providing a blend of work and school for study and application through the secondary school years.

The dilemma considered in each programme continues to be "how do we reach the inaccessible adolescent?" This question applies to all adolescents in some ways, but most aptly fits those who have the greatest difficulty in understanding "what their teachers are on about". The area of the adolescent's "inaccessibility"—those areas from which he retreats and which become unavailable even to himself—may include
family issues as they impinge upon his ability to deal with the world, issues of loss and mourning, and a whole host of others described in the succeeding chapters. The above programmes, however, concentrate on one of the things that has so far been unavailable to the adolescent—the work experience.

Our focus was on the development of group techniques derived from several schools of group dynamics theory and practice. Because all of them are focussed on the individual within his group, a few words about peer groups in adolescence are in order, as a background to the consideration of specific techniques.

**Peer Groups in Adolescence**

The place of the peer group as a mediator between an individual’s need to establish his own identity and the threat of a loss of that identity
through the wish to retain childhood dependency on his family is discussed by Helene Deutsch. The adolescent seeks an intermediate ground so as not to give up his old identity while still unsure of a new one. The peer group represents a "refuge from anxiety". One way of understanding the pressures which bind the group is to say that the adolescent peer group is not a true group in itself, but an "aggregate of isolates" uniting only when under the threat of outside attack. It is partly a collection of people in retreat from other groups, moving towards adult groupings. It consists of different patterns at different stages of adolescent development—often being a collection of pairs of adolescents who shift partners—boy-girl, boy-boy, girl-girl. It also becomes a vehicle for the externalisation of tension originating within the individual, and offers an opportunity for "playing at being independent and free" while conforming
to each other, and substituting dependency on the group for dependency solely on family.

Set against the adults felt to be both dangerous and sorely needed (and dangerous to one's autonomy because sorely needed), the peer group is a haven. As such it contains a concentration of the issues facing the adolescent when he ventures outside the group. For the adult who is trusted, it therefore provides a forum for "playing with" a group of adolescents, sharing in the group's work of magnifying, reflecting and containing anxiety for the individuals. On the one hand, the peer group can be seen either as a group which raises its barriers and lives in a world of shared fantasy as a defence against shared anxiety. Or it can be seen as a group which helps to contain individual anxiety during an arduous voyage from childhood to adulthood. The shifting groupings within the larger group can be followed and found to
represent graphically an alternation between vulnerability and defence. A small group of four girls at Thomaston School was an example of the peer group magnification of individual difficulties. They isolated themselves from teachers and peers, and wandered the school, wistful and depressed for most of the year. The staff’s attention to each of the girls clarified the underlying situation: each girl was undergoing significant stress at home and feeling unable to operate at school. The closeness of their small group simultaneously served to shut out the resources of the school, and gave the girls themselves mutual support in a lonely situation. It made things both better and worse. Here individual anxiety was traded for a group identity. Although there was an initial loss for the group, the school's ability to intervene with them as a group transformed the loss to a net gain for each of them. (The intervention with Annette, one of the
girls in this group, is described in more detail in Chapter 4.)

Because the peer group is such a strong force in adolescence, it is available for support or for damage. It often automatically provides a trusting situation into which an adult can fit relatively easily. An advantage of intervening with a group is the chance provided to use the group to articulate, explore and share experiences with more variety and richness than is often possible with the single adolescent — and to explore precisely those distortions made so powerfully crippling by group reinforcement. The group setting offers the possibility of going beyond interviewing and data gathering, of becoming a growth-facilitating, interactional mode of discussion. Group sharing and exploration are a normally functioning event for adolescents, to an extent perhaps unique to this age group. New information or advantages
from peers feed back to the others, and a modicum of guidance might well be expected to increase the group and individual ability to think imaginatively, realistically and constructively about the worlds outside and inside school. Areas such as a pervasive, possibly unconscious pessimism which tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy, or anger about authority figures at school or work, can be explored and clarified while alternatives are sought. The assimilation of information can be made easier by the exploration and reduction of inhibiting shared anxieties. The teacher who attempts to enter such a group with a task in mind will become aware of the tendency of a group to evoke and heighten latent anxiety, and the development of helpful and unhelpful projections and empathies. Projection on to the teacher of these feelings, the scapegoating of figures outside and inside the group, and students' identification
with certain roles can provide clues to the processes going on within the group as a whole and within its individual members. The teacher may also obtain useful information about the student's view of his own role in the group.

Finally, working in a way which capitalises on the peer relationships within the group can also lend an economy both to the study of a number of children who are engaged in a common process of making decisions, and to interventions designed to facilitate the decision-making process. Thus one might miss some detail about individual adolescents, but would hope to gain more in the richness of the interplay of processes, the interaction of developing individuals testing themselves in new situations, the exploration of group influences, and the multiplicity of feelings about the adult who ventures into the group. His feelings about the group as he enters it are clues to
the nature of the defences operating, although he must be careful to take into account his own personal vulnerabilities as well. (Examples of this are included in the sample groups outlined in this and following chapters.)

It is useful to stress this point that the kind of anxiety which the teacher must contain as he attempts to work with his particular group of adolescents, may offer a whole host of clues to the issues with which they must cope. If the teacher finds himself overwhelmed with the silence, the withholding and the depression, that is an important clue that withholding and depression are major issues for that group of adolescents, and perhaps for that school. If he finds them talkative, flighty and unable to stay on the topic, he may well feel that in general they run away from issues, prefer to turn their back on them and resort to action to avoid experiencing anxiety. A group with
slick and easy solutions within the classroom may well be taking refuge in these outside the classroom as well. A group which needs more concrete information may have difficulty with the abstract ideas that confront it over the whole issue of transition from school to work. In addition, beyond thinking about these adolescents as a group, the teacher needs also to think about them as individuals, each of whom has some particular needs which must be considered, even though there will not be time to attend continually to each of them. Even so, close attention to some of the individuals within the group, at certain times or in certain settings, may prove particularly fruitful not only for that adolescent himself, but for the group as a whole.6

Techniques

The point was made earlier that the methods
which follow are a kind of teaching which involves an area of focus and some techniques, but no traditional subject material. The specific group methods we employed included: 1. small group discussion; 2. psycho-drama, or role playing; 3. concrete teaching method (blackboard "chalk-talk" and "pop star polls"); 4. importation of an employer or recent school leaver to discuss outside experiences; 5. consultation to school staff about issues concerning a group or an individual; 6. consultation to staff involved in designing special programmes about the world of work or in work experience.

I will describe these and include one example in detail which illustrates the general principles of intervention and some specific issues of the transition from school to work.
Discussion Groups

The use of relatively unstructured discussion in a small group is the technique most closely resembling the ordinary classroom situation in some respects, in that it involves sitting still, thinking, and the exchange of information. It is unlike most classrooms, however, in that the teacher has a notion of the task, but does not impose a specific structure on it or on the students.

Small group techniques, as derived theoretically from group therapy models, psychiatry, and avant garde group work (especially in the United States) have a venerable history, but are too closely associated for our purposes with their origins—those of group-therapy rather than of teaching. Nevertheless, there is certainly sufficient experience available at this point to establish small group work as a training technique of great value which in practice
will be dependent on the teacher's or consultant's knowledge of group dynamics, the social setting surrounding the group members, their individual psychology and the developmental issues with which they are concerned. The application of the small group method, relying on these skills, to a specific task saves it from being an open-ended, unstructured and chaotic experience for the members. Increasing experience with groups has convinced many members of the group-work profession, both within the therapeutic setting and in teaching and training outside it, that clarity of goals, adequate training of the teacher or consultant, and close attention to the task, will result in productive work in this area. That is to say, then, that if teachers are going to begin this kind of work regularly, I would strongly advocate offering training and supervision to them. This is a different kind of teaching than that for which they
have been trained.\textsuperscript{7}

Many sub-tasks can be undertaken during small group work. In some models the principal focus is on the experience of the individual in relation to other members of the group and the current experience, without reference to the outside world.\textsuperscript{8} A modification of this orientation to include the use of the group to link the current experience with the experience within the overall institutional and educational experience—in this case the school and the wider society—makes the small group experience more of an applied one than a cloistered one. In our project we were concerned with the relevance of individual experience to the transition from school to work. We therefore emphasised the links between individual experience within the group to the institution of the school as a whole, and to the wider society. We also attempted to link the
current experience to developmental issues and processes.

Another virtue of the small group method is that it is closely allied to small group training methods for teachers. The use of these methods for training teachers is only one application of the more general use of small groups in training for a wide variety of professions. Advantage can be taken of the similarity between the training techniques available and the small group as an intervention technique. Training teachers by using their own experience of a small group gives them a feeling for small group work which they might well use subsequently with students.

The basic principles of group work involve the use of oneself as a sounding board for processes within the group, which can be understood in terms of predominant themes which develop.
The particular relevance of this will include the understanding of adolescent development, which is documented elsewhere in this book and in many other works on adolescence. Many of the adolescent group work themes are to be found in the literature on adolescent group therapy, which has a therapeutic focus on growth. However, the kind of group we have in mind, although relying on many of the same techniques of intervention, is not aimed at performing therapy. This work is an intervention aiming to facilitate growth. It is not aimed at taking up issues of personal psychopathology or life difficulty at the interpersonal and single-person level. The individual adolescent is free to apply the matters of learning to himself and to his place within his family, but it is a learning situation in that he is free to learn but is not coerced into any sharing which he does not feel ready to do. The advantage of the group
technique is that it makes available group process for elaboration of individual and group issues, not that it focusses the whole group's attention on one person's difficulties.

Much of the material presented in the chapters on specific schools and in the ensuing elaboration is a result of such unmodified small group work. Therefore the examples of it will be given there. (See later in this chapter in "blackboard teaching" and in chapters 4 and 8). Nevertheless it is critical to point out now that the kind of understanding which I used for this work involves using the principles of group process to distil to its "essence" the complex material presented in many situations. Whether other group techniques described below have been used or not, whether the process was used with students or with faculty, the basic principles of understanding group process and group dynamics were used as a
way of making sense of the material at hand. They are, therefore, the basis of the research reported in this book.

Modifications of Small Group Technique, for the Classroom

Traditional teaching methods, used within the setting of small group work, have proved effective and could probably be much more so for those more versed in teaching than our research team. There is a danger that teachers who feel that what they know so far is inadequate to an understanding of group dynamics will jettison their teaching experience and expertise, as they attempt to incorporate new skills. This was indeed the case with one highly innovative teacher, who had set up a curriculum for non-academic 4th and 5th formers which involved regular group meetings of the unstructured type described above. He experienced the same kind of
frustration, silence and resistance that we experienced with groups—coupled with the lack of understanding that is bound to overtake anybody beginning to sit with adolescents through the painful process of exploration. He worried that his skill was inadequate and the method useless—although he had brought in several techniques which had stimulated the class intermittently. One of these was the use of the CRAC material previously referred to. Another was the interweaving of work visits with discussion. His frustration and despair despite his own innovations represented both his isolation in his task and the inevitable sharing of the adolescents' own feelings of despair and isolation—suggesting that an undertaking of this sort requires a group of colleagues who can support each other and obtain additional support from an outside consultant or supervisor.13
Combination of Small Group Work and Blackboard Teaching

One frequently used modification of small group work was the use of the blackboard to illustrate psychological or developmental issues which were abstract in themselves, but which could be illustrated concretely. In the work with Thomaston School this occurred repeatedly. On one occasion a discussion and vote about the popularity of various singing groups was charted in accordance with the various personalities and physical characteristics on which or against which people wished to model themselves. Taking and recording the vote, initiating the discussion and planning a chart on the blackboard, captured interest in a group who had been sunk in their own inertia.

A further example is outlined in the material presented on South End School. Varying strategies
of life planning and career planning were charted on the blackboard as responses to success or failure, and the anxiety of certain continued relationships was examined.

Yet another example occurred in the 3rd month of the work with Thomaston School. A session following the taking of mock examinations had led to the group's agreement that "rigid rules and exclusion from opportunities by the rich trapped kids in a dead-end situation". Leaving school, therefore, was bound to be a frustrating and desperate time. At this point one of the boys, Mike, said, "There isn't any more to say, sir. We've said it all. I'm bored." The rest of the group seconded this, largely by their silent assent. As I gradually became conscious of my own rising anxiety, it became available as a clue to me that the boredom was a defence against their anxiety of feeling trapped and faced with a dead-end. I said I
thought we ought to switch tacks to see if we could understand what was behind the boredom—that the problem might not be that there was "nothing more to say" but that what there was to say threatened to be quite painful. I said I felt we were up against a barrier, and wondered if we could conjure up an image of this barrier. The image of a brick wall came up quickly from Mike, and we proceeded from there to draw a blackboard image of a brick wall blocking any constructive paths which constituted the alternatives for a hypothetical character whose name was also Mike as he would be leaving school.

![Blackboard diagram](www.freepsychotherapybooks.org)

Blackboard diagram of alternatives available to hypothetical character called "Mike", with an addenda for a "Jill". Note the confusion of issues: occupation, sexuality, crime and death
Girls (added) Escapes from Work

Alternative outcomes which might be expected or feared were suggested by the group, and listed like spokes radiating from Mike's position in school. Work was a twenty-year stint leading to an imprisoned feeling, while alternatives included prison, the army, the dole, continuation at school, leading to a question mark and another brick wall, football, drug addiction, suicide and a homosexual way of life. Since these alternatives mainly involved the boys in the room, we drew a similar diagram for the girls, which included marriage, and babies, work and prostitution as alternatives not elaborated for the boys. Lesbian relationships were also added after some thought.14
Boredom and fright served then to "block off avenues". When legitimate avenues were blocked off, the underlying depression was manifested by a preoccupation with paths leading to suicide, worthlessness, sexual perversions or other "dead-ends". This graphic illustration of the inhibition produced by fear and anxiety led to a discussion of alternatives —especially the destructive ones—with an exploration of various kinds of crimes and offences, the chances of ending up at dead-end points, such as jail, suicide or in drug addiction. Some of the girls mentioned the alternatives of marriage for its own sake or for the sake of avoiding personal choices, and it was Mike who brought up "Some women sell themselves for money".

I used the blackboard again this time to trace the process of our group as a vehicle for experiencing and teaching about the dilemma. We
had talked about feeling trapped by examinations and by social situations. The growing feeling that choice itself was blocked led to the enervating boredom within the group. The process leading to "boredom" followed the talk about death, the traps of drugs, the dole and jail. The "process" in our group itself had paralleled the developing feeling that the world was leaving them in a trapped position. I was able to demonstrate that we had been able to make the point that dead-ends were not inevitable, but were maintained to avoid the anxiety-laden issues which lay ahead. The "group process" was repeating what they imagined about the "life process". Their feeling of being exploited within this group setting and within the life setting had to do partly with their inability to face the fragmenting effects of their own anxiety, although it had also to do with the reality situations around them. We could demonstrate that one effect of
their anxiety was to fragment thinking and turn it all to boredom and silence, so that nothing could be understood of their experiences or learned from it. When a similar fragmentation hamstrung the making of life plans it became a crucially crippling feeling. This hypothesis was outlined on the blackboard in two parallel diagrams which pointed out that the path, for instance, of work, marriage and a productive life was a far more likely possibility than many of those feared by the group, and that productivity opened out into many unexplored possibilities. It had to be admitted and stressed that all of them involved handling the anxieties of the deadlier possibilities.

At the end of this session some of the anxiety in the room was relieved. Some of the adolescents were able to think more actively about the possibilities for staying on at school, or for planning in relation to going out to work. The
example anxiety of the teachers moving from feeling anxious to gaining understanding and working with the meanings of the anxieties posed by these "deadly outcomes" was available as a model to the group members.

**The Bringing in of Young Workers and Employers of Young School Leavers.**

Although we had planned an extensive programme of outside people to discuss aspects of their experience with the adolescents and groups, for practical reasons we were unable to implement it. We had in mind bringing in an employer who had experience with recent school leavers, a shop steward, and a recent school leaver. Ultimately it was only the last of these that we were able to do ourselves. The discussion turned out to be extremely useful and to raise many of the ideas and misconceptions that our group members had about work, while the young
employee was able to share his experience. Topics ranged from the practical differences between school and work to reflections of regret about early school-leaving which, for the young school leaver, turned out to be primarily about the people he left behind rather than the school. A consideration of differences among employers gave perspective to the myth that employers were exploitative ogres. It also led to a discussion of who people had to accompany them as they left school, and how an "escort" might mitigate the worries of leaving the familiar school environment.

It seemed an important pilot project to pursue further, although we hadn't the time in this phase of the research. It appeared to complement the experience in which other school groups visited factories and other places of employment and then brought the experience of the whole group back for further discussion and elaboration. The
opportunity to talk with one or two young employees at a time provided contact with slightly older peers who had coped with the anxiety of transition themselves, but for whom the transitional period was still a live memory. Both the recent school leaver and the adolescent worker seemed to benefit from the contact, and from the chance to compare the recent past with expectations for the future.

**Psycho-drama**

Psycho-drama or role-playing emphasises the dramatic and imaginative aspects in the study of the relationship between inner psychological life and the realities surrounding people. The term 'psycho-drama' is used for a kind of role-playing in which an issue or situation presented by an individual, relying on the group participants to help personify that issue for him by taking roles of
the "alter-egos" or ancillary characters needed to enact it. In order to carry this out, one of the group members presents a situation of his own from his past or anticipated future. Usually it will be an example arising out of a general group discussion and tends to have an uncanny relevance to most of the group members and to group issues. The relationship of the externalised dramatic action to the central character's internal world and to the group are emphasised both during the dramatization and in the post-drama discussion. The choice of other people to play roles also tends to involve a fit of person to the role which gives each member a chance to work on something of importance to him.16

The overall effect of the psycho-drama is to project a bit of inner life—memory, fantasy, wished-for event, or need—into the external stage and to enact this both bodily and verbally. There
are a number of techniques which emphasise various psychological processes and make them available for study and experience. These include the process of choosing people to fit roles; the warming-up of each person for his role and of the group for the action to be experienced; the process of doubling by which a person's "unspeakable" inner thoughts are spoken by an auxiliary character; role reversal, in which two people exchange roles mid-stream in order to gain more empathy; the linking of themes and of different phases of one's life by the director; the directing of "psychological closure" at the end of the action; and the crucial post-group discussion which relies heavily on small group technique and dynamics.

What follows is a transcript of the meeting at Thomaston School which uses some of the techniques mentioned above. The dialogue and action are presented on the left-hand side of the
page. The collateral comment on the right-hand side focusses both on the technical matters and on the processes of the group work itself. The comments include both thoughts during the session and those arising during review of the session.

The session is presented as an illustration of the issues which are alive in this group, as experienced through the technique of psychodrama. They represent the longer-term group process issues which were in focus over several weeks. The relevance of these issues to the life of the adolescents here and their anticipation of one world of work— in this case a career in the army and the process of the imaginative choice of such a career—will be discussed briefly after the presentation of the session.17
**Introduction to Session**

Mr. Mendell, the school counsellor, had asked to observe our session today, offering to remain quiet and unobtrusive. I preferred that he join the discussion, hoping that we would be able to explore some aspects of the relationship of counsellor and student. By incorporating him into the group discussion, I hoped his presence would not become an inhibiting factor, but part of the area of active exploration. Some of this work seems to have been done in a slightly disguised way during the psycho-drama below.

(The easiest way to absorb the following material would be to read through the actual dialogue—given on the left—without reference to the comments on the right, and only then to return to a reading of both columns together.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. S</th>
<th>&quot;What's going on today?&quot;</th>
<th>Sounding for a concern of the moment with potential impact.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>&quot;Nothing special.&quot;</td>
<td>(others agree)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dr. S  "I remember we thought of some possible topics for today—the Army, witchcraft, drugs, marriage."

Jock  "If you start saying something it will help. We're waiting for you to make the first comment so we can pick it up and go from there."

Kevin  "You're ganging up on us. There are four of you."

Miss Davis, Mrs Sykes (our recording secretary) and I were usually there. The addition of Mr. Mendell seems to have implied more than just the difference between 3 and 4 adults can account for.

Dr. S  "Do you think the 4 of us can take you on? What were we talking about last week? Have you got any memories of it?"

I acknowledge the feeling of threat but returning to the exploring task, hoping aspects of feeling threatened will be dealt with in the discussion.

Mike  "Oh yes, I remember, I was getting a bit uptight. I was shouting a bit about the army. They put a gun in your hands and say, go out and kill as many people as you can. They make murderers of you."

Steven  "Sir, my dad who joined the
army when he was about 17, could not read, write or do anything. When he came out of the army he could do all of those things, so he said."

Tom "I want to be an Electronics Engineer and want some good training. I might get it in the army."

Steven "It is good to join the army. If I decide to go into cooking as a career in the army, I can go to any restaurant in this country and get a very good job afterwards—if I wanted to. The army is very good as far as I know."

Mike "They're murderers." (half teasing Steven, and very dramatically).

Exploring the balance between learning a trade providing nurturance (food) and sadism (killing).

Steven "They teach you most things."

The issue of survival and being murdered is inextricably tied with this career prospect for these boys - and is in balance, during the discussion - against the possible growth in stature, skills and survival ability the army is seen to offer. The topic seems to cut into fundamental issues
of growth and survival and I felt it would be richly developed in an action format.

Steven  "You have to defend yourself if someone attacks you."

Mike  (probing, still perhaps only half seriously), "Anyone can go up with a knife and kill you but when you join the army they train you to use it to kill."

Steven  "They are trained defensively and not to kill."

Tom  "You are taught mostly how to defend yourself if you get attacked."

Jack  "If you go to war you will have to fight."

Nikos  "You know Alec? When he was first in the army they showed him bloody films. He was just seeing films about people being killed all the time. It scared him!"

Mike  "My friend has his fingers shot off. He said I have to guard the old meat wagon where the dead bodies are and he stuck to his post. He couldn't care less now. They (the Army) are trying to get people to kill and they don't care if you get killed."

The group projects all the murderousness outside itself to "them" and feels threatened by it. Notice that nurturance and food have completely changed to "dead bodies"
surrounding the "meat wagon". The anxiety about sadism threatens fundamental issues.

Tom "You have got to be trained if you want to do that kind of thing."

The debate closely parallels discussions about whether the school cares about the adolescents, or is only interested in regimenting and "killing" them by a punitive, denigrating attitude.18

Steven "Electronics is becoming one of the most important things now. It is in the army—in communication and in transportation. You can learn it there."

Steven switches to a communication theme to mediate between murderousness and nurturance. Communication and transportation tie people together and add strength to their efforts.

Merilee "If you have not got those qualifications, you have got to get them first."

Until now the girls have been silent. The relationship of the issues to them is not yet apparent and will need to be developed.

Mike "My friend went into the army and he just chose catering as

Mike shows he feels both sides of the
his career there. In all the basic services catering is the same. He just went up there, chose what he wanted to do in catering, and worked his way up. When he leaves he gets certificates to say he passed so and so, and he can get a good job."

Tom  "What is an army for?"

Steven  "Defence."

Jack  "Not only to defend, to attack and all."

Mike  "Of course it isn't for defence. Someone has to start a war, don't they? Soldiers are programmed to attack and defend. They just train you to kill if you join the army. What is an army for anyway?"

Jack  "You are programmed, it's true. You don't get no choice."

Dr. S  "How about joining the army?"

Mike  “Never.”

nurture-murder conflict.

"Programming" is a frequent allegation about the role of education, too.

The group seems involved, even the girls are beginning to look interested and some proponents of varying views have identified themselves. I move to the role-playing.

A strong protest considering he begins to run our role-play army within the next few
moments. It seems to represent his fear of "being run" by the kind of sergeant he begins to portray.

Dr. S  "I think we should do some role playing about joining the army. Suppose there was war, would you go into the army?"

Mike  "No." (But others express willingness.)

Dr. S  "Why don't we make this the stage, (moving some tables to create a space for the action). Steven, would you like to try joining up? (Steven nods, gets up grinning) Well, how old are you?"

Steven  "20"

Dr. S  "Why don't you walk around the outside of the group, going to the recruiting office, and tell us what you think, how you feel."

Beginning the "warming up" with a willing participant. In reality Steven is in the situation of either having to look for work or having to decide to stay at school. His career decisions will be in the balance for the next 2-3 months.

Steven  "I'm going down to the recruiting centre down at the Strand. I just got off the Tube."
Dr. S  "What would you be saying to yourself, inside yourself?"

Steven  "I wonder if I will get in the army. What do I have to do?"

Dr. S  "Do you want to?"

Steven  "That's why I'm here."

Dr. S  "Why?"

Steven  "I want to get away from a slut—a bad romance or ex-girlfriend or something like that. She's been pretty rough on me and I want to get away."

Dr. S  "What do others think?"

Tom  "He just fancies it, joining the army."

Jack  "Don't know. He just fancies going into the army to see what it's like."

Dr. S  "What do you want to do in the army?"

Steven  "What type of job would I really like? A pilot, I think."

One role for the girls is suggested. Do they accept the possibility? "Mother" is never mentioned in this sequence—suggesting, by omission, her great importance. It may be that the army itself is fulfilling the role of mother.

The rest of the group is quite involved now, sitting forward and volunteering advice on Steven's motivations and on the direction of the action.

A latency job choice—as the army offers protection for the
childish ambitions and often protects its members from outside world onslaughts. Perhaps Steven would like to "fly away" from a difficult reality situation.

Dr. S "Steven, who would you like to play the recruiting sergeant? (Steven looks around, asks Mike who quickly assents and has a twinkle in his eye as he gets behind the "recruiting desk")

Steven (Knocks and enters the ‘door’)

Mike (An aside said cynically to himself with a bit of a chuckle) "He looks so enthusiastic, it might as well be him!"

Steven "You don't mind me chatting to you, do you?"

Mike "Yes, fine— sit right down lad. You look like your fiancee's just left you. Has she?"

Steven (shrugging it off) "She just married another man, that's all."

Mike's taken in Steven's situation and has a strong "act hunger" for the exploitive sergeant's role.

The fate of the girlfriend suggests Steven is working with an Oedipal theme: the unavailable mother. The school is also rapidly becoming...
Mike: "Are you joining the army to teach her a lesson?"

Steven: "I'll make more money than him. I'll teach her to run off with another man. I'll join up with the army, won't I?"

Nikos: (interjecting) "Who do you think you are, Richard Burton or Casanova?" (laughter)

Mike: (To Steven) "All right sonny," (takes out pad) "Name and age." (acts friendly).

The cynical use of the term "sonny" announces his role as a denigrating father—a "bad" father who answers Nikos' taunt to Steven by calling him a diminutive name.

Steven: "20"

Mike: "Occupation?"

Steven: "Builder".

Mike: "What made you choose the army for a career?"

Mike picks upon the role of action and retaliation in the process of teaching—quite relevant to school, especially relevant to feeling jilted or abandoned.

Steven: "I'll make more money than him. I'll teach her to run off with another man. I'll join up with the army, won't I?"

Nikos: (interjecting) "Who do you think you are, Richard Burton or Casanova?" (laughter)

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Steven: "20"

Mike: "Occupation?"

Steven: "Builder".

Mike: "What made you choose the army for a career?"
Steven "Well, the excitement, it's a different type of life."

Dr. S (Doubling for Steven) "I am a stupid idiot. The army's the only thing I could think of. It is good money at least. But I'm worried."

Tom (interjects) "You can shoot up a couple of Micks in Belfast."

Mike "What part of the army would you like to join?"

Dr. S "Steven will have his father with him in his head—Mr. Mendell, would you 'double' as the father in Steven's head his conscience in a way, and speak for Steven's own reservations about joining up?"

Double underscores the difference between acceptable reasons and real inner motives.

The group could understand this idea of the "father Stephen carried with him". It also gave a chance to explore the crucial areas of the role of family in career choice, and the reaction to authority figures and father, whom Mr. Mendell represents, a kind authority figure in real life for this group.

Mr. Mendell (as Steven’s Father) "Don't do it son. It will hurt your mother and me. Come home, son. You'll regret it, Steven."

Only Mr. Mendell ever refers to mother. Steven studiously overlooks her.

Steven (shakes his head) "I won't listen."
Father  "Listen to me, son, please, don't do it."

Steven  "I won't listen to my father."

Dr. S  "But he's inside you; he's part of you."

Steven  "I won't listen. I'm old enough to do as I please. Go away" (Father stands next to Steven for rest of recruiting discussion, shaking his head until Steven leaves the office).

Steven  (to self and "father")  "There's my other 2 brothers—you have them—you can do without me. (He seems to shy away from father). She's only just after money that's all. (Trying to justify self). As soon as she has found someone rich enough, she will go off with him again— I'm joining—go away. (Aloud) I'd like to be in communications, learn a trade."  Steven answers his father's pleas of "conscience" and loyalty to mother with assertions that his girlfriend will desert him—the oedipal issue of rivalry with father. But it is equally a case of simply feeling abandoned by the caring person. He is accompanied only by the internal figure who sets constraints and says "you ought NOT" to do this".

Mike  "You know you have to go through a 30 day training course and have to pass a certain test paper. Sign this Examinations will haunt you, even in the army.
insurance form in case something happens during the training course."

Steven "Insurance?" (alarmed)

Mike (ignoring the questioner, and question and the alarm) "Do you know anyone else in the army? Do you know any certain regiment you would like to join?

Steven "The Royal Fusiliers" (Mike nods, shows him the door and pats him on the back.)

Dr. S "Where will you go now, Steven to celebrate joining the army?"

Steven "To celebrate joining the army at the nearest pub. I'll have a drink."

At the conclusion of the scene there were obviously some unspoken and leftover issues which were part of Steven's motivation and his hopes and fears. The pub is a place where we and he can explore those.

Dr. S "Just to drink by yourself?"

Steven "There will be someone in the pub—my ex-girlfriend." (goes into pub)

None of the girls was able to feel free enough at this stage to take the traitorous role of the ex-girlfriend. Rather than coerce them into a feared
role, I asked Miss Davis, the co-leader, to take it.

Dianne (going to Steven and sitting next to him) "We have not spoken for the last couple of weeks."

Tom "Who's that in the pub?"

Steven "It's my ex-fiancee, Dianne." (to Dianne) "How is your new fiance?"

Dianne "Fine thanks—how are you?" (she seems to care more than he thought).

Dr. S (doubles for Steven, standing behind him to do it). "I will show her, won't I. I am going in the army. You can get lots of different jobs in the army. Cooking, electronics, flying ... good money. Twenty three quid. When I come out I should have a good career to go to to get plenty of money."

Most of this action is unspoken and needs to be brought to life. The role of the double clues the group about underlying thoughts again.

Steven (aloud to Dianne) "I reckon you think you don't know who you are going to marry now. You want someone with a bit of cash and you don't know whether he is going to get some money. You are only marrying the other guy because he's got a bit of cash and everyone's put you off me, seeing I don't have a trade or any money."

Steven picks up the message from the "double" and speaks bitterly to Dianne.

Dianne "Steven, I still care about you."

Steven hadn't
Maybe if you can make good in the army and amount to something, I'll give up my new fiance and come back to you. I still do fancy you, you Know, but I was worried about what would happen to me.

(scene changes – Steven returns to Recruiting Office)

Mike "You've passed the test, son."

Steven "I don't know how I passed" (a bit taken aback).

Mike "Well, you have. So you're in. How many years would you like to start off with? 10 years for a start?"

Steven "5 is enough" (reacting to the hard sell)

Mike (persuasively) "9 years would be better. We'll teach you more. You can go abroad, learn how to drive a car for nothing. All sorts of things. It's a fantastic career. The army makes a man of you. It separates the men from the boys. You make even more money in 7 years. Imagine all that money coming in and we save it up. You get paid danger money! And the places you go! There'll be no stopping you."

Mike's trapping behaviour is getting more overt as he sees Steven's increasing fright. He becomes clearer, he wants to seduce Steven...
Dr. S  "Let's see what's going on in Steven's head now. I wonder if both his father and Dianne wouldn't be speaking to him? (asks Mr. M. and Miss D. to stand behind Steven)

At the moment of critical indecision it is one's internal people who are speaking for varying pulls and forces. They can be represented externally, as here. The link between life choices and important people is physically illustrated.

Father  "Don't do it son. Your sisters and mother and I need you. They're not telling you the dangers."

Dianne  "Steven, I'll wait for you. Get to be something, and I'll wait for you."

Father  "Don't do it Steven, don't"

Dianne  "Steven, I think you're very brave.

Steven  (anxiously) "All right, then, where do I sign? (Signs three times) I'm glad that's over."

Steven's confusion and anxiety mount until he reduces his anxiety by sudden, poorly-considered decision

Mike  "O.K. sonny. You're in the army".

(Scene dissolves. They agree to move to Steven's arrival in the barracks and Mike wants to follow through as Sergeant Major).

Mike  (Now as the enthusiastic
Sergeant Major). "Polish those boots and be quick about it." (With savage gusto. Then Mike goes out).

Steven (To Tom, playing a barracks mate). "I notice you don't like the army."

Tom "No! How many you sign on for?"

Steven "7"

Tom "That's a long hitch, mate."

Mike (re-enters) "Okay you 'orrible little man. What are you, a man or a mouse?"

Steven "A mouse". (laughter)

Mike "Stand up when you are spoken to, boy. You are in the British Army now. You are in the best army in the world. But you're 15 minutes late. Where have you been? (Looks over him, disgusted). Don't say lies to me, boy. I will have you court martialed, you 'orrible little man." (goes out)

Steven "7 years. It is going to be murder."

Steven begins to feel the army is murder—his, not others'.

Mike (returns) "I am going to make you hate every minute of it. I will be up your legs all the time. You will wish you never joined the army now. You just wait. You see all these good lads

Mike confirms all his and Steven's worst fears about employers and shop foremen—they're out to get you. But
here. You will show them how to work, won't you? You'll regret it, you will. Polish this gun". (Mike goes out. Steven begins to polishes, looks depressed, Mike returns.) "Is that the way you treat a gun? That gun is worth more than your simple, stinking life. I want to see it polished in 5 minutes. That gun is worth money. Don't be cheeky, you 'orrible little man. Get a bit of string, tie a knot on the end of it, pull it up the barrel and pull it. I will smash your little face if you don't go over that fence."

Mike also illustrates that he has a "son of a bitch" part of himself—and that is largely responsible for the tremendous force of his expectation of meeting it elsewhere. Intervention would have been useful here to modify Mike's unrestrained sadism, since it is the lack of restraint of his own potential sadism which frightens him.

Steven "What are you, a Sergeant, a Drilling Instructor or an idiot?"

Mike "Being cheeky to an officer? I'll teach you."

Although said with humour, as unthinkable in "real life", Steven really had had enough. His behaviour here is strikingly reminiscent of adolescent insolence so resented by adults —parents and employers. Often it is the only way of salvaging self-esteem, and here it is clearly a very warranted response in the "reality" of the situation.

Dr. S "We have to close for today, It is important to
Steven, how do you feel now?" draw the consequences and closure in the picture. Here we have the consequences of unmodified sadism. It would have been useful to be able to contrast this to closure tempered with empathy and internal moderation.

Steven "Oh, why didn't I listen?"

Dr. S "How would father and Dianne feel inside now?"

Father "I told you, son; I hope you're O.K. I wish you'd listened."

Steven "I know Dad. Oh, I know I kept feeling Dianne would wait if I could show her."

Dianne "I just wanted you to get a good job, Steven. I never dreamed this would happen."

Dr. S "What are your thoughts, Steven?"

Steven "I've left my mother, father and sisters. Dianne is marrying another man—I'd never make good here—it's all too late."

Kevin "The way Mike acted it isn't like that. I have been to barracks."
They don't treat them like dirt. They treat them all right." one alternative and this one is an expectation or fear, not a reality. At this point, others join with their reactions, versions or opinions. Only a part of the discussion is given below.

Dr. S "Steven, what do you think would happen eventually?"

Steven (laughs) "I'd get blown up stepping on a landmine in Ireland." Steven now buys Mike's earlier version of expectation although it does bear a relation to Steven's own unadmitted fears too. The unrestrained quality of doom with which this session ends bears a relationship to central matters of concern for this whole group and forms a part of the larger theme we focussed on with them: the feelings of low self-esteem and hopelessness inhibit the construction of positive alternatives.
Steven (when asked how he felt about his father objecting to his going into the army) “I couldn't see the point of it, but it rings a bell in me. If some body wants to do something and his parents know it is bad, it sometimes forces the child to do it and the end result turns out bad for him.”

Jock “People think it is always the other person who gets blown up. If they don't think like that, no one would join the army. There shouldn't be no armies in the first place.”

Kevin “What do you defend the country with?”

Mike “There will always be someone or something who causes trouble.”

Tom “If he wants to be an engineer, he joins but he has to end up in Ireland.”

Mike “They put my uncle up in the mountains in the army in Cyprus and put 150 lb stones inside their packs and made them run up and down the mountain. My uncle who was in the army told me they did this for discipline. It was awful. The British Army murdered people there.”

Mike is a Greek Cypriot and here some of the roots of his personal fears about the army and about Britain are shown. His sadism and exploitation are linked with the British Army. But that leaves him with the task of dealing with his own sadism lest it turn
Steven "The Israeli Army is known for discipline. But they have so much respect for the officers, it is unbelievable. My father was in the Israeli Army and he told me."

Steven's identification with Israel parallels Mike's with Cyprus, but with less sense of exploitation by authority.

Merilee "I object to saying every girl is after money. Some girls are, but most aren't."

The girls have held themselves out of this topic which is apparently unrelated to them. But the relationship of job choice to choice of husband and the issues we have been examining is one which now can be pursued in the following week.

Cathy "What's the most important thing, anyhow—the person or the money?"

Dr. S "Perhaps that's a topic we can explore next week in the same way. I think that for today, it represented a fear which drove Steven on, not his statement of a fact. Yet it operated with as much force as if it were a fact. Let's pick it up there next week."

Discussion

The major topic of concentration in this session is the relationship of the important people
in one's life—both in reality and in one's mind—to planning the future. Both Steven's job and his future life were affected by his relationship to girlfriend and family. Often the reality relationship has significant differences from the internalised aspects of the relationship, which may contain significant distortions resulting from emphasising a part of another person and not the whole. For instance, a mother who is depressed and therefore often angry may be thought of (and related to) as mean and sadistic—not as needy in her own right. Steven's father was thought of as stern and uncaring—although portrayed in a more rounded, human way.

Since the father was played by a member of the school staff, the feeling toward him has immediate relevance to the group's relationship to the staff: they have complained about the staff as uncaring and cold.20 Now they must deal with a member of
staff who has seemed understanding in the role of a father. For a staff member to play parent is a useful displacement, since it embodies a frequent equation made by adolescents: teachers and parents are seen as having similar roles and as sharing a lack of understanding. We were therefore able to work on the relationship between staff and students through the substitution of Steven's internalised father for Mr. Mendell's usual role.

The role of two important psychological processes was clearly illustrated. The first was the splitting of authority relationships into good and bad, and of people generally into good and bad. Mike picked up the role of the "bad father" and acted it with gusto; Mr. Mendell picked up the role of "good father". Steven's despairing situation could be explained in terms of his readiness to believe that the father who meant most to him was
the 'bad' one—his disbelief in or rejection of parental caring. This despair significantly affected his ability to plan realistically and imaginatively—since he could not believe advice from an authoritarian figure—given an internal one. He had too little confidence in an 'inner good father' to avoid the dependency and institutional aspects of the army. Although he feels anxious about surrendering autonomy, he does not feel strong enough on his own.

The second psychological process involves the effect of loss and separation. Suddenly faced with the loss of his girlfriend, Steven reacts to increase dependency (her loss was given as his original reason for joining up!) and to treat her angrily (I'll show her!) His ability to trust himself is decreased when faced with loss. The relationship of the abandoning girlfriend to the unmentioned, absent mother, is only a matter of conjecture. But we
cannot afford to overlook the possibility of an important link.

Mike and Steven share a fear of, and a wish for, dependence on authority figures. When Mike acts out his own internal splitting of good and bad to confirm Steven's fear, the reason for their shared fear about the beckoning world is illustrated: their own sadism is feared to be out of hand, and the retaliation from the external world is therefore to be expected. For this reason work to confront, illustrate, and modify their own sadism and to set it in a realistic perspective would have been useful in this session. Their identification with the aggressor fits with their fear of exploitation in the working world. And their internalised wish to exploit increases their fear of retaliation from authority figures. A useful intervention would have shown the consequences of split-off bits of oneself. (See a more effective intervention in the
sessions at Lake School in Chapter 7).

Steven's moment of adolescent rebelliousness (What are you, a Sergeant, a Drilling Instructor or an idiot?) illustrated the multiple aspects of such behaviour: humour, face-saving, identity- and esteem-salvaging, and relation to loss and depression. Mike's behaviour in the role of the sergeant major demonstrated his stereotyped view of authority figures, as well as betraying his own internalised "bad father" figure. The adolescent's view of shop foremen as rigid and sadistic is often matched by the adult's fear of adolescent diffidence. Both views represent, in part, unmodified projections. The issue of mutual projection and defensiveness will be considered in chapters dealing with teachers, employers and schools as social institutions (Chapters 10, 12 and 14).
The girls too had a role in this psycho-drama, although it was difficult during this particular session for any of the adolescent girls to actually act the role. Although they initially rejected the notion that they would be marrying for money, they were able to admit it obliquely the following week. They went on to deal with a series of issues around the meaning of marriage, including their assumption that satisfaction would come from marriage rather than work, and their assumption that this group of boys would not be like the boys they would be marrying. The significance of issues confronting the boys became much more alive to the girls as they began to realise that their potential marriage partners would have had to negotiate many of the same issues and might well come from a similar group. Although they had been able to avoid some of the most anxiety-ridden aspects of the choice of occupation with the
assumption that marriage would be their ultimate area of fulfilment, they became able now to enlarge their focus to include preparation for marriage and parenthood as a parallel and related area of concern.

Finally, the parallel between the school and the army needs to be drawn. The army, as depicted here, is scarcely more deadly than some of the descriptions of school by this group. The hierarchy, the discipline, the use of the "need for growth" to excuse regimentation, are frequent complaints about the school. Early discussion in this group had emphasised the school as depersonalised and uncaring. The headmaster could well have been the sergeant major. The next world, at its most murderous, is depicted as being quite a lot like the way this one feels at its worst. Being sent off to Ireland and being blown up by a landmine is a close parallel to the fears of the fate
this group might suffer when sent out into the wider world, as though banished from school. The agenda for joining the army was supposed to have been training in communication, but the feeling often carried, especially by this group, is of impending death.

**Learning, Identification and Separation Anxiety**

Psycho-drama lends itself to the process of playing imaginatively with an anticipated reality. Many of the processes needed to manipulate reality effectively can be represented in concrete ways. The future can be tested out in an imagined way, it can be re-worked, examined and subjected to peer scrutiny. It can also be experienced as a partially real experience *without* the anxiety generated by the finality of real choice, but *with* many of the real feelings which are induced by role-playing. There are graphic chances to look at
underlying processes, to empathise actively with someone in a reciprocal role, and to examine consequences of actions.

With a group whose anxiety "freezes" their ability to use words to play with their inner worlds, a more concrete format is useful. The limitation for this group in their ability to discuss abstractly and openly with us was not a lack of intelligence or articulation. It was a pervasive depression—a despair about the possibilities after school, which stemmed from a feeling of the effect of their own badness in ruining the world around each of them. (See Chapter 4 for elaboration). This depression, fear, and anxiety made talking, the use of words themselves, a potentially dangerous matter. Words were weapons belonging to their adversaries in the world of teachers, employers, and "authorities". The more action-oriented format got to the same subject matter and left the
same work to be done - but in a medium which belonged more to them.

Nevertheless, the need to use such a technique highlights an issue we needed to keep in mind about this group. When identifying us as 'teachers' meant they had difficulty talking and working with us, it was for a reason we needed to be aware of: we are then identified as bad parent figures, dangerous and unfriendly to their plans. The process of learning skills and decision-making is seen as alien and belonging to "others", like teachers. It is therefore resisted as "not like me" or "not a legitimate part of me", when intelligent, constructive thought is seen as alien to the self, the consequences are severe. Constructive planning becomes an alien, threatening thing. The adolescents' difficulty in relating to us and identifying with us enough to talk, led us to adopt the technique of psycho-drama. But it also told us
that this group had a large number of people whose identification with helping adults was largely a negative one—as "not like me". This group could therefore be expected to be at high risk when planning their future lives—especially in the unstructured way the decisions are often made. As their anxiety mounted over the lack of structure, their decisions or discussion about choice became more fragmented and regressive. A technique with a heavy non-verbal component was necessary to let us 'look at' this process rather than 'extract it verbally' from its hiding place. The action format of role-playing made a better alliance between teacher and pupil. It decreased anxiety, and spoke to the anxiety which was largely the topic of exploration. It made it possible for us to keep Steven and Mike company physically much more concretely than we could during a class discussion. It also made Mike and
Steven feel safe enough to work on and play with their anxiety.

The use of varying techniques, and the need to think diagnostically *which techniques fit which group of adolescents*, and at which points, emphasises the relationship between learning and attachment to others. The growth of *cognitive ability is often inhibited by a feeling of loss or separation which invades a relationship*, whether a personal one or a classroom one. When the student can feel attached to or accompanied by the teacher (or other benign figure) he can feel safe to absorb things from him: feeling understood, he feels free to understand. This is partly because opening up to new knowledge means an admission of weakness, the weakness of not knowing. It is important therefore to feel that the other person will not invade as one opens to new knowledge. When there is an impending or actual
separation, the ability to "open up trustingly" to new learning may be threatened because there is no feeling of a trustworthy other person companion during a period of vulnerability. The separation from understanding adults can be a daily event as the student or class feels not understood. A technique which helps the adolescent to "feel accompanied" can lessen the sense of loss and separation, and increase the opportunities for learning.

Since the learning around the process of school-leaving and the transition to work implies a major loss and separation every time it is introduced, it is particularly important to lessen the separation-impact of the work around this topic. Imaginative group "play" with the unknown world of work can give a group of adolescents the feeling of accompanying each other and being accompanied by adults during the exploration of
the new world.

Postscript on Techniques: Consultation to Teachers and School

This ends the direct discussion of the methods of group work employed in this study with the adolescents themselves, but it would be incomplete were I not to mention that the broader opportunities for intervention lie in work with the staff. During this project, consultation techniques were employed which provided opportunities for interaction between our research team and the staff. The opportunity to feed back the issues surrounding the adolescent increased as we learned more, and gave us, as well, contributions from the staff's own experience with their students. Their reactions and additions to our growing understanding were also invaluable.

The process of consulting with a group of staff
relies in many ways on the same use of group
dynamics as does the group work with the
adolescents themselves. Consultation processes
have been elaborated in other places, often most
succinctly in relation to the use of consultative
processes with individuals rather than in groups.
An outside consultant with less expertise in
educational processes than his consultees, offers
something different than expertise in the
classroom, with which they are more familiar.
Attention to group themes, to underlying
dynamics and to principles or organisation
derived from the study of industries, are
relevant.

Consultation to the staff can operate on at least
two levels. On the first level one can help a faculty
interested in counselling or tutorial work to use
groups effectively in this task. One of the
important focuses of such a venture would be
counselling with the object of making the transition from school to work more benign. This is a supervisory function of a consultant who has skills in group work and in counselling.

A second function of an outside consultant is to use the setting of a staff group to determine which issues among the staff and within the school impede a successful negotiation of the transition from school to work for the adolescents in that school. This task involves a flow back and forth between the investigation of one's own organisation and oneself. A modification both of curriculum and of staff awareness, moving towards a more efficient design for learning and teaching can then be attempted.

This book itself is an illustration of the issues which constitute the focus of such a consultative process. The subsequent chapters are presented
as the beginning of consultation with each of the schools described and with the school system as a whole. The material presented has been part of the consultation with schools with which we have worked. It represents a working paper as we proceed in our work with them.²³

NOTES


2 The restrictions against work experience for children 15 and under do mean a limitation on those who might most need a gentle introduction to work through a supervised work experience.

3 Deutsch, 1967

4 Winnicott, 1965

5 I am indebted to Dr. Dugmore Hunter of the Tavistock Clinic for the formulation of the peer group as a defensive conglomerate of small groups rather than as a primary group.

6 There are examples of the attention paid to an individual as a focus of group work in every group described in this work. (See also the chapter on "The Adolescent in his Dilemma")
7 For recommendations for this training, see the final chapter.

8 Bion, 1959

9 Gosling, et al., 1967

10 Bion, 1959

11 Blos, 1962, Deutsch, 1967

12 Berkovitz, 1972

13 Beyond the need for support from colleagues, teachers attempting to work with an unstructured class need a technical frame of reference by which to judge success. For instance, prolonged silence in a classroom will be intolerable evidence of failure to most students and teachers. But viewed in the framework of psychoanalysis or group process, it may represent many things: hard work, wrestling with resistance, the tolerance of sadness, or escape from a task. Another aspect of the theoretical framework involves the tolerance and use of "counter-transference": the group may transfer to the teacher the feeling of the failure they feel. If the teacher can use this as evidence on behalf of the group, rather than accepting the feeling as a self-judgment of failure, he will have mobilised a powerful tool.

14 The "confusion" of sexuality, marriage and generally threatening life-styles with occupational choice provided some valuable clues to underlying anxieties—but much remains at a speculative level. Did the homosexuality convey the fear of passivity contrasting to the activity of work life? Each of the alternatives seemed to be both fearful and attractive, but within the time limitations the
details of each could not be pursued that day. It certainly
could be said that each alternative did represent a way of
life including a "career".

15 Moreno, 1946, 1959

16 The experience of many psycho-dramatists is that the fit of
role to player is usually very good, determined by both
unconscious and conscious elements in the group.

17 One special advantage of the psychodrama technique is the
adolescent’s ability to evoke family issues with an
immediacy not available to purely verbal means. This can
provide a link from family to school and family to work
that is often missing from the adolescent.

18 The same questions are raised about a possible "Next
World"—the army or any future life. The army is
particularly like school—it’s a total institution while you
are in it, taking care of all your worries and needs—at
the cost of considerable autonomy. Through a
displacement and future orientation, live current issues
are being discussed. Crucial aspects of "planning a life
strategy" are considered and compared with current
internal and external situations.

19 Mike is not an unrestrained boy, quite the opposite. On one
occasion he described going out with peers to beat up an
old man. He said it occurred 2 or 3 years ago. He felt
disgusted and wondered why he had ever done it. I
should have used "role reversal" to put Steven as
Sergeant Major, Mike as recruit, and asked Steven (now
Sergeant Major) if he felt similarly. Doubling for Mike, to
speak for his own fright and reaction formation of hyper-
masculinity to cover feelings of inadequacy could also have been a helpful intervention. Both boys might then have better worked through some of the fear of threatened death in the army as a sample world after school.

20 See discussion of Thomaston School in Chapter 4


22 Caplan, 1964 And 1970; Miller and Rice, 1967

23 As part of the question of curriculum modification, we will be attempting to ask with each school whether adolescents who have had such an experience can, in fact, confront the world more realistically. One plan for the continuing consultation is to test this hypothesis. Another question to be considered is "Can such experience be built into the normal curriculum?" For the adolescent, we want to provide for a learning process, but one which is not a teaching one by the teacher, in the usual sense. Can such experience be provided by teachers with training or is an external consultant necessary? Although our project did not provide answers to these questions, my tentative conclusion, based on scattered observations of several teachers is that teachers with adequate training can do this work effectively.
CHAPTER 4

Some Notes on Thomaston School

Thomaston was the first of the schools we contacted when the project was conceived. Consequently, the work there began earlier and went less smoothly, providing valuable lessons for our work with other schools. Thomaston as a whole seemed a welcoming place, despite day-to-day difficulties.

In discussing this school, I will concentrate on the general currents, giving the extended examples in other chapters. Leaving them out of this chapter will give a chance to describe the overall experience within Thomaston. The experience with the student group involved,
developed into a rich one, described in several other places. Important examples in Chapter 3 are from Thomaston, notably the "blackboard method", the importation of a young worker into the group, and the extensive presentation of the role-play in which Mike and Steven contemplate entering the army as a career. Another important series of meetings is described in discussing Annette in Chapter 9. The reader may do well to familiarise himself with this material before reading this chapter, since it contains the specifics from which many of them are drawn.

We approached the school through the headmaster, Mr Paul. His interest in our project was immediate, partly through his own experience of teaching non-academic, difficult students in special programmes in a secondary modern school early in his teaching career. He was fond of his memories of that experience, and of the non-
academic students as well. He drew a picture of Thomaston as a school with a number of problems. He had come there 18 months previously to undertake Thomaston's development and felt things were moving along well.²

The school had been a comprehensive for more than 15 years, originally enjoying a strong reputation among the local middle class. However, population trends in the surrounding area over the last 5-10 years had meant an increasing intake of both minority groups and working class children, with a steadily more mobile population. (See in contrast to this, the comparatively more stable working class population at Lake School). For various reasons, including population changes in the catchment area, the school's reputation among middle class intellectual parents had declined precipitously, and the intake of able
students had become very small.³

In order to improve the school's standing among higher socioeconomic groups without neglecting the other children, he had involved the school in a balanced programme of engaging public support while attempting to enrich the students' experience. His principal efforts were directed at the interface with the community, while the daily running of the school was in the hands of deputies.

The structure of the school has taken notice of the increased need for tutorial care of children. The 1200 children are divided into four houses for tutorial purposes. The house is a "vertical" structure, including members of form years 2-6. Students stay in the same house for their entire secondary school career after first year. The Head of Houses have responsibility for a system of
house tutors. Children meet in a group with tutors briefly twice daily, and for longer periods once or twice during the week. Although children meet regularly with their tutors, this does not seem to ensure that pastoral needs are adequately met. For tutors do not feel generally equipped to handle difficult family or personal problems. They have no formal training in counselling, and operate largely on intuition and experience.

In contrast to the tutorial staff, the heads of department were older and, apparently, as a group, more traditionally minded. It was this group that could be more easily classed as deriving from the old public or grammar school modes of education. It was the tutorial group, to which we presented our early findings and who eagerly asked for training and supervision in working themselves with groups of adolescents. They were able to ask questions about themselves
which were doubting but not despairing.

The counsellor in the school was a man who was well liked by staff and students. His unique qualifications for his position were primarily those of experience with some supplementary part-time and in-service training. He held a free and unfettered position among students. He saw his position mainly as offering "first aid" rather than of implementing a general counselling system. Although he initially attended our staff planning meetings with the deputy head, he soon became caught up in other matters and was unable to attend most of our meetings. He did attend the meeting with our group of adolescents which is reported in detail in Chapter 3.

The careers teacher was a man who saw himself mainly as providing a placement service for adolescents who could not really place
themselves. He possessed extensive knowledge of the adolescents and their fit with available jobs. He was actively sought out by them in this role. In establishing our group initially he aided by reviewing the randomly-selected group members and demonstrated a detailed knowledge of their potential interests.

Two of the Heads of House had organised a pilot work-experience programme for adolescents in the lower 6th form. In this programme volunteer adolescents, about 35 in all, went out into job experiences for a week. The programme was felt to have been a successful beginning. The feedback from the participants had indicated a considerable 'opening of eyes'. They pointed out that such a programme could not be run, under existing regulations, for the much needier group of 5th formers, since youth employment regulations forbid formal employment before 16.
Nevertheless, they remained interested in exploring the possibility of an extended work experience programme for the younger group of potential school leavers whom they felt to need it more.

Our meetings with staff began as soon as we began to have impressions of the students. Our reception from the first was hospitable and full of interest. The deputy head, Mrs Redcliffe, kept in administrative touch with the adolescents in our group and with the staff throughout. In addition, she was able to deal with the interface between administration and students. She was able to sympathise both with staff's plight attempting to understand students' position, and with the position of the students themselves. Her ability to view the school as if from outside and with any number of different perspectives within the school ideally suited her managerial role. The mild
disorganisation we felt in the 'domestic' management of the school helped the research team appreciate crucial aspects of the day-to-day management within the school system. At the same time, we noticed that daily management needs were never allowed to obscure the needs of students.

In our work at Thomaston, we met with heads and deputy heads of house to provide the tutorial staff with information about our findings and to investigate their perceptions. The enthusiasm of their response to issues of student need was pervasive. Feeling they did not have the tools to do the job they wished to do in tutorial care, they very much wanted to obtain them. Throughout the year there was an interest in our being able to provide something for them that would enhance their own ability to deal with these children. Discussions with them sometimes focussed on
increasing understanding of one or two children. At other times we explored general issues: the relevance of existing curriculum to this group of adolescents, the psychological issues which we were beginning to uncover and their relevance to teachers, or the teachers’ reactions to these adolescents and the growth-facilitating or impeding aspects of those reactions. A rather thorough discussion of the constructive and destructive aspects of examinations in relation to school leaving is reflected in the discussion of examinations in Chapter 14. The discussion of the role of mourning in the transition from school to work and teachers' reaction to adolescent mourning was met with sensitivity. A struggle to understand its implications led to much development of the material in Chapter 11.

Of particular importance in this school, struggling to achieve a balance of academic and
non-academic children, were doubts about the ethical aspects or desirability of aiming to educate working class children to enjoy their working class status. Were we teaching this group of children to enjoy their servitude? The issue seemed crucial when one began to think about the relevance of certain aspects of education for working class children (as well as for academic children) and the goals of Thomaston School. A fundamental ambivalence about goals is represented by this concern.4

The liability that came into focus for this school was the difficulty in having bright, favoured children who gratified the teachers' wishes to have successful students, side by side with non-academic, often dull or inhibited students who came to represent the bad, denigrated and hated parts of the teacher. Working class students could be treated in a much more cursory way and
themselves felt like out-of-favour step-children. (See the group material which follows). This was true, despite the mixture of classes and despite the staff's intention to focus equally on them. It seemed to be a liability stemming from the kind of feeling represented by the need for attracting more of the academic students for the school's morale and overall welfare, and from the notions of the need to aid children in escaping from the bad, deadly, working class life they had been born into. The children's own feelings of messing up their lives and, therefore, losing out on opportunities, fit into the school's ambivalence, to produce a complicated picture

The clearest request from this group of staff for future help was in the supervision of their tutorial work. It was a stronger request than came from any other school staff group. Curriculum clearly had a very secondary role for this tutorial group
which was not surprising considering their appointment to tutorial positions rather than to curriculum or departmental positions. Nevertheless, when we approached the more curriculum-minded group later in the year about future planning, they were also interested.

The Student Group

This group began at the end of November and carried on until June. The initial selection was quite random and was drawn from the lower 2/3 of the ability range of the class, with only the top stream being excluded, on the assumption that most adolescents in that stream would be going on to some kind of further education. We expected that the issues might well be the same for them but that they were a group in less acute need, although some individuals might well be in need. After the initial selection for a group that was to
take place during a "community and social education" time, we had our first group meeting. Over the early group meetings several of the adolescents dropped out and new ones were added. Attendance finally ended up with 6-10 fifth formers usually in attendance out of a group of 13 who were regulars. About 8 had opted out and gone back to their regular class during this period.

Instead of discussing the process of this group in detail, I have elected to discuss the general kind of progress noted by the research team and the "counter-transference" issues. A number of examples from this group are used as detailed illustrations elsewhere and it would therefore be repetitious to describe them here. These include the psycho-drama session enlisting in the army, (Chapter 3), the discussion of pop stars as ego ideals, the bringing in of a recent school leaver, Annette's work on her own decision about staying
at school (Chapter 9), and material on mourning at school-leaving (Chapter 11). While the overall course of this group will be detailed here, it may be best understood after a brief look at these chapters. (See chapters 3 and 9 particularly).

The first week's discussion introduced us to the adolescents' perceptions of work and the school. School was in many ways seen as an uncomfortable or inadequate place. But it felt like home to them. Some hearkened back to the transition into secondary school from primary school with feelings of loss of childhood and the protection it had afforded, and with the feeling that the work was dangerous, difficult or boring. Many of them had jobs that they didn't mind doing in their leisure but dreaded doing full-time. Two of the boys were taking a catering course which was a specifically trade-oriented course. They enjoyed it, but were ambivalent about following catering as
a career.  

After this early discussion there were signs of increasing resistance in the group with the passing weeks: many long silences, no verbal support, students turning pages of books, taking out comic books, picking the tables with pins, beginning to talk to each other. At first, as group leaders or teachers, we felt that there was no ostensible reason why an open-ended group should not work. We began to feel quite anxious. We then began to feel that we were holding the anxiety for the group and Mike's comments, "There's nothing to talk about, we've talked about everything. It's boring, sir," began to be a clue that to cut below the surface aspect, to explore the move into a world of work, would be extremely anxiety-provoking.

When interpretations about the anxiety did not
move the group very far, my initial conclusion was that interpretations would not work with groups of adolescents in non-therapeutic situations. In retrospect, interpretations seem not to work for adolescents whose resistance to examining anxiety is extremely high and who have little ability to use words to avoid impulsive action. They have also narrowed their focus of possibilities for work and the chance to realise fantasy in the real world. Fears and anxieties remain pervasive, and this is, therefore, a group of inhibited adolescents—inhhibited because of their anxiety about the world, and inhibited because of their social experience of the world as a dangerous and difficult place. This group fell into the "poverty-prone" group of adolescents who have experienced certain kinds of emotional and physical deprivation, and who choose to escape by narrowing their focus and pursue one goal
without considering too many open-ended possibilities, since those will provoke intense anxiety.⁹

The anxiety level fluctuated greatly during the year. For a period of a couple of weeks it might be possible to penetrate the anxiety to get at underlying issues. We could follow the fluctuating level of anxiety as external school events took place. For instance, during the mock exams, which took place in January, anxiety became acute. It receded immediately after the mock exams, when the exaggeration of their importance faded. As the end of the school year approached, anxiety became very high again. Aspects of leisure or issues about leaving school regularly and predictably became more relevant and available before holidays and as the end of the year approached. We felt that this "orchestration of anxiety" through the school year was a
phenomenon which could be used by tutorial staff to predict when certain anxieties would be greatest, and therefore most easily worked with. An example of this would be anxiety about choosing jobs. At certain points, when anxiety made the adolescents feel more fluid inside and more amenable to accepting help, we found that our group focussed on occupationallly-related issues more than at other times.\textsuperscript{10}

With the loyal group of 8-10 who attended the whole year, we noted (and shared) an experience of significant depression, flattening of feeling, and boredom. We came to understand it as a response to the inhibition of anxiety and a process of "clamping down" on anxiety.\textsuperscript{11} We despaired of group intervention as an effective technique with this group for most of the year. It was only when we looked back and saw the large number of effective group sessions accompanied by the
emerging individuation of certain adolescents as the group went on, that we began to feel at all effective. For most of the year, the group seemed to demonstrate a kind of difficulty with sequential work and with following themes, despite having an adequate amount of time each meeting, and despite meeting regularly throughout a long period. They had difficulty holding themes in focus and acted more "deprived" or "ego-deficient" than any other group we worked with. They seemed detached from society, excluded from the school, and blocked from the future world of personally-redeeming work. Generally they felt that they had "messed up" their own lives badly (or that circumstances had conspired to "mess up" their lives) so that there was very little help or hope for them. (See description of Annette in Chapter 9).

Thus, before the first series of "mock exams" in practice for the CSE's and 'O' levels later in the
year, the exam room was described as "being like a morgue". The strategies for leaving school all ended in death, drugs or deprivation. There was general agreement by adolescents that the school was not a "facilitating environment" for them, that individual teachers tended to treat students badly and without respect or understanding. We shared the difficulty, of sessions in which they experienced the pain of hopelessness and transmitted the feeling of it to us; the feeling that life would be boring, and the sense that investigating oneself was to risk overwhelming anxiety.

The group was dominated by two verbal boys, Steven and Mike. The girls tended to be more reticent, with never more than one or two of them participating actively in a single group discussion, although which one or two of them it was varied. Steven and Mike were together in the school's
catering course and seemed by far the most open and available adolescents. The girls seem to have been drawn accidentally from a skewed group which was particularly depressed, withdrawn and thoroughly defeated. Two girls were, in fact, from a group of four that the staff was especially concerned about, because they felt that this group had a good deal of potential but felt excluded by the school and therefore could not be reached by even unusual staff efforts. (Again, see Chapter 9, Annette).

Although the students often presented themselves as "uncared for step-children", the staff demonstrated from the beginning an active interest in them and their views about the school. There was a clear wish to reach out to the withdrawn student. The gap between student and teacher persisted despite a mutual longing to be in contact—this poignant situation speaks to a
general adolescent problem during the struggle for autonomy: the wish for caring parents and teachers remains.\textsuperscript{13}

It was with this group that we most doubted the efficacy of our techniques. That doubt triggered us to search for techniques beyond open-ended discussion. We were also forced to begin to think about the relationship between group technique and group goals. With this group we finally reached the conclusion that in a group intervention (or a counselling system) it is not that a certain technique is best - but that the process of understanding the development of a "strategy" to cope with occupational choice and life planning presents the same problem regardless of the technique involved.

The goal of this process has to be clear to the leader of the group (or the teacher) and be
imparted by him to the adolescent. And it has to rest with him in a flexible enough way that he can think selectively about which technique will be valuable, for which group of children, and at which time. Which techniques will enable this particular group of children to help each other to insight, to widening of perspective, and to broadening of available strategies of job choice and life patterns? What will enable them to hold anxiety long enough as a group to explore the consequences of being unable to contain it. This "diagnostic thinking" about the group was one of the main things we learnt from this particular group.

In trying to reach this group, we worked with role play, open-ended discussion, bringing in a young worker, use of a blackboard "chalk talk" and the school counsellor. We would have used other things like work experience and field visits if time had allowed. This group convinced me that
flexibility of approach was crucial.

However, what emerged as more important than technique was our long-term relationship to them. Over the process of a year many of them began to form individual relationships to us, to trust us and to discuss things more openly with us. At the end of the year there was a crescendo of individual issues with an empathy for each other which we would never have thought possible earlier in the year. We felt that living through our doubts about the efficacy of our work, which echoed their doubts about the efficacy of their work, staying with them week after week, while tolerating boredom, frustration, and anxiety had brought us something together. What we found as a personal reward for suffering through this with them was enormous. We discovered tolerance and techniques in ourselves that we hadn't known were there—a new flexibility in withstanding
anxiety and boredom as defences, and a relationship to most of the adolescents in the group which went far beyond what we expected. In fact, we went beyond group processes as a tool with this group and into the realm of individual relationships which were fostered by group process. What began as an ego-deficient group required more of our own energy than we had anticipated. What we got in return was an increasing depth of personal relationship beyond that of any of the groups with which we worked. These relationships seemed the best evidence that we could find for the need for solid, empathic relationships with members of staff, who cultivate a persistent tolerance for anxiety in order to lend that tolerance to the adolescent and to increase thereby the range of possibilities for him in the world beyond school.14

This group benefited from the use of
increasingly flexible techniques as the year progressed. They explored their own issues much more with role-playing, with the use of the blackboard, or when the young worker was brought in, than when we sat and tried to run an open-ended group discussion. An open-ended group discussion often meant that one of the leaders did most of the talking and the adolescents did most of the shutting off. We thought that the need for flexibility in curriculum design, not only for any given school but for any given class, and therefore, by any given teacher, was demonstrated quite clearly and that our own lack of resources, knowledge and experience in teaching techniques hampered our work with this group. Students like these do seem to require an increasingly experimental curriculum approach to the facilitating of occupational maturity. But the most important aspect of teaching with this group was
sitting, waiting, remaining sympathetic and being available. Working with them requires an integration of the tutorial system and the curriculum system, and integration of structured and informational material with the emotional availability of the teacher.

This group of children throughout the year complained of a school which did not support their ego functioning, their morale, or their self-esteem. At the end of the year they approached exams still feeling that an empty initiation process was preparing them for an empty world. Then, surprisingly, and suddenly, some of them found that at exam time, teachers were in alliance with them and against an exam system. The teachers hoped that the adolescents would do well. The adolescents were surprised when the teachers, who had previously been seen as disciplinarians, were suddenly on their side. They were
overjoyed. We were struck that exams could have this function of bringing teacher and student together, but we were also struck at the sadness that this seemed to be the first time in the experience of this group that teachers were ever felt to be on their side. It was too late to use this alliance to build a lasting relationship, which could then be internalised and carried into the future.

A number of adolescents in the group were left with the feeling that they had "messed up" their lives at school and, therefore, that they were unlikely to do anything different at work. They also felt that it was very difficult to mourn and give up a school that had not cared for them and would be glad to see them go because they had been difficult children. The terminal dynamic of the group was that all strategies for leaving led to death—and death was life after school. It was no wonder that their mourning processes about
losing school were severe and incapacitating, because what they were mourning was a very ambivalently-held set of parent-substitutes.\textsuperscript{17} The withdrawal \textit{by} the staff, which they felt to be happening much more than it was actually happening left them increasingly abandoned.\textsuperscript{18} One explanation may be that at the same time they also withdrew \textit{from} the staff, while their guilt over their own withdrawal caused them to project all the withdrawal on to staff.

Once the end of the year approached, our group had difficulty meeting. Members were not at school regularly, and became unreliable when at school. Exams and the closing of school for the summer meant that staff were not available for consistent planning. The chaos of closing down and planning for the next year preoccupied everyone. Lessons effectively stopped, and students said goodbye to teachers only briefly, and
sometimes not at all. The turmoil of the school was echoed in the staff and students.\textsuperscript{19}

This experience, although familiar to everyone in the school, nevertheless precluded students and teachers from carrying out the last joint task of their relationship—the sharing of loss which could leave each with a sense of gain. The sense of the adolescents of "being pushed out of Thomaston before their time" was the last message we heard from them. It was remarkable that in a school as attentive as Thomaston, so many of this group could still manage to leave school feeling "pushed out". That it was so is a testament to the strength of the tendency of some adolescents themselves to feel rejected at the time of school leaving. It is also a statement about the absence of specific efforts to stay in touch with adolescent needs during this phase of development. We shall see that this was true of all the schools in which we worked.
The experience of Thomaston does demonstrate that the active interest of a pastoral system can help in a number of ways. Our own contribution to that system was both directly to certain student for some of whom it seemed helpful, and indirectly to help pastoral staff learn to improve their functioning. As they moved to work wit what we offered, we attempted to learn about their problems and their contributions. As we began to collaborate with them, the sens of collaboration between them and some of their students increased as well.

NOTES

1 The names of all schools and persons involved have, of course been changed, along with certain details which might make identities recognisable. Nevertheless, the details concerning each school have been discussed with the Headmaster, and with the Head of Research and Statistics at ILEA.

2 Information about each school was obtained in interviews with that school’s administration.
Both Mr Paul and local parents agreed with this assessment.

For a more extended discussion about this aspect of the teacher's relationship to his non-academic student, see Chapter 10.

By "counter-transference" I here refer to the feelings of the group leader which arise in reaction to the group experience. "Counter-transference" can be a valuable clue in understanding that group "transference" is that feeling brought in by each group member which comes from previous relationships and is re-enacted towards other members and the leader.

See Chapters 3, 9, 11, 13 and 15.

Career decisions about some careers tend to be made very early. Work done by J.M.M. Hill in the Catering Industry showed in a number of cases that the decision to become a chef or to enter the catering trade was made around the age of 5 or 6. It is strengthened, thereafter, because it can be linked with parents, practised, and progress seen. The catering course at this school appeared to recognise the early age of choice by offering a trade-specific training from the age of 14. This seemed to fit well with both these boys' interests in cooking. Although neither of them was absolutely sure he wanted to become a chef, both of them were interested in it enough to give it a real and dedicated try, in contrast to their interest in most other subjects.

See the clear illustration of this group graphically limiting their choices in Chapter 3 (blackboard teaching.)
One possibility which presented itself here was that we were running into cultural language deficiencies of the kind described by Bernstein, 1971. In fact, I would argue that the subsequent development of this group demonstrates that the limitation is not a linguistic one, but one of the difficulty of moderating overwhelming anxiety without the resources of trusted, guiding teachers or parents. See also Rosen, 1972, for a refutation of Bernstein's theories.)

When I discussed this point with Mr Paul, he agreed that anxiety fluctuates in a pattern during the school year. Interestingly, he noted that the staff seem to experience the same pattern. Late in the year, for instance, he and the deputies are regularly flooded with all kinds of requests by staff which he can only attribute to a very high level of anxiety, since they are matters the staff handle routinely during the rest of the year.

The evidence for this interpretation is the material in meetings like the one detailed in Chapter 3 in the section describing a blackboard outline of the effects of anxiety on job and life choice in which a "boredom" which stopped group work seemed to cover a pervasive feeling of doom.

Winnicott, 1965

This dilemma of the adolescent's longing for parents who also long for him is echoed in the families discussed in Chapter 9, and is behind the struggle of many of the teachers to reach out to students. With the longing comes the vulnerability to failure or rebuff which prompts the defensive patterns described in families (Chapter 9) and
teachers (Chapters 10 and 11).

14 I am sure that this kind of self-discovery during a year of teaching "difficult" children is experienced by many teachers. As teachers grow through it they gain something which can be even more valuable with succeeding groups.

15 For instance, one boy, Jock, said, "I never thought they wanted me to pass. It was the first time I heard them say they cared how I did. Now I know they care. There's still one teacher who doesn't like me though."

16 Again, the detailed discussion of this dynamic is taken up in terms of Annette in Chapter 9.

17 Their feelings towards their own parents were also pretty ambivalent, and several indicated that parents did not support their efforts.

18 For a detailed discussion of the role of loss and mourning in school leaving, see Chapter 11.

19 Mr Paul, the Head, confirmed that this was a yearly event, which he felt was in much better control here than in most other schools he had seen. He described adolescents heaving bricks through a school window as they rode away on their bikes, heaving a small car on top of an outbuilding, and other pranks with violence. This may represent the adolescent's inability to reconcile the leaving of the caring place with his own anger at losing the caring, even though he says he is aggressively ready for independence. Mr Paul felt it was important both for the school and the student to help in the containment of
that anger by a farewell ceremony and by special post-school programmes.
CHAPTER 5

Thomaston School Group the Following Year

Jill Savege Scharff

Introduction

Thomaston school is a comprehensive school for 1200 children of mixed social backgrounds and of widely varying abilities. Contact between the Tavistock Institute and school dates back to 1972 when the schools research project was begun by D. Scharff. He was interested in studying the transition from school to work and his work developed out of earlier work by J.M.M. Hill on occupational maturity. D. Scharff and M. Davis had worked at Thomaston with a group of school
leavers of average ability, helping them to explore issues around their imminent leaving. They had also worked with groups of school leavers at two other schools.¹

In 1973 the project was to be continued and developed in three schools in London with some funding from the Inner London Education Authority.² The Adolescent Department of the Tavistock Clinic was interested in maintaining a link with the research activities of the Institute and agreed to allocate time out of the psychiatrist resources to allow me to participate. My involvement had to be restricted to work at Thomaston school where I was involved in two situations:

1. Marion Davis and I met with a group of tutors,³ and

2. I met with a group of school-leavers taken
in this instance from the remedial classes.4

This paper arises from the work of the remedial class school-leavers group. It reports not only on the main focus of work on the transition from school to work, but deals with general related phenomena too. There is some discussion of the method of work. Some recommendations are made in light of the research, but extensive and final recommendations for policy change in the school cannot be made without having considered the findings of the project teams working in other areas of this school and other schools.

The Group

The school-leavers group consisted of a remedial class. The group discussion was time-tabled for weekly occurrence in place of a double Maths period, and since it was viewed as part of
the curriculum, attendance was theoretically compulsory rather than voluntary. In fact, attendance was never complete for any lessons, but an average of six girls and five boys attended the group. The two teachers responsible for the class were keen to attend the discussions.

The previous researchers, Scharff and Davis, worked with a teacher-less group and felt that pupils would find it easier to be frank in this situation. In the remedial department, however, teachers have more time and inclination to have personal discussion with pupils. I formed the impression that the intimate relationship between these two teachers and their pupils might support rather than inhibit the task of the group. It seemed to me that this hypothesis was worth testing. Furthermore, I was interested in integrating my research activity into the life of the class of pupils and their teachers. It seemed to me that working
in my style with the teachers present could offer a model of skill-sharing that could be a model for consultative work. I could observe the pupils' experience of the teachers and their ways of dealing with the discussion and they could observe mine, and we could learn from one another.

Thus it was agreed the group consisting of approximately eleven children, two female teachers and myself should meet for one hour weekly. Taking holidays into account, and stopping at the middle of the summer term, the group was able to meet on 15 occasions.

**The Environment**

We met in the Maths teacher's room, sitting in a specially arranged circle of chairs without desks. The Maths teacher thought the room was very cosy and quiet, as it had been soundproofed. The
children found it stuffy and still. It was impinged on by the continual roars of the traffic outside. The children seemed to deny the inconvenience of noise, because the noise served to hide their comments which they feared would be faulty and because it provoked a very loud and authoritative voice in the teachers who did wish to be heard and who tended to ask direct questions to evoke a response from specific named children. This noise interfered with the functioning of a non-hierarchical group and severely limited open communication. We agreed to move to the room of the other teacher, who is the English teacher, whose room was not liable to traffic noise.

This was crucial in allowing me to work. It had certain disadvantages. The Maths teacher, being more senior and due to retire, felt somewhat hurt at the rejection of her cosy room. Her attendance at the group became very unreliable, excused by
pressing disciplinary duties affecting other children. In addition, I learnt that the boys were good at Maths and the girls were good at English. Certainly the boys became progressively less involved while the girls seemed to own the group, after the change of territory to that on which the girls felt more competent.

The other factor that was important was the seating. A formal circle was unusual for them and I began to feel that I was enforcing a clinical group seating model on a classroom situation. I agreed to adapt to their method which is to sit haphazardly on chairs or desks and to be free to move around. This was a mistake in the sense that it removed the control of the group over its members’ behaviour. The teachers became more authoritative from time to time, which reduced my authority. It did remove some inhibitions, but allowed the group to adopt defences against facing
the anxiety of taking individual responsibility for speech and behaviour. It did, however, offer me the opportunity to study their natural classroom behaviour and its defensive manoeuvres.

For instance, because of their wish to maintain the familiar authoritative role of teachers, Jacky, Andrew and Louis chose to sit behind the teacher's desk, thus embodying a wish for the two teachers and myself to behave as distant traditional teachers. Those who took that position were boys, who said they felt more comfortable there with something to lean on, thus supporting and protecting their male authority in the face of anxiety about the unpredictable, unfamiliar female authority. On another occasion, when the group was engaged in a massive denial of racial conflict, Andrew lay down on top of the desks and appeared to sleep. In general, the children would sit huddled together between rows of desks or on
desks, or leaning on window-ledges, using the physical objects in the room to protect them from exposure and individuation.

**The Aims and Tasks of the Pupils Group**

I introduced myself as one of the workers on a large project involving two other schools. I said I would be interested to find out what the pupils feel about the changes in their lives around the time of leaving school at the age of 16, and to help them share these feelings and learn to discuss them and think about their future. I said that it was clear what I would get out of the meetings, namely, the understanding of their situation, while hopefully they would find that understanding useful too. I explained that at the end of the year the workers visiting the other schools would write up their findings and develop ideas about what a young person needs of a school at this age and
how the school can prepare them for leaving school and entering the world of work. The task of this group of pupils and their two teachers, therefore, was to discuss the concerns and feelings about leaving school and finding work. My task was to help them discuss and make sense of this.

The teachers had prepared the class and the group seemed to understand the task. But the group had great difficulty in knowing how to discuss their concerns. "The group is to discuss things about everything", said Peter who joined the group in the second session. Another child found the freedom to discuss everything made it difficult to find something to start with. Peter observed that he might learn something just from the "atmosphere" of the group, which was so different from that of a class. He said "The group has given us practice in going out to work. You are a person from the outside world coming in to the
school, and so you are like the employer we might have to work for in some job we don't know yet."
Thus the group had a secondary task, namely, the rehearsal of entry to the work world. The primary task was the discussion of feelings and attitudes about leaving school and entering the adult world of work.

**Problems In Using The Group**

Difficulty in initiating thought and discussion or taking personal responsibility arose from wishes that I would behave as a traditional teacher. They retreated to their usual dependent learning position and pleaded with me to ask direct questions. The teachers reinforced this dependency by asking direct questions to specific individuals who were put on the spot. This need for individual pairing with the leader was frustrated by me, but gratified by the teachers who
were encouraged to stay active by the passivity of the pupils, even though the interaction seemed at times quite as persecutory as it may have been facilitative of speech (if not thought). When I responded to a direct question by exploring its meaning for the group instead of answering it, the pupils and teachers felt I had ignored and rejected the individual asking the question. There was continued resistance to the idea that this feeling reaction was something to be learned from and worked through as useful preparation for adult roles and responsibilities. Instead, pupils and teachers agreed I was creating difficulties and stopping the group from doing well.

The group disliked my relatively quiet voice. They wanted me to shout, and to say what I had to say and make them listen. Tanya said "I don't like the way your voice is so quiet. Laura (the teacher) has a loud voice full of joy. Your voice is dead." I
said I felt she wanted me to be more assertive and that the deadness she heard in my voice was also the deadness she feared in the outside world where there would not be teachers like Laura to bring her joy and drive and she would be on her own struggling. She responded by picking a fight, then responding competently in anger to justify her position. It seemed to me she had to be driven by anger to defend positively and with vitality against the feeling of being dead and empty inside and not having good things to say. This inner feeling could be leading her and the others to expect myself and the teachers to speak, as if we were the only good and clever ones. They were angry at me for not giving them ideas and questions to make them feel good about themselves, instead of having to feel so hopeless.

Yolande thought that my presence as an outsider was difficult. She said, "It's like when I
was a new girl. It took a while before people were friends and some took me in sooner than others."
She seemed to be speaking for the part of each one that felt new and strange in the group, although tending to see the problem as residing in me. There was a group myth that the girls were supposed to be the hostesses and should be making me welcome. As another female, in addition to the two teachers, I might not be so welcome, however. The girls felt me as a rival, as they feel some younger teachers to be. They were particularly incensed by one who dresses too young and did a dance with a 6th form boy in the school play. The teachers completely blocked the expression of dislike of this teacher, let alone the implied criticism of themselves and me.

The boys had more difficulty in engaging in the group. They were working on the English or girls' territory and they had two female teachers and
myself to cope with. They might have contributed more forcefully if they had had a male authority to fight and identify with. This suggests the use of a mixed sex research team pair.

There was a continuing fear of being laughed at. The boy who had spoken with such insight about the "atmosphere" of the group was teased remorselessly about knowing such a difficult word and his participation was quite reduced by this envious attack. They were afraid of wasting my time and worried that my commitment to them might not last.

There was a general distrust of the group's expected reception to individuals' comments, given reality by the prevalence of scribblings, switching on radios, playing chess, looking out the window and reading the paper. Franco, a very uncommunicative boy spoke briefly about the
unwillingness to share. "I don't see any point in telling about myself. It's not their business, and I don't want to hear about them." Too easily, individuals would get type-cast and rejected by an inner core of the group who found it easy to talk but difficult to cope with awkward or upset feelings.

In addition to non-verbal activities as a means of escape, the group would split into sub-groups: pupils/teachers, girls/boys, blacks/whites. Individuals who failed to pair with a teacher would pair with another group member, two boys going off together to read, play chess or look out the window or two girls physically holding together, rocking or playing with each other's bangles or rings. The pairs tried to capture me to join them, and thus on behalf of the group would possess and contain what was good about me and smother what was difficult. The homosexual
pairing was a retreat from the apparent impossibility of boys and girls working together. (The teacher said later that this was not so except in this group. While accepting that the stress of the group may have provoked it, I feel equally sure that the unstructured situation revealed it.) In the main, the girls took a firm hold on the group and though complaining the boys did not co-operate, were squeezing them out and making them feel small. The boys reacted by withdrawing to a negative male identity: "I prefer to be boring than like you." They would also say the group was boring, because their attempts to bring in for discussion more subtle areas of the adult world were squashed in a flood of concrete female talk about work. It was interesting that the boys stood for reflectiveness and the girls stood for action. Their dominant activity orientation turned the potential reflectiveness of the boys to
uncooperative distancing. Confrontations about this produced slight shifts which soon relapsed.

The non-co-operation between the sexes was continually evident in the group, "The boys go together in pairs, and the girls all go round together. It's only natural". The one sex denigrated the other. When I spoke of the hopelessness of getting together for creative work, one boy said, "What do you want us to do? Go and sit on their laps?", indicating his fear (or wish) that to be close to the girls he would have to be a baby and could not relate as an equal.

One day I pointed out how the girls were putting the boys down by making a noise if the boys spoke. They were really showing the boys that what they were trying to say was of no importance, and so it did not surprise me that it was difficult for the boys to speak when they felt
so worthless to the group. Jacky shouted across to Peter, and showed him a picture he had found in a book: "Look, there's a snake swallowing a frog". I accepted this image as a statement of how he could feel eaten up and would thus disappear in the girls' group. Then the boys spoke about their job experience and were listened to.

**Attitudes To The Remedial Class**

The class assumed they had been chosen for the project because they were of the lowest academic ability. Therefore, they would be the guinea-pigs. In fact, their teachers had made the only strong bid for their inclusion and had been exceptionally accommodating to my time-table. Perhaps there was some truth in their belief, in that the other classes' academic prowess could not be compromised by the introduction of these discussions. Similarly, when a work experience
week release scheme was introduced, they felt very upset at being the first to try it. They were sceptical of the teachers' good intentions and efforts to reassure them that they were a "very special class to get this chance to have a break from school".

They felt they were far away from the rest of the school already, always kept separate. They were not brainy enough to do high status subjects like science or French and even the other remedial class seemed to get harder work than they did. They said they were really Form 5-8 (the lowest of 8 classes in the fifth form) so why did they have to be called P2 (the remedial class taught by Miss P & Mrs. P)? Their resentment was with the denial of their low level of ability by the teachers, who labelled the classes not numerically like other classes but after the teachers' initials, as if they were babies unable to move around like more
grown-up children choosing their options. They seemed to be clamouring for a statement of recognition of their limitations, but instead of hearing that they were not clever enough to do French as well as their other subjects, they were told it was because there was not a French teacher. The teachers bent over backwards to repair the damage done to the children by their isolation and labelling by the rest of the school. But the excessive protestations about their worth and goodness did not prepare the children for their experiences of humiliation at their stupidity at work, (see section on work experience).

Although they appreciated their teachers' loyalty and tremendous support, they found it hard to identify with the teachers. The teachers who had obviously succeeded academically would parade their deficiencies as if to encourage the children. Their description of how bad they were
at certain subjects or at certain holiday jobs was aimed to reassure. This self-denigration as a denial of enviable strength seemed to me to be not useful in relating to these children. A parallel can be seen here with middle-class successful teachers who parade their working class origins with a humility and sincerity that barely masks their triumph.⁶

There was not the usual flurry of exams at the ends of terms in this class. The three black girls were sitting one exam, however. Apparently the council pays for people to sit exams, unless they fail to attend. The black girls thought everyone should pay for their own exams, and for their books, as they wanted to own and keep the books. The girls filled out their exam entry forms in the group, as if to emphasise their eligibility for further education. Perhaps their insistence on payment was to support their right to education (one of the reasons their fathers had left the loved
old country to come to Britain} when they felt insecure of their intellectual status in the school and their social and racial status in England. Just after telling of their wish to own books, the girls began to swap jewellery as if they felt secure in sharing their plentiful feminine attributes, whereas they needed to keep tight hold on their diminished learning capabilities so as not to feel more impoverished in that respect.

**Preparation For Leaving School**

In the earlier phases of the group's life, there was terrific denial of the issue of leaving school: "It's too far away to think about". One of the children volunteered the idea of the school as a centre, and "when you leave school all that happens is you all go off in different directions."

The fear of loss of contact with friends was quickly masked by technological solutions like
phoning each other or posting letters. Substitute friendships with mates at work would replace lost school friends. While all this may indeed happen, the glibness of the description suggested a manic attempt to bridge the gap by keeping things the same as if nothing had been lost, and no-one faced the worry of feeling lost and alone. Attempts to reach the sadness and fear were defended against. "I feel great about it. Leave the school, leave the school. I'm sick of hearing that phrase". "You take each day as it comes. You don't think about leaving." "Leaving school is no problem at all. It's just one of the things that happens. You don't worry about it. There aren't any changes."

Later in the group, and nearer to departure date, there was more working through of the mourning. I suggested that vacations were times when a sixteen year old could imagine what it would be like to have left school. The importance
of the Christmas vacation was obliterated and mistakenly referred to as mid-term. But after Easter half-term break, there was more awareness of the concept. They had had a really boring time with nothing to do but watch TV. "The school should have arranged a trip, or a club, or games and horse-riding". Then similarly bored in the group, they watched the pop-singers on the back wall as if it were a TV screen. When this defence was pointed out as a way of watching other people's pictures instead of facing the pain of working out their own images, Yolande agreed it had been painful at half-term. "It was so cold. Maybe in summer it'll be different and we can go to the park". Later Cloda talked about the play "Under Milkwood" in which some of them had parts of people returning from the dead. A preoccupation with death and resurrection led me to say that the thoughts of death were linked to
the feelings of deadness away from school. This idealisation of school as a lively place that would be dreadfully missed was associated to the feelings for the old country of origin of the black girls in the group—where it was "sunny and there were plenty boys and so much to do you never wanted to watch TV." Then they moved to realise how awful it was to leave and not know how much you would miss people. "We are a funny crowd. When we are at school we want to be at work. But maybe when we are at work we'll want to be back at school".

The wonderful thing for them about school was that they could do different things every half hour. "Sometimes you may want to work and sometimes not, and that's all right". They may be taken on school trips and holidays. Even though the school trip regime of six hours walking was groaned at and joked about, it was also talked of
fondly, some children having kept souvenirs of the trip. At school there was always something else to learn. By Easter, they were beginning to face the sadness about the realisation that none of the jobs they might expect to have offered anything as good as school. "Everyone who leaves wants to come back".

Then there was a tendency to talk about the marvellous subsidised canteen food at various stores they had heard of or worked at. Here was an attempt to substitute for the lack of food for thought. "The food could be so much, however, that you have to turn it away, and in some places the canteen's dirty and the food slops all over the place. You might work at a place but you wouldn't eat there even if it was cheap". This seemed to be a statement about emotional needs not being met.

The leaving date seemed to be felt as a final
dead-line and attempts were made to obscure this. Some would leave at Easter and some in July. One would have thought the working through of the Easter leaving would be useful preparation for the summer leavers. Instead the event was continually lost sight of and the staggering served to blur the issue instead of focussing on it in good time. It was extremely difficult to be clear precisely who was leaving when and my efforts to get this clear led to an anxious response. Jacky asked for his bag to be passed over from on top of the radiator. He said it would be dry now and he wanted it back. When I suggested the group might think of more complicated meanings to his request, Tanya replied that it was because he wanted to have his bag over beside him so that he could get out the door quickly at the end. I said I thought that at this discussion of leaving he wanted to have himself and his possessions together in order to feel
equipped to run on to what lay ahead. He said "I plead guilty." Louis referred to his walking out of the part-time job without telling the manager and told him that if he didn't stop and face up to the idea of work he would be a beggar. His attitude in just walking out of the job was like his wish to take each school-day as it comes and to leave without thinking about it.

We heard of a boy who "didn't like the atmosphere at work" and who came back to school. This event was shrouded in mystery. It seemed strange, and, "If it happened to me it would be a dreadful defeat". It seemed to me very sad that it was so difficult to return to school. There was enthusiasm for a scheme at another school where boys were released half a day a week to go to college to learn printing, wallpapering, woodwork and bricklaying. It suggests to me that a much more flexible leaving year or two with
revolving periods at school and various forms of work or further study would be a more helpful transition.  

**Work Experience**

a) Unofficial

It was easier for the group to deal with issues of leaving by doing it gradually rather than reflecting on it, namely by seeking out after school employment at Wainwright's, a local food-store. A teacher had negotiated the opening for them, but pupils individually had the choice and responsibility of following up the opportunity and getting themselves hired. Eight of the group worked there for varying periods. Some others from the school had jobs there too. By the end of the year fifty percent of those who had started there had dropped out. Some reasons for this labour turnover will emerge in the discussion.
This sort of work experience was used constructively to experience the adult work world and the group was used to discuss difficulties. In fact the pupils were increasing the length of the leaving transition by their efforts from one day to six months, an action that I recommend the school to institutionalise. But the group also used the concrete work situations to defend against exploring the other areas of adult living beyond work. The boys (whose work record was not as reliable as the girls) complained, "There is more to life than work at Wainwright's". But fears of the talk and reactions that might ensue kept the group back on safe topics of events at work which had happened, rather than fantasies, hopes and fears. Yolande expressed this: "You can't possibly know how you feel until you've left." The teacher, at this stage in the group, was inclined to collude with this denial of inner feelings as shown in this
example:

Example: Jacky's comment that there was more to life than work at Wainwright's led the girls to talk about a film they were making at Inter-Action about attitudes at work. I pointed out that he was hinting that people had thoughts and feelings that they kept inside themselves but might like to talk and share them, but the girls had responded by going off chatting about even more that they could do, rather than talk about the things we could only think and feel about. The teachers said I had misunderstood the girls, and that they had responded by talking about something that was not work, but recreation. I asked Jacky if he felt the girls were responding to his comment or not. Jacky said, "No, I really meant thoughts and feelings inside. Everyone has them, but they don't have the guts to say them." The teachers said the children had a lot of guts to interview people about their thoughts on work before a camera, this proving their courage in the area of exploring thoughts and feelings.
b) Official

This unofficial work experience made the official work experience much less important. A new scheme was introduced at Thomaston in 1974. They were the first class to be chosen to have a week's break from school to try out some employment. The group felt rather ungrateful and said there was not much point in it now that they had real jobs. It was clear there was considerable pressure to go on the work experience week and this was experienced with some distaste. "Any employer is going to take boys on if he can get some work out of them for free, so it's stupid of Miss to feel so grateful about it and to be so disappointed if we don't take the jobs she fixes up."

In any case, children did not get the jobs they asked for and felt very let down. One boy was expecting to go to a woodwork job, but when he got there he found it was a toy factory where he
had to be a packer. He picked up a doll and said, "How am I supposed to make a joist out of that?"
Obviously he felt quite belittled by this, as well as by not getting paid, and by being sent as one of a pair. He thought the school sent them in pairs to prevent them being violent. He is not a violent boy, so perhaps he is afraid that entry to the world of joists rather than toys will unleash a lot of his aggression. In fact the pairing was intended for their mutual support. Here it was much less supportive than the collective pupils group at the food store, which at the same time was individually more gratifying since the individuals had personally arranged it and were even paid for it.

Some could not get jobs at all, and felt very left out and left behind when they had to stay at school. They would not discuss this and, as if they felt more ashamed than they could bear, they
focussed instead on a boy who couldn't go to his work experience as he had sprained his wrist (which he agreed might have been more than mere coincidence). When I asked about the work experiences each had had, I was told everyone knew already. "There was nothing. You don't learn nothing."

**Issues Arising at Work**

Nine of the group worked for varying lengths of time at Wainwright's a local food store. As long as school remained such a good place the jobs seemed destined to turn bad. The badness was projected on to the under-managers who were blamed for not meeting their needs, although over-managers were seen as benign arbiters by the girls, and as feared people, to be avoided by the boys.

For instance, Louis told of his annoyance when
he went to ask an under-manager for some milk stock and he was told to push off as it was none of his business. He said he was only asking for it for a customer. Here was an example of rejection of his responsible self, as if he was just a baby wanting milk for himself. Others suggested he should have gone to the manager, but he was afraid he would be blamed and told he was in the wrong. Normally he could stand up for himself, but in the shop he found it difficult. I think this was because he was so afraid of being rejected and being told to leave.

From the first week the main problem was located in Pepper, a bossy under-manager who "thinks he is in the Army when all he is dealing with is food" and who makes everyone feel stupid and rejected. Most of them could deal with the bossiness and would answer back that they weren't taking that from him. But they could not deal with his rejecting ultimatums such as, "If you
have a bad back you're in the wrong job, so if you don't get on with it you'll have to leave." Quite a few of them, like Pat, would reply, "All right I'll leave." Of course, they may have encountered a difficult boss, but I felt they were using him to hold their own negative feelings about the job and wishes to opt out of it.

a) Stupidity, Shame and Blame

The main problem was his making them feel stupid. Again he may have been the focus of their own feelings of stupidity. He was always saying they were a bunch of idiots and sometimes this struck them dumb so then they really felt idiotic. "Sometimes he blames us for being stupid when it was things we didn't know 'cos no-one told us, like not clocking in with your coat on: we got taken to the manager for that." He teased them about not being able to pronounce the name of a French
soup, saying if they were still at school they should be able to. Here they felt attacked for not being adult employees, and poor scholars (for whom French was a very sore point).

We worked on the way that a person, who fears he is not as clever as he might be, tries to make other people feel stupid so as to get rid of his own stupidity in them and so feel clever. Yolande agreed: "It takes a stupid one to know a stupid one". They showed that they understood by suggesting a similar example of projective identification: "a tough-guy manager may be making us feel like ghosts who can't speak because he is weak at dealing with staff." Thus they began to see with surprising rapidity what might be projected in to them. They were also more slowly able to see how they were projecting their own feeling of lack of worth into the managers' attitudes. As long as they could maintain the
manager figures as difficult and the job environment as unhelpful, then they could use all their negative feelings in complaint. This saved them from the pain of looking inside themselves at their part in the situation and from the sadness of their recognition of their own limitations. Furthermore, seeing all the badness in the job protected the school as a good place, which they could preserve and not think about. After I pointed these things out, they moved into a sad silence about leaving school and talked of how much they missed it.

They felt further belittled at work by being at everyone's beck and call. Not only managers and foremen expected them to do this and do that, but even shoppers expected them to search in the store for things that were not on the shelves. In part, they could appreciate the shoppers' requests were not unreasonable, but they hated getting
squeezed between carrying out a shopper's errand and a manager's questions as to why they had left the shelves. (This may reflect a pull between teachers' and parents' wishes for them around leaving or not leaving school and searching or not searching for a niche in the work world.)

Even after six months, they felt lost and unhelped in many areas. Jacky said, "You can't find the stuff because it isn't neat and it isn't named in the storage room—it's all a mess of hunks of meat and you can't find anything." Jacky left this job, and was later very interested to learn that the boy he used to work with got the sack for fighting. Jacky may have left rather than reach an aggressive stage of frustration. They gave the impression that no-one taught them how to do the job, but complained about the way they were doing it. There was inconsistency in standards and work methods subscribed to by different
managers for whose differences they were the butts.

Jacky clearly found it tiresome and demanding on the frozen meats section. His literal description of it gave a graphic insight into the nature of being alone on a new difficult job too, "It's awful on the fridge: it really freezes you up. You dread going down there, especially if you're on your own." But he said he left because it was a "popsy" job. "A popsy job is the kind of job you just walk out of and don't explain to the managers". I thought of "popsy" as meaning feminine, but he said it was not that: "Popsy is just crap, like when you don't get your rights". So indeed there may be an equation with women and that kind of job. He gave confirmation to this idea by explaining that girls had a different set of choices. He had the choice of just leaving or telling the managers he was leaving to go to a job that was not a popsy job: whereas
the girls had the choice of putting up with being bossed around or complain to the managers about it so that they could stay in the job.

b) Male/Female Conflict

There were many examples of male/female conflict at work. The girls said the boys at the store were not their types, although the girls were. This implied that their male classmates were not their type. There was an assumption that girls should work together at certain jobs like nursery nursing, shopshelf-stacking, telephones, while boys work together at technical things like bricklaying, woodwork and the Air Force. Jack said, "Of course, the boys go round together. Even the woodwork teacher goes round with the woodwork teacher. He won't go round with the art teacher." There was an appreciation that job choice determined personal and sexual identity
and one's circle of friends. This stereotype was operating in the store and partly accounts for the fact that more girls stayed in the job than boys.

The male/female rivalry often focussed on wages as a symbol of the measurement of their worth. The girls were getting less pay than the boys. It took some time to get into the discussion, because the girls would start arguing instead about which of them was older and got more. Finally they said it wasn't fair that the boys got more. The boys said they had got more energy and did harder work. They would not support the girls in a claim for equal pay, because they intended to take that they could get and were afraid that in supporting a rise for the girls they would lose their extra and be brought down to the girls' level.

Apparently the boys had always been paid straight by the hour, while the girls' hourly rate was lower. So the girls asked to be paid by the number of
boxes they could stack; thus if the girls worked very hard they could possibly earn the same as the boys. They regarded this as an improvement that they had negotiated.

At work the girls and boys exaggerated the male dominance of the managers. The girls would try to undercut them by teasing and confusing them. For instance they told of sending a valentine to one of the mangers and enjoyed his not knowing who had sent it. It was of Dracula carrying a heart with a dagger through it, a rather horrifying image of the murderous possessiveness of the unattainable other in male-female relations. This was regarded as a mighty joke. Provocative, disobedient behaviour from the girls created difficulties for the under-managers. Tanya had flicked water at one who told her to stop washing her hands and physically tried to pull her back to work on the trolley. She certainly felt irritated and
insulted and quite molested by his touch, which she had violently sexualised. She said he said to her; "If you were a boy I'd kick your teeth in." Obviously he felt able to cope with a male employee, but found it hard to know how to express his authority in relation to a girl like Tanya. Perhaps it was their sense of the power these girls exercised that led the managers to criticise their platform-soled shoes. They told them not to wear these shoes to work in case of having an accident with a trolley. The girls, however, were outraged at this interference with their rights to dress as they pleased, and I had the impression that the high-soled shoes were a fiercely-held symbol of their female sexuality and power. I did not learn until later that these shoes are identified mainly with black girls.

**Racial Conflict**

Throughout the year I had been looking for
evidence of racial differences in attitudes to school leaving but had found none, nor any signs of racial conflict until the end of the spring term. At the beginning of the group at the end of March a tight knot of girls were clustered centrally as usual and the boys were drifting around peripherally. The teacher got angry and asked them to spread out and share with the boys. As they spread out, the regrouping produced a scattered line of children with the whites at one end and the blacks at the other, with a sharp demarcation in the middle where Yolande, a black girl, had her back turned on the white end of the line. Louis, a Anglo-Mauritian, said it felt very hot and he took off his black coat revealing a white shirt. I interpreted the emotional heat in the room being due to the emergence of a racial split and his fear that he might become the butt of the racial conflict. My
remarks were obliterated and only later with difficulty were they heard by the white children but the black children wanted to scream rather than hear and see this painful issue, while Andrew, a white boy, lay down to sleep on top of two desks.

I was struck by the ill-feeling in the group, and by the isolation and sadness of individuals. I likened the scattered class to the scatter that would occur when they left school as their centre and suggested they were experiencing some of these feelings now. They responded angrily and said it was all the teacher's fault for asking them to move. Of course, the school in a more general sense was asking them to scatter, by suggesting work experience as preparation for leaving.

The teacher began to try to help the group to face the racial issue by using herself as a focus for the discussion since she was a white Jew married
to a black man. This did nothing to facilitate the discussion. Finally Louis, stood up and shouted, "Have you lost your tongues or something. Why won't you say it when she's here: you always say afterwards that you should have said things." His attempt at leadership was squashed. The white boys (one of whom had been asleep) said they'd rather be boring than like Louis and sat up at the back flexing their muscles as if to prove they could be powerful in some areas if not in the group. And the girls felt sad that we were not getting very far.

No hint of racial conflict could be detected in ensuing weeks, which may have been due to my inexperience of cultural conflicts and their denial, and to a British tendency to deny such conflict. Just after this group and before the next one to be described, I visited an inner city school in Washington D.C. in the United States where I felt unmistakably confronted by the racial issue. This
may have opened me to its emergence in the group.

For the last meeting of the group, the teachers were absent. The racial issue had erupted and was already causing a row when I arrived. Everyone was picking on Louis for changing his attitudes. "You are the same colour as us. Just remember that. You seem to think you are white half the time." "I can't stand the way you change about, Louis. One day you call me a black bastard and the next day you call me black and beautiful." His inconsistency led to very marked inconsistency in the response of the black girls. They wanted him to stop denigrating black girls as he did by saying they copied white girls and wanted to borrow money from boys: but they would not let him enjoy playing Black music because he was not identifying totally as black and therefore was not supposed to like it. The ambivalence about race
and relationships was acted out in relation to Louis who from his background of "white mum, black father and black step-mother" brought together inharmoniously the black and white parts of himself, and the wholly black and wholly white children components of the group.

The fact that Louis had two mums, one white and one black aroused considerable interest. There was an equally marked tendency to deflect from it on to talking competitively about who got the longest holidays in the furthest country of origin. I felt that all of them felt very far away from the lands where they felt so happy and then in England felt split by a great distance from parts of themselves that they longed to find. Instead of sharing the hurt about this, they were fighting about who was most hurt to keep the hurt away. This interpretation succeeded only in aggravating the fighting, culminating when Yolande knelt upon
the teacher's desk and shouted, arms akimbo, at Louis that he must stop blaming the blacks. At this point all the black girls were blaming Louis. My point that the prejudice described as occurring in the work world or in society in general was happening now in the group was completely denied. They insisted they all got along well in the class, but continued to shout at each other.

Remembering that this was my last meeting with the group, I felt it was important to say good-bye in a final way and to acknowledge my feelings about it as a model for their leaving school. None of my remarks were heard. It occurred to me that the racial issue was being used to contain the fight among themselves and to protect me from their anger at being left by me, a successful white. This must have been the hurt that the interpretation about their fighting had failed to touch, throwing them back to the defence of fighting. This defence
deflected anxiety about their own black and white feelings of sadness or relief at the end of the group and the coming separation from school into an angry black or white defence channel, made more necessary by and also permitted by the absence of their teachers. A white boy walked out before the end of the class (as I was being felt to do) and no-one said good-bye to me.

I felt that I might be being punished for finishing the group before the end of their term and thus avoiding being with them during that painful period of transition. I had discussed it with them and prepared them for it but I was not doing it with them. I experienced the pain and abandonment of mutual withdrawal from an imagined greater pain of separation in a state of unreadiness. This might not have been different had I ended at the end of their school term, like the teachers do since that still leaves the youngsters
unsupported except by their families in the transition.

The teachers were upset to learn that the group had not said good-bye (neither had they, as they were not present to support the group to terminate.) They dealt with this by responding to my hurt and reassuring me the group had been a good thing. Here was evidence of their feelings about losing their pupils and anxieties about the value of their work, in that the stimulation of these may well have been what they wished to avoid by not being present at the last meeting of the group. In another sense, this is analogous to their prompt departure on holiday after school has closed and pupils have left. It suggests that the research team might carry the group on after the end of term. This, however, may be as much a denial of the ending as was the finishing "early" on my part, and the teachers' absence on my last day.
Summary of Findings and Implications

Partly because of the contrast between my style and the gratifying style of the teacher, pupils' opinion of the group was often so negative that I began to wonder if they could learn there. In addition to those who found it boring, others could not see the point of the discussions. They did seem to benefit in their ability to articulate feeling issues and from time to time could be helped not to shut out awareness of loss and mourning and to share the anxieties about the work world.

Their boredom was clearly a defence against the anxiety of the task, but perhaps the anxiety about the transition from school to work is too great to be addressed directly. This suggests that the group task could be stated as the working for understanding of themselves as young adults in present society. The research ear could then select information about school-leaving and note how its
emergence related to other developmental issues.

The project might also attend to the separation anxiety by allocating a research team who could start the pupils group in the middle of the last school year and continue through the period of getting started in a job. The knowledge that this would occur might be expected to alter the group and school ways of managing the separation. This recommendation is consistent with Scharff and Hill's¹⁰ proposal for a bridging institution.

The teachers seemed to feel the pupils had gained greatly and cited their making of the film "People At Work" under the direction of Inter-Action staff. The pupils attended this creative centre in school time where, despite wishes to make a James Bond movie, they produced a film on people at work. The teachers marvelled at the expert way the pupils interviewed their subjects
before the camera, attributing this skill to the work of the group.

Pupils, however, dismissed the film (as they did the group) as an activity they did not care about. I pointed out that they had chosen to interview 'top' people (including a member of Parliament), perhaps because of a wish to have articulate statements rather than hesitant, developing ideas like their own in the group. I did not see the film, and it might be useful for the research project to view it, partly to learn more about the pupils' attitudes and partly to see if it might be an evaluative tool to review the helpfulness of the group. Furthermore, this might possibly be a useful teaching film which the project might want to borrow for use with school leavers' discussion groups.

Although continually positive about the group,
the senior teacher Miss P more or less stopped attending. The other teacher Mrs. P seemed to move away from a tendency to look only at the obvious meaning of statements and got closer to hidden feelings. I cannot tell whether shifts in approach made in the group transferred to her teaching or tutoring situation. I recommend that it would be more useful to include a formally arranged review time with the teachers to increase the value of the intervention for the teacher and to evaluate its effect with her. This would allow us to gather information about and help with the continuing discussions that were said to occur in the classroom during the week when I was not there. I recommend the inclusion of the teacher in some groups as a way of helping teachers to contain the separation anxiety and help pupils with the task of leaving. I also recommend that some pupil groups be met
without the teacher so as to afford a different situation for study and comparison of effect.

What I learnt from the work has been presented here. I feel I learnt what I wanted to know about attitudes to the transition from school to work. It has to be remembered that my learning experience was confined to this remedial group of school-leavers. It seems likely that some of the findings are specific to them and their situation, while others may refer to brighter children equally or to some degree. In summary, the group had difficulty coping with the unstructured group style, with frustration of wishes for leadership and pairing with a teacher, with discussion of feeling issues, with abstracting from the discussion to form general themes and with formulating life plans. The preferred use of the group was for discussion of concrete problems at work. It may be that the project's most helpful contribution to this
group of children would be in providing help with specific, work relationship problems during work experience, because of the problem in reflecting about abstract issues or anticipated feeling states.

I admit that pupils might have talked more freely if the teachers had been absent, but then I would have lost the opportunity to observe their relationship to the teachers and to me in comparison. In particular, I saw their dependence on the leadership of the authoritative teacher whose initiative and drive was captured during pairing with her, but the qualities of initiative and drive were not thereby incorporated as an individual pupil ability persisting after the pairing.

I do not wish to argue for or against a particular style of leadership or seating, either the haphazard classroom style or the group circle of clinical settings, since either one has its
advantages and disadvantages. I do recommend that the project worker select a style and stick to it, and then work on understanding its effects and its relation to the material, the school context, and the imagined work context.

I was continually dismayed to note how boys and girls could not collaborate on the task. I recommend the presence of a mixed sex pair (female teacher and male researcher, or vice versa or male and female research pair) to give the boys a model. Another suggestion would be to take a mixed sex and mixed age group of: girls about 15 and boys of 16 from the year above.\textsuperscript{11} This would reflect the choice that is made socially and sexually at school and later in work.

The problem between the black and white groups was difficult to address. If one of the research and teacher team could be black, at least
for one of the pupil groups in the project, this would offer a mixed race group lender pairing which could be the focus for the exploration of racial issues. The project could learn whether this was more helpful than in other pupil groups led by white workers.

To the school I would recommend some changes in the light of the research. The change of topic and sometimes scene afforded every half hour by the bell signalling the end of the period is not good preparation for the sustained repetitiveness at work. Longer periods of work on the same subject could be substituted. Furthermore these longer periods might include time to be spent at a place of work with a local employer.

Work experience spread over the year prior to leaving and allowing the pupil the chance to go to
an assortment of work places would be more effective than a one week placement. It would be better if this work could be paid for, too. Back at school, the school (using teachers or project workers) could run groups to review the work experience. A model for this has been suggested by the present pupil group and its discussion of issues at Wainwright's. The project might run groups at the place of work with foreman and work colleagues present, if a number of pupils were to go to one particular place. Indeed Wainwright's might find this useful to prevent labour turnover and to improve the skills of under-managers.

I would also want to recommend that the school consider the implications of Remedial class labelling. In fact I understand that there will be no remedial class grouping when the mixed ability teaching policy comes into effect fairly soon. In
addition to mixed ability, perhaps a mixed age group could be used for teaching about developmental issues. Indeed the older members of the group could be ex-pupils now at work.

The two teachers from the pupils group were also attending the tutor group which Marion Davis and I worked with around issues of counselling and the school as a caring institution. Two teachers from the pupils group were also attending. There they learnt something of the feelings their pupils would experience in the pupils group and learnt from their own experience of the very group phenomena can reflect current preoccupations in the material. I recommend that the project should run such a tutor group to prepare teachers who are to be included in pupils groups. It might become a situation where teachers from a few schools met together. Later the group might review the pupils group as well as
discuss its own concerns with counselling and the school.

Although it is not strictly within my remit here to refer to the tutors group which Marion Davis and I met with, I need to refer to it as part of the context of the school and project in which the pupils group was set. I do feel the opportunity to discuss concerns and ideas about counselling, teaching, their roles and responsibilities and their relation to school and community was important for establishing a core of teachers interested in supporting the aims of the project, which included the pupils group. For this reason (as well as others which will be elaborated in the paper by Savege & Davis about the tutors group) I recommend that the project continues to meet with a group of tutors like this, as well as with the group of teachers from pupil groups that I have suggested.
It has to be remembered that these findings and recommendations apply to the remedial group of school-leavers. I expect that these are applicable to greater or lesser degree to other groups of school-leavers of varying abilities. The extent of this consistency can be gauged by comparison of these results with those of other project teams working with different groups of more intelligent children. All the recommendations made here should be regarded as tentative, since they are made prior to a synthesis of the other project team findings.

It is essential that the project continues its program of consultation on curriculum design to allow the discussion of issues arising in the pupils' and tutors' groups to influence planning for policy change.
Notes

1 Scharff and Hill 1974, Between Two Worlds.


3 Davis & Savege. Working Note on Issues Arising in the Tutor Group

4 The names of the school teachers and pupils have been disguised for reasons of confidentiality.

5 I was encouraged in this choice by Isca Wittenberg.

6 Davis & Savege 1974, Working Note on Tutors' Group

7 Scharff & Hill, 1974, Between Two Worlds. This idea has been elaborated as a recommended task for a bridging institution to contain a wide transition period from school to work.

8 The name of the store has been changed for reasons of confidentiality.

9 Inter-Action. A neighbourhood creative centre offering film making and drama to engage young people in groups for the development of their personal growth and social responsibility.


11 Discussion with Dugmore Hunter led me to think of this.
CHAPTER 6

The Tutors' Pastoral Care Group at Thomaston

Jill Savege Scharff

Introduction

Thomaston School\textsuperscript{1} is a comprehensive school for 1200 children of mixed social backgrounds and widely varying abilities. The school was one of the London schools involved in a research project of the Tavistock Institute begun in 1972 by D. E. Scharff. His focus was on the experience of the school-leavers' transition from school to work, an interest which developed out of earlier work by J. M. M. Hill. In addition to meeting with groups of school leavers, D. E. Scharff and his research
colleague Marion Davis met with school teachers and headmasters on two or three occasions to gain further information and report back their findings and their implications. Out of this preliminary study, D. E. Scharff developed a proposal for extending the research project in the schools to include regular work with groups of tutors and groups of senior teachers with responsibility for curriculum design, as well as the already established groups of school-leavers. The task of such a research project would be to provide an evolving pilot institution for the facilitation and study of the transfer from school to work.

In 1973 the proposed project was to be partially developed in the three schools with some funding from the Inner London Education Authority. The Adolescent Department of the Tavistock Clinic was interested in maintaining a link with this part of the research activities of the
Tavistock Institute and agreed to allocate time out of the psychiatric resources to allow me to participate. My involvement had to be restricted to only Thomaston School where I was involved in two situations;

1. A group of remedial class school-leavers met with me to discuss issues around the transition from school to work.³
2. A group of tutors met with Marion Davis and me to discuss the problems of their pastoral work in school.

This paper discusses issues arising in the pastoral care consultation group for tutors. The method of work is discussed. Findings are summarized and recommendations made. It should be remembered that these are tentative, being based only on this limited area of research. It is hoped that they will contribute, along with the research findings from workers engaged with pupils, tutors and curriculum designers in this and
other schools, to a composite picture from which a hard set of recommendations may emerge. Although the paper is written by J. Savege; the findings were jointly arrived at by myself and M. Davis during our research discussion. As the author, however, I take responsibility for views expressed.

The Group

The pastoral care consultation group was offered to all Thomaston school teachers with pastoral responsibilities. Thirteen such teachers volunteered to attend after school 4:15 to 5:15 p.m. once a week. This frequency could not be maintained because of staff association meetings and other commitments which coincided with our meeting. Allowing for holidays and other meetings, the group met on seventeen occasions during the school year 1973-74. Its meeting place
was the heads of houses room also called the "home" room, a quiet, small comfortable office liable to occasional interruptions by phone or pupil reporting at the door. There were two large desks pushed together as a central table around which the group met. There was a choice of high and low chairs.

The group was attended regularly by most of the same group of thirteen teachers representing a variety of pastoral responsibilities and roles, and each with a continuing subject teaching commitment except the senior housemaster. There were two first year form teachers, the head teacher of the first year, five tutor group teachers, three house-masters, and two house-mistresses. Of these teachers, six worked in the remedial department. (Two of them also met with Jill Savege in the school-leaving pupils group, while another also met with Marion Davis in the
curriculum consultation meeting held with John Hill at the school.) One man left the group at the 8th meeting as it was less important than his other work demands, and one woman left at the 15th meeting because of domestic demands.

To understand their roles we had to establish the pastoral care structure of the school. The first year is a transitional year between junior and secondary school and functions somewhat autonomously. The first year has its own Head. The children remain for all activities in the same form with their own form teacher. In the second year pupils are allocated to tutor groups of about twenty five children of mixed age and ability. Families are kept together in the same tutor group and the pupil remains throughout his senior school life in the same tutor group with the same tutor group teacher. This group meets for half an hour weekly to deal with any pupil problems. In
addition children are allocated to one of four houses each with its own housemaster and housemistress. The houses are large groups of cross-age mixed ability children and teachers who belong to that house for their time at school. Houses minimise the enormity and impersonality of the large school and offer a sense of continuity and belonging to their members.

The group was not attended by the school counsellor who was seriously ill. His function is to make liaison with outside agencies concerned with children, and to talk with specially problematic children at greater length particularly at the child's own request. His absence seriously reduces our picture of the care system in the school, but does not diminish our understanding of the tutors' role in the care system.

We introduced ourselves as consultants to the
pastoral care group and research workers on the Tavistock Institute schools research project. We stated our backgrounds: Marion Davis, a research worker from the Tavistock Institute has a background in sociology, class teaching and individual tutoring: Jill Savege, a clinical psychiatrist from the Adolescent Department of the Tavistock Clinic has a background in individual and group therapy and consultation to paraprofessional mental health workers. The project could not afford a research secretary to join us, so we explained that one of us would take notes one week and the other would take notes the next, although both would participate actively and share time-keeping responsibility each week.

The Tasks

Our research task was stated as:

To learn from discussion with teachers who have pastoral responsibilities about pastoral
care in this school.

We wanted to learn about the types of problems such teachers were faced with: both the kinds of difficulties shown by the children and the teacher's difficulties in understanding and coping with these. We wanted to learn about the complexities and conflicts of their roles in the pastoral care system and in the school. Thus we hoped to build up a total picture of the caring institution of the school. While learning about these issues we would also be concerned to offer help with understanding the situations described and integrating each of these experiences with the total context of the school. We would help the group to work together for this understanding and to plan together for the development of pastoral care in the school. We would observe how the teacher used our interventions and hoped to draw conclusions from this on how to offer pastoral care
consultation.

Teachers were asked what they expected to get out of the group. They wanted to discuss counselling. Some addressed the issue in the abstract. "What is counselling? How is it done?" Others wanted to discuss the particular problems brought to them by children and hoped to get our advice. Lucy wanted to learn how we (Marion and Jill) counselled children and what things had "a positive effect". Arthur pointed out that teachers were in a different position from therapists in that they were having to counsel for disciplinary problems, and even when the problem was not disciplinary the tutor was still the authority disciplinarian figure. (This dilemma was to emerge as a major theme). James was interested in discussing his work problems arising from his job to do with relations between children and staff at all levels, which he later described as his role in
"the parallelogram of forces". Margaret was interested in practising group techniques and examining their own relationships in the group.

Our research task was acceptable to them, and what they wanted from our intervention was acceptable to us and consistent with the consultative aspect of our research. The group task could be summarized. By mutual agreement then,

The group task: To examine issues of pastoral care in this school and to develop personal skill and group ability to offer such care and plan for its provision.

Subsumed in this task, is the discussion of individual children and their families, the tutor's response to them, the tutors' work with their tutor groups, the tutors' relations to subject teachers, tutors' relations with each other and their group impact on pastoral care issues, the pastoral care system in the school and its relation to the
community.

The task has a multi-focal orientation, and indeed allowed free-ranging discussion. The research team became concerned that this multi-focal orientation, would diffuse the research focus and our ability to abstract research findings, (usually at times when the group was feeling confused and scattered). We reviewed our interpretation of the task and agreed that the understanding and management of complexity was the specific focus rather than a dispersion of it. We focussed on the group's understanding of the total experience of the school as a caring institution with an inter-relating set of individual roles and sub-groups. As time went on we became more aware of the group's wish to compartmentalise problems to avoid the pain of seeing the totality and bearing its complexity. Simultaneously we became more aware of the
need to relate problems constantly to other problems and to their context. To hold the total picture in the mind became the essence of our intervention, as we helped the group to place the figure of the individual pupil or teacher or classroom or parent problem in the ground of the "parallelogram of forces" of relationships in the school. It is important to realize that our intention to deal with the management of complexity and to integrate the issues in our understanding developed from a preference into an insistence on the holistic approach, because of our growing experience with the group. Thus although the research task and method did not change, the emphasis was reinforced by the material being researched. The statement of the research task and method has become clearer as the project has progressed.
Method

The research team had previously worked together in a group relations conference organized by the Tavistock Institute. We became interested in using the examination of group dynamics to understand the behaviour of that conference as an institution. We were then interested in applying this approach to the task of our pastoral care consultation research project group.

It was our hypothesis that the group would have difficulty in sticking to the task and that these difficulties would reflect concerns about the task, the leadership, the relations between individuals in the group, the content of the discussion and hidden agendas. Furthermore, we held the view that these difficulties would reflect difficulties experienced in the role of tutor in the pastoral care system in the school. Thus we worked with the difficulties in sticking to the task and facing the issues, not only to facilitate the discussion by
dealing with the resistance, but also to study that resistance as a legitimate area of research. We expected the study of the difficulty in the group to throw light on the difficulties of the school as an institution. We did indeed find that phenomena in the group reflected issues for the tutors in the school, and we could use our examination of these phenomena to understand the material being discussed and to relate this to issues in the school.

Our hypothesis that we could usefully view the tutors group as a microcosm of the school was made for the purpose of helping the group to experience what they represented for the institution and to experience in the group itself the material being discussed concerning other individuals and groups. We did not imply that the tutors group is the school, and our experience of the tutors group cannot be reported as if it were an experience of the total school. Nonetheless, our
experience of the school as related in the thoughts, feeling and behaviour of members of the tutors group and in the dynamics of that group will be described as findings about the school as an institution. This can then be compared and correlated with the experience of the other pupils' and curriculum design groups to build up a comprehensive picture of the school as a caring institution.

Two examples can illustrate the method outlined above.

**Example 1.**

We had used the first meeting to introduce ourselves and the project and to find out the names, subjects and roles of the teachers present. We had agreed on the task and had explained our style as consultants to facilitate the group learning rather than as didactic teachers. We agreed a
meeting time and place.

At the second meeting a lot of loud cross conversation persisted after the agreed starting time, and quite a few tutors were late. Marion said she felt the group was like a classroom where the teachers were wondering whether to begin without the stragglers. Apologies and explanations for lateness were given. There had been a mysterious message to the effect that the group was supposed to start 15 minutes earlier than agreed. Discrete conversation persisted: two teachers talking about a disagreement with a senior teacher, two teachers asking Marion to explain about the time, one teacher asking Jill if she had had a good day.

Jill clarified the agreed time the meeting was supposed to start and described the cross conversation, the lateness and the idea that the
group should have started earlier as the features of the beginning, indicating that there were mixed feelings of eagerness and reluctance in engaging in the task. She felt the group was waiting for her to begin as if they were a class waiting for teacher, rather than a group of competent tutors who knew what was to be the work of the group and could discuss the eagerness and the reluctance. Lucy protested that as Jill was supposed to be leading the group naturally she was waiting for her to indicate that the meeting had started. She supposed, however, that if this was a democracy anyone should be able to, but furthermore they were waiting for the others in the democracy to arrive. She seemed to have moved from an expression of protest at her dependency needs not being met by authority to a rapid acceptance of the non-hierarchical structure in the group.

James and Arthur, two senior men, arrived.
Almost unanimously, the rest of the group joked: "Now James has arrived we can begin". Jill pointed to this joke as confirmation of the tendency to wait for the teacher. This possibility was strongly denied "It was just a joke". Lucy seemed less defensive and said she knew that jokes were supposed to arise from feelings and could be very important. Andrea said "well, James, now you're here, I'd like to bring up the question of that boy I wanted to mention last week when I was too scared to, so I asked you if it would be alright to discuss it this week." James replied that he remembered saying it would be in order and gestured to her to continue.

There followed a discussion of the problem of how a female teacher like Andrea responds to an adolescent boy's expression of sexual curiosity in touching her, and what might be leading the boy to behave this way. The focus however, was on
Andrea's anger at being unsupported by James, to whom she had taken her problem, a confrontation in which she was well supported by the other female teachers. When it was pointed out that they were using the group to confront the more senior teacher about his use of authority, they denied it vehemently and said that this could not be so because Andrea had asked his permission. This indicates that indeed the issue of dependency on a senior teacher was current. Confrontation of James was a way out of facing the pain of the situation and the difficulty of talking about and working with sexual anxiety, just as the waiting for Jill and Marion was a dependent defence against not knowing how to (or whether to) get involved in the task.

We pointed out that this fear of being able to share these difficulties lay behind the need to confront James. There followed a further
confrontation between another female teacher and the next most senior roan. The interpretation had to be made again, and finally the group spoke of how difficult it was to reveal weakness because promotion depended on keeping things under control by keeping classroom difficulties hidden and locked with the teacher inside the classroom. The group here experienced the difficulty of sharing and the defence of not sharing the problem until it became uncontrollable and then seemed to be outside the teacher and something to be taken to the next up the hierarchy who could then be criticized for his failure. This reflects the way one school handles emotional problems.

Example 2.

Margaret and Lucy began the session by saying they felt disintegrated due to looking at their own feelings last week. This week they wanted to talk
about counselling or children instead and hoped especially to find a positive note to end on, although Lucy simultaneously felt she could not understand counselling without understanding the interpersonal relations in the group of counsellors. There was guilt about getting rid of bad feelings in the group and hurting people. James wanted people to forget all this from last week and launch forward into an intellectual discussion on counselling. We pointed out the wish to resolve differences by ignoring them or seeing them only in the children or losing them in intellectual pursuits and showed how there was a wish to deny feelings and consequences of the previous meeting's work. This was analogous to situations in counselling when reverberations from previous week's work is part of the material and when counsellors need to be able to endure as much suffering as the child if they are to be able to
help.

Arthur (who had spoken of how he had to push teachers to do bus duty) said it did not matter if a bully felt bad after a session since it could help him in future. He wanted to explore the counselling of the bully, but James led the group into another intellectual discussion on directiveness or non-directiveness in counselling. Arthur again mentioned the bully who does not see that he has a problem. We pointed out that there was a feeling of being bullied in the group by Arthur who wanted to make them discuss bullying and by James who was telling them what to do and was dismissing discussion of feelings. At the same time the group was leaving it to James to express this resistance and thus was colluding with his bullying them. We suggested this dynamic could help the group to understand the bully and the bullied and think of ways of coping.
The group agreed to discuss bullying but became very coy about naming the children in question or describing a single incident, although various remedies were suggested. The anonymity and vagueness suggested that the group was wanting to see bullying only in relation to these children and yet they could not name the children since the bullying actually was current in the group and difficult to name there. Then Michael said how annoyed he was that only in the last ten minutes and with only five to go, had we got on to a firm topic and the rest was a waste of time. We pointed out that in saying this he was criticising Jill and Marion for not being more directive in leading the group, yet in making his comment he was himself directing the group away from its applauded focus on bullying. We tried to show that directiveness itself can be a form of bullying and can be enjoyed just as victims will get bullied for
their own reasons. We said we felt the non-directiveness in the group was a model for the counselling situation where one has to be open to the difficult feelings and motivations that could be present in the child's inner world, in contrast to the teaching situation where a lesson has to be prepared and delivered, and involves the teacher in a change of role. At the same time as the group had leaders who were non-directive about topic nonetheless these leaders were directive about getting on with the task of exploring the issues, just as the counsellor is. Furthermore the group allowed the expression of different interests tending to pull the group in different directions, just as a school was full of teachers of different interests. This complexity and conflict had to be worked with rather than ignored or bullied out of the way.
What Is Counselling?

This question was a continued concern. It would be returned to in the abstract at times when the emotional work in the group was difficult. This suggests that a teacher thinks of referring the child to a counsellor at such difficult points in their relationship. In the group, apparent attention to the subject of "counselling" arose at such times, much as the school had decided to develop "counselling" as if it were another subject. This response is both constructive and evasive. In the group we had to work with the tendency to compartmentalize counselling and to help teachers see that counselling functions could be a part of every teacher's role although not a designated responsibility for all.

In the beginning, discussion was characterised by naive, anxious questioning. "What is counselling? Is it giving advice or offering you extra experience?" "Is it listening while the child
talks?" "Counselling is helping people to live in the circumstances they find themselves in". "We must decide what we mean. Is it to do with helping solve children's personal problems or is it educational or vocational counselling?" And later "Is it directive counselling when you take the child in, listen to him, and repeat it back as a way of interpreting and then you direct him as to how to go in future?" The tutors wanted to get agreement on what counselling was so that a child would get consistency from teacher to teacher. Here was a magical attempt to become competent in counselling, to deal with staff differences and pupils exploiting the splits by just deciding on a definition. James appreciated the influence of the teacher's own moods but felt they should be eliminated in order to reach a decision. Ingrid wanted help to conceal the fact that "she was boiling inside," as if she agreed that feelings were
there but were of no value in her work.

There was concern about time and space boundaries of the split of counselling. "Is it twenty minutes alone in a room with a child, or could it be ten minutes in the corridor?" Although Lucy met with her own group of 25 children for half an hour per week, she felt that the 5-10 difficult ones had to be counselled individually at other times, which meant removing them from classes at times when she could be free. Finally she decided she needed to see a child for ½ hour a week for 6-8 weeks, but this was not time-tabled for. Only 2 teachers had special time for counselling: each had 35 minutes per week.

"Is it counselling if the child has been sent to you for doing something wrong?" Tutors were troubled by the interference in their counselling role by their required disciplinary functions (see
Teacher/Tutor conflict). There was a tendency to feel that counselling was only any good if the child came voluntarily. Furthermore counselling was seen as giving something to the child (like advice, sympathy, reformulation of problem and goal) rather than requiring some responsibility on the child's part for the developing relationship which seems to us to be the gift which is mutually given and received.

We felt that constraints of time were a real issue whereby the school limited the effectiveness of the pastoral care system, and yet the attitude of "getting it out" rather than "working it through" suggested that tutors might not feel trained to explore difficulties over a longer time. The tendency to polarise issues, as if counselling were only this or that, was a common defense against involvement in differences and conflicts which are of the essence of counselling. There was a wish to
seek the perfect model and to borrow this from individual psychotherapy without time and resources to implement it rather than to develop something appropriate to the school.

Perhaps the most striking obstacle to effectiveness was the mechanism of denial of hidden meaning. Tutors were most inclined to see clearly only the obvious and to react violently and mockingly against interpretations pointing to inner needs, fears and feelings being conveyed within a piece of behaviour. Nat said "We don't have time to go beyond face value." Much later Andy ventured to ask "could you have many interpretations of a situation?" The fear was that going beyond the straight forward single view would call into question the assumption that the teacher is always right. They were afraid that the more the teacher saw the more he would have to refer to psychologists, not only children but staff
as well, and that seeing difficulty would mean chaos and loss of control and consequent non-promotion. It also occurred to us that seeing the needs of all the children in a class would be incredibly stressful for a teacher.

It occurs to us that teachers are concerned to teach and to make sure that the whole class "sees", for instance using a lot of visual material including the blackboard. Understanding seems to involve having seen the answer rather than knowing by seeing what is involved on a number of levels. To help teachers give up this attachment to superficial clarity was a difficult part of our task. They had to be taught by example in the group to see the signs of a relationship in action so that they could describe interactions in the group for discussion. They had to give up a cross-questioning manner of eliciting information, and the premature over simplified definition of what
was being communicated. This also meant that they had to give up the attitude that their job was to give students the answer, while complexity was for "the experts". Instead, we tried to help them value the process of the search for complexity.

After five sessions, we began to hear examples of counselling work done in the English class or the Spanish class, and particularly in the small remedial classes. It had to do with not preparing a talk, but responding to thoughts and feelings in the class. Another example was given of dealing with a situation in the library when a group of kids were teasing a Pakistani boy. The teacher got them all together and had a discussion about "Paki-bashing", focusing on how all parties might feel.

There was much guilt about discussing problems of children. "If some kid pours out his heart to you he wouldn't be all that happy to think
it was being discussed here," said Michael. Andy thought it was arrogant to discuss other people's problems and feared it would get back to them. Sandra said professional confidentiality meant that what a kid told her was secret. Tutors seemed to be heavily identified with the adolescents' attitudes to their inner worries, and then, like the adolescents, were unable to discuss these worries with their peers.

There seemed to be no ethic of shared professional responsibility for the children and the pastoral task. The need to keep things secret had to do with fears of revealing incompetence and receiving criticism. It may have reflected a wish to keep children out of the group and have the group for themselves, while keeping individual children for their individual selves too. The individual encounters were over-valued and kept very precious, perhaps in contrast to the difficulty of
relating to 25 children in the tutor group. The attitude of non-revelation and secrecy implied some shame about things being told to them so that they needed to be kept hidden, an attitude which must also have been communicated to the confiding (or more probably withholding) child. At the point where this was being discussed anxiety about betrayal and being found out focussed on our research note-taking. Tutors like Laura take notes in counselling sessions too, but mainly to control the possibility of misperception rather than to be aware of differences between tutor and pupil in perceiving what was going on in an interview and to work with the fantasy and reality aspects of this difference.

The counselling relationship involves the tutor in work with positive and negative feelings. Our impression was that teachers tended to repress, ignore or punish the negative feelings so as to
teach within a maintained positive transference. In the group they wanted to "end on a positive note." They had to be helped to realise that negativity and anger did not have to be got rid of as a bad thing, but could be worked with.

Similarly we tried to show that loss was a necessary part of a counselling relationship that had to end, just as school days end. We were dismayed by the force of the manic denial of feelings of loss when the group was ending and we were leaving. The tutors reacted with a terrific effort to work without us and keep the group going next year, maybe even teaching others as they had been taught by us. Counselling might well include a planned program run by the tutors for helping pupils and teachers to face the mourning of leaving school, but the tutors' own mourning has been imperfectly dealt with because some of these tutors did not have to leave school.
permanently but got back in when there did not seem to be anything else to do.² For others it was clearly a considered vocational choice.

Arthur spoke with some misgivings for the part of the group that might want to use the group to "get rid of" negative feelings and thus be "freed up" for counselling. An attitude of needing to evacuate problems emerged, and we suspect that the school's attitude is to evacuate the problem from classroom to tutor and that counselling is at some level seen as having to do with helping the child to evacuate problems. Lucy had a different view of how the group might help her with her feelings. "You get your own neurotic difficulties worked out first." Others felt that they could not counsel children unless they understood their own relationships and developed trust as a group. "Teachers' problems have everything to do with counselling" Their wish to work on their own
relationships tended to exclude discussion of children as if they felt very competitive with the needy children, while other tutors denied their feeling needs the gratification of expression in the group. It is equally possible that those who wanted rid of feelings felt very badly about them. Unfortunately interpretations about this did not prevent Arthur from leaving the group after one term. In his departure he represented the "getting rid of" a part of the group that was resistant to the working on feeling issues and tutors' relationships as they might affect the counselling task. In going, he thus "freed" up the group to focus on tutors' relationships without having to cope with their more conflicted relationship to him and his views. The group evacuated him as their problem, but denied this interpretation.

By the end of the Spring term, sufficient trust had developed to address the task adequately; for
instance, in Frances's presentation of her reaction to a boy and his rudeness, the group included discussion of the family situation, the implications of his good older brother pupil, and the reason for Frances's sensitivity to personal verbal abuse. Laura remarked to Frances, "for every child who thinks you are a cow there is another teacher who is adored". The co-operative discussion in the group was evidence of a new willingness to acknowledge splits of good and awful children and nice and nasty teachers while bringing together these experiences into an integrated totality.

"Counselling has to do with change. Have you changed?" asked Lucy. Quite a few responses citing improved understanding or better relationships were given (see Evaluation). One teacher wanted only a Yes or No answer "Had skills increased or not?" There was great difficulty in itemising what had been learnt. To overcome
this, there was a dependent wish to see our report, as if that contained the learning, rather than that the ongoing group work was both the learning and the practising of counselling skills.

There was at first no awareness of the tutor's function as counsellor to the school. The tutor heard problems from severely distressed pupils which indicated stressful parts of the school life for themselves and for others. The tutor was in a unique and burdensome position of having knowledge which was largely kept secret. It seemed to us that this was because of the pain of really knowing what was wrong with the school as a caring institution and facing the challenge of planning for change. In the Summer term Lucy expressed a fantasy of having a counselling centre in the school that would monitor the problems discussed and give feedback to the heads and educate school colleagues in the need for change.
She seemed staggered when it was pointed out that the tutors' meeting is such a place, but that she and others had not begun to use it as such. Arthur had the thought that they should be counselling the other teachers, not the pupils, but he diminished the idea by his pejorative, sarcastic tone. James asked the group to consider how they could use what they had learnt in the group to make the school staff meetings more effective; for instance, he felt he had been letting things get passed there just as he let things happen in the group. Despite misgivings about the possibility of flattening the hierarchy, Margaret felt it might be possible to risk interpreting a hidden agenda that was getting in the way of work at staff meetings. Thus by the Summer term, members of the group had begun to think of themselves as a group with responsibility to the school for change, and were beginning to suggest tactics, although they did not
get to the stage of formulating a strategy.

**Teacher/Tutor Role Conflict**

Tutors referred to the difficulty of behaving as the teacher in authority while teaching class and then as the permissive tutor while counselling. They felt that children could not really tell them things because of the carry over of their disciplinarian image, operating both at a fantasy and reality level. Their image of teaching was of their talking while the class listened, while that of counselling was of their listening while the child talked. There was some pressure to keep these two modes separate, and to feel role confusion if the stereotypes blurred.

The difficulty which they stated as a problem in functioning in two different roles could be restated as a problem in integrating two possible ways of functioning within one person. Their
choice of the tutor position indicates that they felt capable of both styles, but their conflict indicates that they had not brought these two parts of the self together in action in both teaching and counselling situations. This dilemma was also expressed in terms of a conflict between inside and outside, where "outside person" referred to the person in the role and "inside person" referred to the person behind the person in the role. The outside person was identified with the authority-figure-teacher while the inside person was the real human being with personal thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Tutors felt that subject teachers might use the subject to defend against the emotional content in the class, and their reaction to it. Similarly tutors may have used the spectre of the interference with their disciplinary functions to defend against their anxieties about whether they were able to engage in a meaningful personal
counselling relationship anyway.

Often it was suggested that this inside person had to be suppressed in school, although he or she might emerge in the playground. At such times he would be delighted to find that pupils too were quite different. For instance, Andrea had always felt anxious that her upper class accent and background were so different from those of the children that she could not possibly understand them or be accepted by them. She was relieved to learn that although the children perceived her as different, she was nonetheless a real person. The children had only been able to realise this when she had taken a group of them on an outing to another school. "Gosh, Miss; you're a real person, in spite of your blasé accent and weird clothes".

Laura, on the other hand, tried to establish herself as a real person by exposing her apparent
similarity to the children. Despite her present middle-class status and posh accent, she declared to children that she too had been brought up in a council house and her accent was the result of elocution lessons. Here was an example of difficulty in believing in the reality of her present teaching-tutoring self, instead citing its origins as evidence of her reality as an understanding person. In other words, she was trying to get them to accept her rather than her understanding of them.

We frequently returned to work on the split operating to separate limit-setting reality expectation and confrontation as "authority-teaching" functions from listening, understanding and clarifying as "permissive-counselling" functions. This split was further aggravated by male/female polarisations, where some of the women tended to identify themselves strongly
with a more permissive style even when in the "authority-teaching" role, while men denied this attitude. Some of the men spoke loudly for authority, control and discipline and were pushed to this by the need to counter the female permissiveness. This may also have been reflecting a senior/junior difference, since most of the men speaking were in senior positions, although one more junior man identified more with the female point of view.

The predominant female attitude to being professional in the teacher-tutor role was to attempt to be as natural and personal as possible. This would include the use of touch between teacher and child, and visits by children to the teacher's house. Some were very clear that they were in teaching for their own needs as well as to help the children. From this stemmed their willingness to look at their own relationships since
that was part of counselling.

The predominant male attitude was that being professional involved putting out of consciousness his own home troubles so that then he could help the child with his. Since they declared they were not in teaching for their own needs, they were less willing to look at their own relationships, and may have been pushed to this by the female insistence on neediness (as the women may have been pushed in exasperation at the men's denial.) For them the appropriate behaviour was paternal, while they expected women to behave in a maternal fashion, rather than in a female, sexual fashion.

**Example 3.**

Andrea complained that James refused to counsel and discipline a boy who had grabbed her breasts. James said he felt it was less the boy's
problem than the outcome of her teaching style which had to do with her being a "touchy person". Laura and Margaret defended Andrea.

Margaret felt some of these children had never known a caring touch and needed to experience it rather than the violent or sexual thing they may have been used to. Laura agreed and said that she let children touch her but that they knew not to touch sexual areas: they would not touch her breasts although they loved to play with her long hair when it was down.

It has to be remembered that these teachers were dealing with children whose ages ranged from 11 to 18, both boys and girls. These women were struggling to be their own persons to these children, but seemed unaware of the sexual impact of their sexy clothes or long hair or manners. Other women opted to be more paternal and like
the men, which was easier for the men to deal with. The insistence on the expression of female sexuality and the unwillingness to give up the easy gratification of being free with kids made the other teachers anxious. It may have been this they were defending against when criticising the permissive teaching style.

In an effort to eliminate this conflict, younger staff exerted a battling insistence that there should be no boundaries. We suggest that the female junior staff were rejecting boundaries which were established by men, in case the acceptance of them should mean they would have to be male. Perhaps too, their insistence on being expressively female is an expression of competitive jealousy of the real young girl who can go to some teacher like James and get help. If they were able to express their female selves in a more maternal and less sexually exciting way, they might get more from the men
who would be less defended. The male junior staff seemed to be wanting to get more in touch with personal, and more feminine aspects of themselves, as revealed in their clothes and identification with attitudes expressed by women. If only old, male-defined boundaries could be got rid of, they seemed to hope they could relate in the real person style too, especially urgent in their tutor roles.

This conflict expressed between individual persons in the group over personal or professional relationships and equal or more distant cross-age relationships was manifest at the intra-psychic level as a conflict over teacher-tutor role expectations. There seemed to be a hope that the tutor role could allow the real person to be in relationships to the children (and we pointed out that the "real" person is not just the open friendly person but also the responsible grown-up who
sets limits and confronts others). Severe constraints prevented this however. At the interpersonal level as shown in the group, being real and true to oneself would mean revealing opinions that were not part of school policy and thus would betray one's colleagues. The correlate of this at the intra-psychic level is that being real as a tutor threatens the viability of the teaching role defence.

Looked at from the developmental point of view, the move from the doing and showing of the teaching role to the being and reflecting of the tutor role implies a move to a late life phase role. This step to maturity involves the loss of the vitality of the active relationship with the pupils, and decreases the possibility of a quasi peer relationship. Some tutors seemed to be in conflict about facing this loss, just as the adolescents are in conflict about losing the role of child in order to become adult.
The child might split the teacher into these nonintegrated parts of himself, and might split the staff into their different factions. Children may have this tendency, deriving from wishes to split the parents, and they need to meet in teacher or tutor a representative of a consistent coherent staff group which can withstand the splitting. The group of tutors then had to work on sharing and developing a consistent approach that was nonetheless flexible enough to allow for individual differences. Before this could be begun, we had to help them to begin talking together and developing enough trust and respect for each other, so that the individual felt supported by the group not only during the group time but in the school at large.

Control And Containment

Tutors faced a constant expectation to keep
things in control. This was true of the individual feelings of the teacher in relation to the child. For instance, Ingrid asked us to help her not to be boiling inside when she had to chase seventeen children back to their respective classrooms. It was true of Andrea in relation to other teachers. She quickly learnt not to say in the staff-room "Gosh, I've had such trouble with that pupil" since the reply would always be "Oh have you, I haven't." (This attitude parallels the adolescents' need to disown their troubles) It operated at classroom level, too, where a teacher should ensure a quiet classroom if she wanted to get promotion. Then the more senior teachers had to control the emergence of feelings of the junior ones. For instance, even when Lucy complained to her senior James "I'm hurting...." he replied in such a way as to say "No you're not. You're terrific and so are the kids".
Lucy summarised this attitude in an image of school as a collection of people like pegs in little holes. If a head pops up out of its hole, the system goes "bang, bang, get back in there, and if the head won't fit get out altogether." The tutor is both the peg and the hole and the system, banging others into place and feeling put in a mould him/herself and contributing to that mould and its flexibility.

During our group discussion there was a wish to control seeing what lay behind the emergence of problems by itemising them

1. bullying
2. lateness
3. gambling
4. smoking in toilet
5. truancy from class
6. going over the wall

as agenda pegs on which to hang a discussion. Genuine attempts were made to understand what contributed to the problem in terms of the
background of the child, but again we had the impression of trying to control the behaviour by understanding it as an isolated phenomenon, rather than in its wider context.

**Example 4.**

The problem of children skipping classes and roaming the corridor was mentioned. When we asked what thoughts there were about this, the reply was given that children did not like that lesson or could not do that subject. We had to work towards an exploration of the contribution to their reluctance made by the teaching matter and method, its relevance in the curriculum, and the continuity of the teaching person. This led to a discussion of the underlying problem of staff sickness and absence leading to the necessity for "supply teachers". They were poorly integrated into the life of the school. They were not oriented
to the school, not shown what the class need would be, and not attached to a house. Children escaping from attending their classes could have been escaping from the emptiness in the class, from the loss of a good teacher, or from an association with a new confused and dislocated teacher who could not be expected to help an adolescent who is struggling with biological and intra-family dislocation anyway.

The more we engaged in general exploration of the problem behind the manifest problem, the ore anxiety was expressed about the absurdity of the tutor's position in chasing the children up and down the corridors to compel them to return to classes which were not suitable. Tutors gave up trying to get an answer to the question of how to carry out this rodeo action without having feelings of foolishness and impotent rage boiling up inside. They began to accept their own conflict as one that
needed to be taken seriously. But they saw as the alternative, another action-namely removing the corridor children to alternative schooling. Here they were acting on their identification with the children's feeling of protest at not getting what they needed from good teachers.

Although alternative schooling is useful, it was being used here as a defense against looking at ways of incorporating the models of successful alternative schools into standard classrooms or of breaking up the huge school into smaller units more like the alternative schools.

It seemed that the tutors' dissatisfaction and protest became located in these children occupying the space between school and no school. Their attitude to the protest was then expressed in relation to the parts of themselves seen in these children. They could get rid of it by
expelling the children or placing them in alternative schooling: they could suppress it by enforcing their return to the classroom: they could punish it by detention of the children: or they could take no responsibility for it by allowing the situation to aggravate beyond recall in truancy, and work to control the manageable remnant in class.

We tried to encourage the development of another alternative to this kind of control, by helping the group to understand detention, expulsion, truancy and punishment as defences against fears of the emergence of raging, dissatisfied, dependent, needy, unwilling, tired parts of the selves of the tutors, identified in the children but denied expression as legitimate tutor-responses. When these feelings could be acknowledged and shared in the group without shame, doubt and guilt and expectations of
criticism and humiliation from colleagues, the tutors could take responsibility for these feelings as a useful part of their personalities in tutor role rather than as childish, interferences with their ability for the adult tutor role. Then the group, which could contain such feelings, could move to consideration of a model of the school as an institution that could contain anxieties in staff and pupils by working with them, understanding them and designing curriculum, timetable and staff meetings to do so.

**Interlocking Life Issues**

The statement that "teachers' problems have everything to do with counselling" was amplified throughout our meetings. We found that teachers projected aspects of themselves on to the children and dealt with these aspects there. Our work had to do with helping them take back these parts of
themselves and own them. Then in the group we could address the issues directly within the group process.

The example of discussing the problem of pupil bullying rather than facing wishes to bully one another in the group has been given. (See Example 2). Once the phenomenon was accepted in the group process, then the struggle with the exercise of legitimately given authority versus imagined or self-given power could be tackled. Similarly there was much discussion in the group about pupils being late or skipping classes when they felt bored. There was a lot of resistance against exploring how the process in the group might have contributed to a tutor's lateness or non-attendance. Excuses were taken at face value and people laughed or got angry at our interpretations of motive in these behaviours. There were lots of jokes about excuse notes, one of which was
accompanied by a request not to spend the whole hour discussing it. Gradually the lateness and absence could be owned and addressed. Lucy said this helped her to deal more thoughtfully with lateness in her teaching classes.

We were less successful in helping tutors acknowledge their own aggression instead of discussing this as it arose in the classes. There were many fears of destroying their relationships if negative feelings were expressed. "I felt fragmented after that disagreement". "I had to go to a flick, anything, just to blot it out". "Let's end by saying something good about each other". Sexuality was even more difficult to address. Although sexy clothes might be worn, their impact was denied. "Certainly I let the kids play with my hair when it's down, but everybody knows that's not sexual".
After recording and reviewing the series of issue overlap between tutors and pupils, it became evident that these could be categorized:

1. Working with attitudes to authority
2. Working with issues of dependency
3. Difficulty with separation
4. Working towards personal responsibility and autonomy
5. Struggling to be one's own natural sexual person while in role
6. Bringing together aggressive/ disciplinary/ caring/ permissive aspects
7. Developing peer group trust
8. Trying to find an identity

The main defences against the anxiety that these tasks produced were:

1. Intellectualisation
2. Denial - blinkered vision
3. Laughing it off
4. Disowning
5. Concealment
6. Projective identification
These issues and defences are the same issues that the adolescents are struggling with. The identification seemed especially strong in the areas of sexuality and aggression and concealment of problems. When the identification was too strong it hindered the tutor's ability to reflect and be helpful. On the other hand some degree of identification facilitates empathic understanding of the pupils' issues, and allows the pupils a ready model to identify with. Our work had to do with helping the group realise that the issues were parallel and find the balance that would allow them to be more effective in understanding and managing adolescent conflict in the pupils. The tutors' acceptance and integration of adolescent parts of her/himself provide a model for the adolescent who is trying to get himself together.

Of course all adults keep struggling through life with adolescent issues, and the issues described as
adolescent issues are not exclusive to adolescents anyway. Furthermore it could be argued that I, as an adolescent psychiatrist, am particularly liable to see the issues in this light. Equally that light may usefully illuminate the parallels. With that preface, we might suggest that teachers and tutors are adults who confront their adolescent issues more directly than others by choosing to work with large numbers of young people. They can do this vicariously by working on the issues only when they are projected on to the children. Or they can acknowledge the projections and then confront their own issues directly and personally with their peers in group discussion. We suggest that the latter is the more mature position in which a tutor can be more effective. It would seem useful to work with tutors in pastoral care consultation towards this development.
Evaluation

The research task of finding out about the pastoral care issues facing these tutors was accomplished to the extent that this report has described them. The group task of developing personal skill or group ability to deal with pastoral care issues was addressed, although we felt that at least another year would be required for work with these tutors. We also felt a regular weekly meeting might have allowed them to develop more quickly.

Our aim of holding in the mind all aspects of any given situation was held to, despite tendencies in the group to compartmentalise problems, and our counter-transference reaction where Marion was focussing more on discussion of children and I was emphasising the context. We felt that the tutors did begin to grasp the importance of relating their knowledge to the school system and of using the group experience to develop a
cohesive working group that could plan for change. The weakness of our approach was that it did not allow sufficient detailed discussion of individual children. (The tutor who spoke most forcefully for this emphasis left the group after the first semester. This leaving represented a splitting off from the group of the investment in the child and a riddance of much of the resistance to examining personal relations in the group as a way of developing group skills.) It might seem that it would be helpful to have a preliminary child-centred group to help teachers learn to observe interactions through describing the children with no stress from the more complex attempt to relate this and their own relationships and roles to the institution. On the other hand there is evidence that the teachers learn how to observe these interactions and to work on their understanding of relationships by direct experience within the
tutors’ group. Similarly they learn about adolescence experientially through an experience of the adolescent parts of themselves in the group.

Tutors would review the group as it went along. Michael often felt it was a waste of time because we did not stick to discrete topics such as gambling, but he kept coming back. At the thirteenth meeting he had decided "Surely we are here to counsel ourselves and if only we can get on with doing that we will learn what counselling is about." Here is evidence of a complete change in attitude.

Lucy mentioned how Sandra had changed. In the group she was quiet and changes were not apparent to us. Lucy said "Sandra is doing much better, not in terms of talking much more in the group, but for every one step taken in the group she's taken six outside." James wondered if the
group was meant to teach him to sit in silence and Margaret pointed out that certainly it was, since he had learnt that that was what was required to help other people speak. "That is what the whole thing's about—it's about being self aware," she said.

The increased awareness was sometimes a burden. "There's more light on decision-making now, and the light is blinding us". Margaret said: "What were previously ordinary encounters are now complicated situations to study and analyse. I have become more aware of defences and what lies behind things, and now it's more difficult to be positive or give advice. Sorry to sound so muddled". She was struggling with the muddled feeling of tolerating complexity instead of the more comfortable earlier feeling of simple clarity based on denial of hidden meanings. She was also struggling to find a balance between being aware
of the unconscious and being self-conscious about the new knowledge so that action was inhibited instead of facilitated. Lucy felt that obviously they had done the best they could with what they had seen, but now decisions might be different. Michael felt people took decisions intuitively and now took the same decisions as before, only now they took them with insight into their intuitions. A few minutes later, he said that he always appreciated "something of the sort (i.e. unconscious phenomena) went on", only now he appreciated what these reactions might be and that this helped him to make decisions. Andrea felt she had managed to stop "charging into things" and be more reflective. The group had reached the stage of awareness of previously denied factors but were not fully comfortable with the new knowledge. It was our fear that the group did not meet for long enough that this new knowledge and
attitude could become stable.

Margaret felt that the group had allowed them to relate differently to each other. Ingrid had been amazed to find she could be friendly with someone like Lucy. "We have different relationships now than we had—we can discuss things we never discussed before." James felt the group might be a Lupercalia in which people were allowed to say things they could not say in the ordinary world. (He may have been referring to fertility in the relationships with some anxiety, rather than to the fertile expansion of ideas.) "If counselling equals change, how many people have changed?" asked Lucy. They tended to evaluate change in terms of others being different towards them in the ninth meeting, but by the fifteenth meeting they were looking at their own changes. There was a fear that the contact would end when the group did, and strenuous efforts were made to avoid this, by
planning continued meetings even if they could not get consultants to replace us, by going on courses, and by imagining that they themselves would run such a group for others next year to help them build better relationships. While this was a defence against termination and a denial of their loss of us, it was an attempt to make this single group less priviledged and to offer their knowledge to the school. We felt relieved that they had stopped investing us and the group with the sacred Lupercalian atmosphere, and looked instead to making the world of school one where issues could be faced and worked with creatively.

The group began to feel that in their institutional setting they could use what had been learnt in the group. Michael felt that only in a small group could people really discuss issues and he advocated asking smaller staff year meetings to review issues prior to the larger staff meetings.
Lucy wondered how to ensure that staff views, and more particularly their feelings, were adequately represented at Heads meetings. Margaret described an idea for organizing a selected group of teachers from all strata who would be truly representative but comprise a number smaller than the staff association. This group would allow problems to be shared and then shifting and adaptation could occur. The group would function on a free communication basis. Michael described how their concern about the poor quality of supply teachers could focus on working with the parents to pressure the authorities, instead of trying to fill in for them in a hopeless fashion.

Lucy offered an interim suggestion for coping with supply teachers; provision of a carrier bag full of the books and the materials they would need and copies of the syllabus for each form. I viewed this as a transitional object solution, prior
to enabling the school to function as a container that could hold its regular teachers in the school so that they could transfer this holding to the children. This remained a dream rather than a possibility, with some tutors inclining to look for immediate solutions and to blame external sources for problems. Lucy's idea of a counselling centre to monitor problems and try to understand their meaning for the school and feed this back to the school does move towards the concept of the school as a caring institution. Our reservation was that the evangelistic quality in these ideas was due to the anxiety about the group ending when knowledge had not become stable nor had the pain of knowledge been acknowledged and felt. The application of the knowledge had not been thoroughly tested in the school institutional setting.

At the end of the group the question of what
our report would say became an issue. Clearly tutors still felt dependent on us to evaluate this learning, although competent to do so themselves. They were keen to get a good report. While we could understand that they might want their hard work appreciated (which we clearly did), we felt that there was evidence here that the teacher's dependency on being right and being well thought of was still very strong. Teachers do not expect to grow and learn through criticism. "If a teacher is criticised he feels hurt and gets defensive. It's that feeling of 'oh god, they're getting at me again." At the last meeting we pointed out the difficulty of facing the loss and how the feelings kept getting hidden in a manic flight no matter how often we referred to them. Lucy felt she'd been given a bad report, and represented for the group a return under the stress of termination to responding at the level of doing well or badly in our eyes, rather
than working with the situation as we perceived it compared to others.

Having evaluated our work and shown to what extent the research and group tasks were carried out, we have to mention our concern about the relevance of the work to the Schools Research Project which has its focus on the transition from school to work. There is a dysjunction between the focus in this tutors group and that overall focus. It was our understanding of the project, however, that the tutors group was indeed to be a pastoral care consultation group and that that was what we were being paid for. As such it offered the project an understanding of the school as a pastoral care system which seems to me to be a useful basis for planning further interventions. The question remains as to whether this interpretation of the research proposal was accurate or not. Secondly we have to ask whether the lack of material about
school-leaving in this tutors group was due to avoidance of this painful subject by group members and consultants who were aware that they had just got back to school and might have to leave if funding did not materialise and whether it represents an exaggeration of the dysfunction in research focuses.

**Recommendations**

The group was felt to be useful, but in our opinion the work was too limited. Tutors would need a longer group of one and half hours, held every week. Perhaps this sort of in-service education should be time-tabled for. Certainly this group needed to work for at least another year, since the group really went only so far as to open the tutors to new areas of thought and perception of feelings and relationships and of problems as symptoms of institutional as well as personal
disorder.

Although tutors could benefit from more child centred discussion, I would hesitate to recommend that this should be split off from the task of working with children's problems in the context of the inter-relating school relationships. Perhaps some tutors might elect to attend a counselling course such as that organized by Isca Wittenberg for tutors from many schools and held at the Tavistock School of Human Relations. I would recommend that a school-based pastoral care consultation group should follow the model presented here (even if the project directs the research at school-leaving issues facing the tutors, in future). The dynamic interpretive mode is analogous to the work of counselling. By using this as the pastoral care consultation method, the research team can teach the methods of counselling in an experiential way while learning
about the issues and sharing knowledge of such issues. Thus the approach is itself a model for the integration of the subject-teaching and counselling aspects of the tutors role, while the research is a model for the tutors' monitoring of emergent problems so as to understand their basis and plan for change.

It is important to address the tutors' pastoral care role responsibility to the school, if the school is to be a caring institution rather than one which evacuates problems in to children and deals with them only there. It seems to me that this tutor group is a useful and appropriate level for intervention and research, particularly when its members represent a span of the hierarchy. It needs to be augmented by consultation of a similar kind to the Heads of the school, helping them to look at institutional issues and plan the school to function as a facilitating system which allows
cognitive and affective development. This development can be more specifically fostered by innovative curricula, to the design of which the project might also give consultation based on findings from tutors groups and pupils groups held at the school.

Perhaps the pupils group with which I met afforded me access to children's issues and this may have reduced my need to press for discussion of these in the tutors group. This was useful in allowing the research team the freedom to explore the totality of the school. The project needs to continue with such pupil groups to have direct access to the issues facing pupils. These groups need to be reviewed in parallel with tutors groups and curriculum design groups and Heads organisational consultation research groups, in order to get the total picture and make meaningful intervention at all levels.
It was a continuing concern of mine that aims of the tutors group did not connect directly with the aims of the pupils group. We did not discuss school-leaving much and I frequently questioned whether the group should be more focussed on this subject, so as to make it consistent with the pupils group research intervention. I feel that the broader-based group can be defended, however, since it helps the tutor group to work on developing a caring institution in the school. From this basis they can move to thinking of transition preparation and care systems. It is a matter of working where the group is at: the pupils at 16 really were at the stage of leaving, whatever the school-life had been like, whereas the tutors were still at school and working on what kind of life it offered. Thus I would recommend that the research project proceed in two stages in its work with tutor groups.
For one year the tutor group should work on developing group ability and personal awareness, while considering pastoral care in the school as an institution. In the second year, from this organizationally informed base, they could work on developing a transition care system, perhaps taking over from any such transitional care that the project might develop.\(^9\)

Another possibility would be to run two different kinds of tutor groups, one of the kind described here, and another focussed on thinking about school-leaving. It is possible that the subject of the transition would cut into all areas of present pastoral care issues in the school, just as it did in the pupils group. It would be interesting for the project to compare the progress of the two styles of consultations and evaluate their effectiveness.

I recommend that tutor groups meet with two
consultants one from a clinical and one from a research background, since this mixture worked mainly to our advantage in developing the consultation model although we had to recognise and work with our differences constantly. We wondered whether our same sex (female) consultant pair had an effect on the group, perhaps changing the contribution of men and women and thus skewing our appreciation of their attitudes. Certainly a mixed sex pair would be more readily acceptable, but I do not feel that this would be of great importance for these adults. (This is in contrast to my recommendations for pupils groups where mixed sex and race pairing is suggested because of the adolescents' more pressing need for figures to identify with so as to join in the task). A research secretary would ease the burden of note-taking and provide more extensive verbatim records and eliminate memory
error, and I would recommend such an appointment to improve the research team effectiveness.

The Schools Research Project Team would need to review the tasks of the three areas of intervention in schools as they were outlined in the project proposed by D. Scharff. This arises from our concerns voiced about the relevance of our tutor group work to the project aims. Clarification is required for future tutor group consultants.

**Conclusion**

Action research in the form of pastoral care consultation for a voluntary group of 13 tutors has been described. The research method has been described as it evolved from early intentions to a more secure model during its interaction with the material. The research model is presented as a
recommendation for future work with such groups. Generally, the group could be said to be helpful in developing pastoral care skills with individuals and groups as evidenced within the group where such skills were practised. The help was too limited and could have been extended by another year's work. It is suggested that the tutor group comprises a group of resourceful caring people who are potential change agents for the development of the school as a caring institution. Thus the tutor group is a useful area of intervention in the school system and an informed source of issues which need to be researched. The tutor group, however, is only one area for intervention and others should be continued too. It is recommended that the tutor group continue in conjunction with pupils groups, consultation to program designers and curriculum developers, and organisational consultation to Heads.
Notes

1 This is a pseudonym.

2 Scharff Project Proposal. CASR Doc. No.


5 Teachers preferred to address each other by and use forenames. We refer to them here by forenames pseudonyms and to ourselves as Jill and Marion.

6 Bion: Experiences in Groups. Landon Tavistock Publication, 1961. This approach was developed from concepts formulated by Bion.

7 J.M.M. Hill: Personal Communication.

8 Erikson: Childhood and Society. Chapters on the Stages of Man.

9 Savege, J. Pupils Group at Thomaston School. CASR Doc No. 1031 see section on recommendations.

10 Only in the final task of writing this report did we find it too difficult
Lake School was purpose-built as one of the early comprehensives. Although it is located in an area of working-class housing estates, it has enjoyed a reputation as an academically-orientated comprehensive which has always drawn from a large number of applicants whose parents were academically motivated for their children. The recent ILEA policy limiting choice of students has already affected this school, which now has a larger intake of non-academic children.¹

Many of the staff who have been at Lake School over the years express a sense of lost opportunity as the number of academic, middle-class children dwindles. Nevertheless, the calibre of the staff is
high, the school well organised, and planning approaches to issues occupies a high priority and much time.

The headmaster, Mr Greenen, a man of enormous dynamism, puts a great deal of effort into the broader issues of education, while delegating the day-to-day running of the school largely to his deputies. There is a considerable premium on the efficiency of the organisation of this large school, reflecting the daily management problems of moving 1300 people into the right place at the right time. The need of the 'domestic managers' as we came to think of them, to be constantly alert to small faults in the system, occupied much of their time, although this group had clearly in mind that their overall goal was "to devise organisation situations which allow the teacher to interact most profitably with the individual pupil". The woman who was deputy
headmistress remarked, at one of our meetings, "I think it's terribly nice that you are interested in thinking about what we're doing with non-academic children. Frankly, we don't have much time to think about anything in school. Most of my decisions, the important ones, are made at 10 o'clock at night in 20 minutes talking with my husband. It's not the way things ought to be, but it is the way they are." I must stress that she felt this way despite the massive planning efforts she shared with the senior staff.

The school staff is a mixture of old and new in many ways. On the one hand, we encountered senior staff who felt that society and the students who came from it were losing touch with traditional values of hard work and discipline. The most articulate spokesman for this view felt that the staff, especially the younger staff, were unable to see the value in hard work, discipline and moral
values. He aligned himself with the conservative moral values which he felt slipping away in this generation of students and young teachers, describing them as suffering from signs of a degeneration of moral fibre.

But another attitude was also well represented in the senior staff. Some had been present in the early days of some pilot Tavistock consultation programmes to this school, when ideas of school consultation were being developed. One Head of House told us of her own struggle to obtain an education after receiving advice to enter a trade during her secondary schooling. Her conclusion was that it had been pretty difficult for her, but would be more so today for the bulk of her non-academic children.

Mr Greenen called it to our attention that the polarity of attitudes was also reflected in a
polarity of staff age. He commented, "The point about the school staff mixture here is that it lacks a 'middle'. That is, the age and experience profile emphasises the two extremities and the staff group lacks the mediating function of people in mid-career."

In practical terms the school had done little about careers work as yet. The head and the heads of house had an intense interest in the problems of the transition from school to work and in adolescent development. They were emerging from a planning phase in careers programming. The first phase had been a thorough study of careers work at Lake School, following which they had obtained the services of a talented, trained Careers Adviser. She had a light teaching load and a brief to integrate careers work into the pastoral care system. She came to the school after we had established contact with it, but just before our
actual work with groups of adolescents began. It was clear from the outset that her interests and ours overlapped. The fact that we did not actually meet her until our year’s work was almost finished, pointed out some of the inherent difficulties even in a school with a substantial commitment to enlarging careers work.

Functionally, therefore, during our contact with Lake, it had no careers programme. The new Careers Adviser found that the existing timetable precluded her from making contact with significant numbers of children and that there were other, seemingly small, obstacles to her task. For instance, she was not invited to the first meeting we had with the staff to discuss the early findings of our work. In principle, she had been given a broad mandate, but in practice I felt she was given less support than she needed. Neither she nor we felt that this was an intended omission.
These comments about the low functional priority of careers work must be taken in the context of a school which was making a broadly-based, comprehensive effort to teach the process of occupational choice as a part of the curriculum throughout the adolescent's development. What we saw were the kinds of resistance in an organisation which remain even when the organisation is by-and-large committed to movement. As such, it points out some of the difficulties to be expected in any such undertaking.

This difficulty in launching a highly desired programme applied to a marked degree in several schools we saw. In a large organisation responsible for so many moving parts, introducing change requires overcoming multiple resistances. The resistances persist despite the dedicated effort of administrators, and not because of personal obstruction. As this school represents a
well-managed system, it is especially noteworthy as a symptom of some of the dysfunctional aspects of a large, and therefore *ipso facto*, depersonalised, social system.\(^3\)

The overall picture that emerges is one of a fairly smoothly running "plant" for processing children through certain cognitive growth areas. Management of the content areas of subject material (with which we had very little contact) and the "traffic control" problems of getting the right number and kind of children and staff into the right places at the right time, was in hand. Exposure of the children to varying, and potentially enriching experiences, seemed to be possible. But the efforts to modify the pastoral system were just beginning, and so for the normal, untroublesome child, tutorial care and counselling still went on mainly in crises. This seemed equally true for the personal guidance areas of careers and
vocational development, for attention to interpersonal development, and for keeping an eye on development of an imaginative approach to life and job. As the school moved towards a disseminated form of pastoral care, each teacher is to become increasingly responsible for attention to issues of adolescent development. This experience with Lake School occurred before that plan had been implemented substantially.

**The Adolescent Group**

Getting our research group into the timetable was a major logistic problem. Despite interest and co-operation by the head and second master, we could not find a suitable weekly hour. The first effort revealed a number of alternatives: taking a group which had some idle time during 'games', and would be a fairly random group in other respects; a tutorial period (which, however, was
only 35 minutes); or paying a group to attend after school. Of these choices, the first seemed to compromise our hope for random selection the least.

But when we met our group, we found that the group, which went roller-skating on Tuesday mornings, was composed of 16 West Indians, a Nigerian and one white Briton; all girls.4

Although the ensuing discussion was useful in many respects, and the material has been used elsewhere in this book, we clearly did not have a representative group. The next alternative was to choose a tutorial group which had a majority of non-academic members, but was otherwise randomly grouped, and so was representative of the 5th form school population. Although tutor groups are no longer "ability-grouped" at Lake, the 4th and 5th forms still had the old grouping
patterns. The major problem with this alternative for our purposes was the short period of time allowed for tutorial meetings. Nevertheless, we began to meet with them, asking them to come a bit earlier than usual, and planning to keep them a bit beyond the period for a total of about 45 minutes—although we would have preferred an hour to an hour and a half. The time limitation remained with us for the five months we met, and was probably the most significant obstacle to effective intervention of the kind we had hoped for. Surprisingly the time did not stop us from hearing and seeing the kind of issues we were looking for. The responsiveness of the adolescents yielded rich material once we had settled into a working pattern. But the limitation of time kept us from being able to enter into a pattern of receiving or experiencing material, reflecting on it and entering into an extended dialogue with them.
Without the leisure to do this, I have little hope that many of them could have gained significant increments in insight, information or understanding.

The experience of extreme brevity, however, underscored the need for adequate time in a reflective, repetitive working-through process during the development of the child or adolescent. Even the optimum 1½ hours a week would, I believe, scarcely have dented lifelong patterns of handling anxiety, fantasy, and modes of relating to the beckoning or threatening world after school. Investigating fantasies and fears about life after school requires prolonged study.

The immediate setting of the group was an art room in which the group of 19 met each morning for registration. Twice a week they stayed for longer "tutorial" meetings, although to the best of
my knowledge, no regular tutorial task was undertaken on these mornings, nor was any regular discussion held. The girls sat round a grouping of tables on one side, the boys on the other. When we moved into a circle after the first session, they occupied clearly demarcated, opposite sides of the circle. The tutorial commitment to this group was shared on alternate mornings by two part-time teachers, since there were not enough full-time staff available. They had not volunteered for the assignment, nor did they evidence any special commitment to it. They did know the children well and supervised between them two half-hour periods per week. The absence of functional commitment to tutorial goals, albeit for intensely practical reasons, was underscored in the use of two people, neither with a commitment to this task, and the lack of supervision or training for the undertaking. When
the adolescents in this group looked for guidance, they referred to the head of house or particular teachers they knew, but not to their assigned tutors. Their overvaluing of the half-hour careers interviews, in which they were joined by the dedicated head of house, is also a comment on the paucity of what was available to them from involved house staff.5

The group of adolescents had roughly equal numbers of boys and girls, aged 15 to 16, most of whom did not plan to stay in school after this year. All had elected to stay on the previous year, when approximately one-fourth of the class had left. They reported that most of their friends who had left wished they could return. These 15 year old school leavers were said to have been dissatisfied or felt mistreated and demeaned in their jobs. Several had lost or changed jobs already. This fed our group's anxiety about the future they would
face after school leaving, now only 5-6 months away. The group was two-thirds white, with a scattering of adolescents of West Indian and Asian extraction, some of whom were recent immigrants. Most lived in the housing estates or in other working class housing within walking distance of the school. The majority had parents employed in working class occupations in industry, small shops, or domestic employment.

**Four Group Sessions**

The following role-playing sessions are given as an illustration of the development of a theme over four successive weeks. They will be used to illustrate the gathering of data from the group, the development of understanding over a three-week period, and to illustrate the issues outlined by the Lake School group around the transition from school to work. At the end of this chapter, I will
refer to the relevance to the school itself.

Early in the life of the group, we were involved in the work of early group formation and the kind of mistrust that has to be worked through in the beginning of all such groups. After four weeks the group began to be more relaxed but also to lag a bit. There were expressions of boredom, and of wondering where to turn after the initial superficial discussions of career, job, and life planning. Over the two weeks preceding the sessions presented below, we moved into a psycho-drama format. The first two in this series are briefly summarised below, the following two presented in dialogue from transcript. In the first of these the drama centred around Andy, (a second generation Pakistani boy) and his old, now relinquished, aim of becoming an auto-mechanic. He described a fantasied situation in which he got into a job with a contract to stay for three years as
an apprentice with a sadistic shop steward.

He then felt trapped both by his own dissatisfaction and by his idea of a sadistic boss. He portrayed himself as purposely "buggering up a car" in order to get sacked, so that he would not have to honour his contract. As we followed his developing fantasy he found that the consequences were quite different from ones that he had previously considered consciously. The repercussions of his actions were played dramatically as quite severe, and were, in fact, more realistic in many ways than the easy and more superficial solution. All this had led Andy to a consideration of alternative paths to job choice and to solving problems without impulsive, self-damaging action.

Following that session the girls indicated an interest in picking up similar themes. It was
agreed in advance that the next week's session would be conducted with a similar format to Andy's but based on girls' ideas. They began by expressing unanimous sympathy with the teachers' cause in a current teachers' strike. They were particularly concerned that the teachers suffered unduly from putting up with students like themselves. They felt guilty about giving teachers a "hard time" and seemed to feel happier if they could feel that the teachers got more compensation for tolerating the "children's badness". That discussion led to the question of how and why students "gave teachers a hard time". Initially, they explained that boring lessons and teachers' ineptness at making lessons interesting were the cause, but further discussion uncovered a feeling that some children would "play up" even if the lesson were interesting.

We then picked up Andy's theme when Susan
became the central character. In the beginning she took the part of a naughty girl who was habitually late and was frequently reprimanded by teachers. Susan was not the only one who acted the student role as "tedious", naughty and irrepressible. However, she did take a most energetic and imaginative approach to her "role", and told a story of "getting sacked from her Saturday job" because "she had been in the stock room for three hours with other girls playing with toys, and had been found out." She was "worried about her mother finding out and taking it out on her". In the role play, we convened a group of "teachers" to discuss what to do about Susan. They decided that "she was terrible, disrupted classes, and was always on about sex—laughing and writing essays with sex in them". It was decided to summon her parents. Andy and Judy played her parents, selected willingly for these roles by Susan. The
"parents" played an exhausted, no-longer-caring couple. Father was at work most of the time and said he did not care about his daughter any more: Susan was her mother's responsibility. Judy said about her "daughter", "Oh, she can just get on with it. She is such a nuisance at home as well as we can't do anything with her."

During an ensuing confrontation, the "teachers" advised the "parents" to have a firmer hand and "mother" then said, "Oh well, we do bash her about a bit." In reaction, the "teachers" took a superior and advisory role, distancing themselves from the parents. A mutual pattern of defensiveness, projection, and blame, developed which seemed quite realistic, but one which certainly demonstrated the students' perception of the mutual blaming and hostility between parents and teachers over a difficult child like the one Susan portrayed. When the "parents" discussed
the meetings with "teachers", they concluded that "it was a waste of time going to school and we're not going to go again." They felt attacked and angry. The teachers in their discussion among themselves, pointed out that the parents did not seem to care and that they, the "teachers", did not know quite what to do with Susan either. In the discussion after the first session, Susan said, "My parents aren't uncaring like that at all." She agreed to pick up the play the following week, where we had left it.

**Role-Playing**

**Week 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Comment on Technique and Interpretation of Action&lt;sup&gt;9&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. S</td>
<td>O.K. Susan, let's pick up where we left off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>(playing herself; walking around group to counsellor's office) I'm going to see Mrs Reake.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dr. S: What's in Susan's mind?

Susan: It's bloody boring going to see Mrs Reake. She doesn't get decisions done; my parents were very stupid and could have stuck up for me at that meeting. I don't care about the tutors, but I do care about my parents. (Opens the door)

Mrs Reake: [played by Thomas, sitting behind desk] I have been talking to your tutors that take you for subjects and find that you have not been behaving. Can you tell me why?

Susan: I am bored:

Mrs Reake: Why can't you take an interest?

Susan: The teachers don't make it interesting and I feel like mucking about.

Mr White: If you tried to help the teachers it might become a bit more interesting.

Mr White's double; [by Miss Davis, the Co-director] I just can't think of any way of helping her.

Susan says it's easier to dismiss the need for care by teachers than by parents, and feels most betrayed by her parents.

Mrs Reake soon becomes Mr. White because Thomas has trouble playing women and later changes the role to male tutor for his own comfort. 10 In both cases, he takes a traditionally confronting role.

No group member can see any way out for an adolescent like Susan.
— *she's so hopeless.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>I don't think of it at the moment, I only think about distracting the lesson.</th>
<th>We point out the feeling of being at a dead end with her.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Susan agrees with the blame and demonstrates some insight. This report echoes what we hear of Susan's reality.

(The other boys and girls make comments on how they could continue from here.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. S.</th>
<th>How do you want to leave it Mr White?</th>
<th>Thomas is stymied about how to help, and acts on Susan's complaint.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr White</th>
<th>I can only have a word with the teachers to make the lessons more interesting.</th>
<th>Director acts to uncover strong feelings underlying polite behaviour by asking codirector to &quot;double&quot; or speak for Susan's unspoken thoughts. Double speaks for Susan's feelings of guilt, blame and despair.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss Davis: (doubling for Susan)</th>
<th><em>He is no help either. He is just as bad as the other teachers. I was thinking I might get some good advice from him. I am so poor in these lessons: it's the teachers' fault really.</em></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Dr. S  Let's move on, what now Susan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>I've been sacked from my Saturday job. How will I get a job and take care of myself? Home! It's the only place. I will go and see Mum. (walks &quot;home&quot;,</th>
<th>Susan begins an Odyssey in search of supporting adult help.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Susan: Hallo, Mum.

Mum (again played by Judy): Oh, how was school? Did you see Mr White?

Susan (glumly) He isn't any help, but I suppose he does his best.

Mum He might swap you over into his class.

Susan I'm just bored in the lessons.

Nancy (standing behind Judy, doubling Mum) I don't know what I am going to do with this girl: she's sacked from her job and she's no good at school...

Mum (Judy aloud): Are you going to leave school?

Susan (thinks in an aside) I wish she would not keep pushing me ... (aloud) I don't know.

Mum: Decide then, you can't do nothing.

Susan: I think it is the teachers' fault myself.

Considering her despair Susan has a good deal of empathy!

Nancy now asks to fill in as double replacing co-director and sharing her own reactions to Susan's situation: the frustrated and disappointed parent.

Susan can also "double" for herself.

Showing frustration.

She regresses under pressure of mutual frustration to less insightful position of blaming teachers.
Mum (in frustration) Have you got any homework? You go and do it. Yes, it is about time I told you to do it. "Homework" is used as an excuse to get rid of her frustrating daughter, but also expresses Mum's feeling "Maybe it's partly my fault too."

(Susan leaves, Andy as father enters)

Dad What about this daughter of ours?

Mum She doesn't know what she wants to do.

Dad I will make myself a cup of tea ... I think she is getting better but she gets on my nerves. I can't really talk with her.

Mum: She shouts too much. She gets under your skin.

Dad What is she going to do, leave school or what?

Mum She must decide herself. It's getting to be too much.

Dr. S Mum and Dad seem to be torn between wishing to help and wishing to get rid of Susan. Maybe they feel guilty too. What will they do?

Dad I'll go to school and have a last word with Mr White and see if he can do anything. You talked with him before. I'll see if he can get any job for her at
all ... where is she?

Mum

She's in the bedroom doing her homework.

Dad

(going in to Susan) I must talk to you. I want to know what sort of job you want and will do.

Susan

I don't want to work in an office. Her fear of being coerced into a dead end job. She sees choices only among undesirable alternatives.

Dad

What about us going to see Mr White to talk about a job?

(Susan pauses)

Dr. S: (to Susan) What are your feelings about your father?

Susan

He is trying to help, but inside I’m feeling upset because I don’t get on with anybody and my parents weren’t trying to help, though they now are.

Dr. S

(to Dad) How do you feel about Susan?

Dad

I am now sick of her. I’ve now had it but I also feel sorry for her and will try to help. Dad would like to withdraw from Susan and her "mess" but feels he can try once more.

Dr. S

Susan’s parents are torn
between feeling sorry for her and wishing to get her off their hands. Let’s see what happens. (Dad goes to see Mr White, with Susan walking dejectedly behind him)

Dad (to Mr White) I have come to talk about Susan. She is a bit bad in her lessons.

Mr White Susan is the sort of girl who talks all the time in the lessons. That is what she must stop.

Dad I must put my foot down and tell her to get interviews and find a job.

Mr White: (to Susan) When you have your interview next week, your Dad can come up with you. In the meantime, Susan, you must not mess about in your lessons.

Judy: (breaks role, laughing, to a "favourite story" of the actual Mr White, which he might be telling Susan in such a situation). It’s like this boy who mucked about in his lessons and was kicked out and he was sorry. So he went to night school and got "O" levels and went to university and got a degree and he’s

This story, which they have all heard from the real Mr White, tells of the "magic" success story of a poor student who also "messed about". The story is told partly to mock a senior head of house who is both loved and laughed at but it also reaffirms his hope in
a professor now.

Dr. S: Let's think the best set of things that could happen to Susan and the worst set of things.

(Silence)

Miss Davis: What would be best? A good job, prospects and promotion? Or worst: not getting a job at all? Then Susan would go home and her parents would tell her to get a job.

The anxiety around this question is so great, it is only broken by the co-director.

(Susan decides she would like to try drama. She has an interview with a drama school principal (Sally). Father goes along with her). Before they enter:

Dad: I don't think you'll be able to get into this school. (Susan looks more hopeful. They knock and enter).

Principal: What is your name?

Susan: Susan Peterson

Susan makes a slight displacement from her real self by choosing a last name which happens to be one of a young, attractive Senior Teacher whose first name Susan often assigns to people.

Principal: We have had a letter from your school saying that you want to become an
actress and how much you like the idea, and you haven't any 'O' levels.

Susan I have left school before CSE and took an exam in drama.

Principal's double (Nancy) I don't like the look of her.

Principal I will have to think about it and write you a letter. What sort of thing would you like to do in the drama school?

Susan What sort of thing do you teach?

Principal Well, we have dancing lessons, adverts for the TV, film shows. You have to be with the other girls, and you have to come to work from 9 o'clock until 6 o'clock and have to train very hard and cannot leave before the year. But if you do not like it you can leave. Then if you like it you take an exam. And if you pass you continue for a higher grade and put in for an interview. She may have learned the importance of these alternatives from the previous weeks' work on 'feeling trapped by a dull job'.

Nancy (doubling for Principal): You have to say a lot of rubbish.

Dad I do not think it will suit her myself. I would prefer her in an office. She won't
get up for 9 o’clock in the morning.

Dr. S: It’s getting to the end of our time. How do each of you see the session closing for today? Susan? Andy?

It is important to have both closure for the day and a discussion of reactions to the session and ways of learning from it. It’s a useful device to get the discussion going by asking those who played main characters for their own reactions.

Susan I receive the letter that I’m not accepted and I run away and cry because I wanted it. I’ll go for another interview to please my Dad.

Andy (the Dad). She ought to go into an office job. I was annoyed but now I’m sorry for her. She could have tried to be on time though.

Andy, as Dad, says he overcome anger to try to help.

Sally (principal) People who are going into drama and acting need brains and Susan did not have much except her drama certificate ... She couldn’t have done it.

All three agree she’s to be punished for her misbehaviour, even if not by a person but by the situation. It looks difficult for adults to be helpful to the child who is seen as bad, although Andy does try. Note that the "mother" has been much less able to help,
presumably fitting with Susan and Judy's perceptions of mothers.

**Week 4**

**Dr. S** (after group has warmed up again). The question is "What happens next?" Where do we go from last week?

A bit of initiative seems required to help shift back into roles and theme. Director and group help Susan regain her role.

**Miss Davis** I remember someone saying something about Mum would help her to get a job in an office. (Susan now stands and listens)

**Judy:** (who had played mother) Susan would stay on at school, or she could go out on her own and get a job.

**Susan:** Perhaps I could stay on at school. I could go and see Mr. White again and ask if I could stay on.

In the face of rebuff from "reality" Susan retreats to the relative safety of school.

**Dr. S** Are you going to see Mr. White? Martin, will you play Mr. White?

Martin, is a withdrawn negro boy who has participated little. We attempt, not very successfully, to draw him in. The several negro adolescents have been uninvolved in this group.

**Dr. S** Mr. White, this girl is
coming to see you but cannot get into Drama School. Do you know what she is coming to see you about? (Martin nods) How are you going to feel about her? (He shrugs his shoulders) (to Susan) Are you ready to see Mr White?

Susan (to herself): *I hope he is going to take me back into school but he won't because he knows what I'm like.*

Susan agrees with others' estimate of her unworthiness. She restates the likelihood of refusal although in reality the school's policy is to take all adolescents with any demonstrable motivation at all into the 6th form.

Mr White (to Susan) What have you come to see me for?

Susan Can I come back to school?

Mr White No

Susan: I went for an interview for Drama School, they did not give me a try, so I don't know what to do, could you advise me?

Mr White (gropingly) Why don't you go back for a careers interview?

Susan I don't want to be in an

Still trying to get some help from a caring adult.

Still fears being coerced.
office or anything.

(Mr White is silent)

Dr. S (to Mr White). I take it you don’t know what to do? What is the problem? Is there anything you can do for her, or are we facing a situation where you are the person who can help if anybody can— but you don’t know what to do? What options are open to her?

Mr White She must go and seek a job.

Dr. S: What is your final message to her?

Martin: Go out and try to find a job.

Susan You have got to help me.

Thomas Is she still at school? If she left she cannot apply again. (Various group members speak, saying "once you have left you cannot come back", but then some thought you could).

Dr. S The message seems clear enough, and it is what you are afraid of. Shall we see what happens if you go out and get a job? In some ways people hope

Trying to open thought patterns with a withdrawn adolescent.

Trying to free the group from a paralytic hopelessness that has been pervasive for the last few minutes.

The feeling of being stuck

Leaving school is simply a one way ticket and they all know it. Although the process of re-applying to schools after the 5th year is a formality, to this group it seems a real barrier. The facts seem not clear to them and the routine reapplication they actually face is confused with the relatively difficult or impossible process of re-entry after formally leaving school.
rejection from a job will never happen, but it can happen realistically. Any ideas? (Pause—silence). She has been turned down. Can anyone tell me what happens when you go out to an employment agency?

Group generally

We don't know, we've never tried it. You have to pay money for some of them.

Dr. S

(to Susan) Let's try warming up again, walk down the street; what kind of a mood are you in?

Susan

I am happy because I think somehow I will be able to get a job. In spite of disappointment I will try to look on the bright side of things. I'll try an employment agency. (enters agency)

Sally (now plays Director of Employment Agency):

Hallo, can I help you? What sort of job do you have in mind?

Susan

Not something in the office line. I'm trying to get out of an office. What can you advise. I don't

is still very strong and the anxiety felt at this point is high.

A lack of information about reality issues of getting jobs.

A denial of desperation comes in—but it's also true that Susan is basically optimistic.

Sally has a ubiquitous role in the advice-giving profession. She has accompanied Susan part way through her Odyssey and will stick with her from here on.
want to be bored.

Sally we have typing ...

Susan I thought perhaps a receptionist.

Sally What qualifications do you have? (Scrutinising her and taking notes).

Susan I may have some when I take CSEs, I don’t know yet.

Sally Here is a position for a receptionist. Did you do typing and filing at school? Despite Susan’s wish to be out of office work

Susan Yes

Sally There are some places here. You will have to watch the girl you work with, and train with her for 2 or 3 weeks. I am afraid you have to pay us for getting a job.

Group (murmurs) Do you? Is that right?

Dr. S In fact, employers often have to pay, presumably they are looking for someone who will work out—which does put some kind of burden on what people bring to the job. Injecting a bit of reality

Sally I am afraid that you will have to pay me for
finding you a job. If you like the job and you think it suits you and you want to stay there, it will be about £3. to £4.

Judy Why doesn't she get the job and stay there?

Susan O.K. I'll try it (dubiously)

Dr. S Let's see what happens when she goes to work.

(Sally decides to go with Susan and becomes the senior receptionist at the Dorchester Hotel).

Sally (showing Susan the books) We have all these people's addresses and telephone numbers and you have to put them in order after I show you how to do it. You put them in alphabetical order. If the 'phone rings I'll answer. There is a writing pad to take a message. Push the button. I'll do it once, and then you do it next.

(They sit chatting, and Susan looks excited)

Dr. S What is going to
happen?

Sally Judy will come up to the reception desk.

Judy: (as a guest) I would like to stay overnight next to David Cassidy’s room. Could I have a room, please?

Judy puts their teen idol into their hotel, capturing him in a way. Perhaps Sally’s envy of the notion of capturing David Cassidy prompts her room assignment for Judy.

Sally Room Number 13 is free

Judy I don’t want to stay in no. 13, it is unlucky.

Sally No. 9 is free

Judy That is all right, it’s my lucky number.

Sally How many nights?

Judy Might be one week or six.

Sally You pay us for one week. You can pay us by cheque for longer, (gestures to Jack). Take up the laundry box. Jack gets up to do his walk on part.

(Bell goes again)

Linda How much is a night?

Sally Double room or single room? Single room is £8 and a double room is £14. (To Susan) You
have to add that up for so many weeks.

Dr. S Sally is helping Susan as an older person in a job might help a new person and that makes it a more friendly place.

Sally They do not always show you, they bung you there.

Dr. S That could be more difficult.

Linda You would be stupid if you didn't say, "I cannot to it".

Susan (to Sally): Yes, please help me.

(Sally gets up to go; Susan, now on her own, sits down behind the desk).

Sally I will go and have lunch. If you need help, press the button and I will come. Goodbye.

Susan is being given a chance to try her own skills, alone but is not abandoned.12

Susan Goodbye

Dr. S How are you feeling alone?

Susan Excited, rather nervous in case I make a mess. Somebody may fire me.

Judy (calls on the phone from No. 9 angrily) I have not had my morning coffee. I asked for it at 9 o'clock
and it is now 11 o'clock.

Susan (to herself): Must get the kitchen. (Picks up a phone— Jack takes the role of cook).

Jack (from the kitchen, with self-righteousness) The coffee has already been sent up— it will go on her bill.

Susan (now very confused picks up phone to room no. 9). The chef says he sent the coffee up. Are you sure you didn’t drink it?

Judy: Well! (slams down the phone).

Miss Davis (waits near desk for some time and is finally noticed). Excuse me, are you the only receptionist here?

Susan (putting down the phone, still confused and torn). Can I help?

Miss Davis (indignantly) I was wanting to reserve a room, but the service is not too good around here and I was wondering if I ought to go somewhere else. (Susan rings bell for

As Director, I now was feeling things were going well and asked Miss Davis to behave like a difficult client. A discussion of my reactions at this point is included below.
Senior Receptionist and Sally returns promptly).

Miss Davis (to Sally): Are you the Head Receptionist? I have been waiting for 10 minutes ...

Sally (to Susan with a knowing frown): But we do have some awkward customers!

Miss Davis I want to reserve a room for tonight, it must be at the back and very quiet; I want good service.

Sally Cheque or cash?

Miss Davis Cheque

Sally Name?

Miss Davis Miss Davis

Sally How about room No. 13

Miss Davis Have you something higher up in the building?

Sally 121?

Miss Davis That will do (she goes)

Sally (to Susan) Could you tell me what happened?

Susan You went off. Room No. 9 rang up again, you know what she’s like.
She said she hadn’t had her coffee. I phoned the kitchens and the chef said he had sent it, and I rang back and explained and she got a bit rude.

Chef (rings again). I’m sorry I didn’t send the coffee up. It was my fault.

The apology recalls the way the parents began to care again when the school called them in. Sally’s caring triggers others to treat Susan more gently.

Sally (to Susan): If anything happens again and you are on your own, say, "Would you like to take a seat, I will be busy for a couple of minutes." If the customer is too impatient to wait or they are just difficult or being rude, you say, "if you do not like the service and the way we run our hotel you must jolly well find another hotel."

(Group laughs).

Sally offers a retrospective supervision of Susan’s experience to further the learning, while supporting Susan’s self-esteem and drive for competence.

(Andy decides to play a role and arrives in the hotel lobby with the dirty laundry).

Andy Where shall I put this?

Susan Over there. Ta! (to Sally) He's nice …

Andy had been a disparaging father, and like Sally changes roles to "accompany" Susan. As Susan begins to "grow up", he changes roles to become available as a "boy-friend" figure. But

Sally You must not fancy people like that on the job.
Sally sets limits like a parent.

Dr. S  We have to stop, but let's discuss things briefly. What do people think of Susan? What's been happening? What about Susan's parents? (to Andy) What do you think of your daughter?

The general comments led to a discussion of Susan's acting and job prospects. She can do amateur dramas. She has done a job on her own in this session. Her parents were getting angry yet all she needed was some help.

Dr. S  Is that something to notice? Her parents may get annoyed because they cannot help, but are happier and relieved when she does it herself?

There is a feeling of relief and triumph in the room as the session ends.

Discussion

Susan's drama synthesised so many of the themes of the transition from school to work that only a few of the major ones can be discussed. The slight displacement Susan made by choosing a different surname while retaining her own first
name confirmed the teacher's indication to us that there was a congruence of the drama she presented to themes of her own life. It should not be assumed the sessions were only relevant to Susan. Although she volunteered to play the "bad" adolescent, there were several classmates who seemed to be equally identified with her plight.

**The Triangle of Despair**

The melee of themes in the session '3' draws a picture of a triangulated world: adolescent, parents and school staff participate in a process of mutual blaming, blocked communication, and shared depression which reverberate among them. In this group the entire picture of staff-parent-student relationships is presented from the vantage of the adolescent. It is an expression of the group members' views, but cannot be taken as otherwise factual. Its value is its representation of
the adolescent's perspective.

The adolescents see school as a boring and threatening place, yet feel the teachers deserve reparation for the difficulties the students themselves pose. The teachers represented here, and therefore the expectations these students carry about teachers, are judgmental and distant. At the same time teachers are the "culprits" who teach boring lessons. But they are also seen as the victims of the adolescents' damaging acts and behaviour and deserving of higher wages on this count. And they are, for all the denigration, still seen as a potential resource to the adolescent.

By the same token, the representation of parents captures a general despair about the ability of parents to help, and the poverty of the 'internal' parents carried by various members of this group.13 When parents are pitted against
teachers, they blame each other for failing the adolescent, and the adolescent in turn blames both of them. In each case, a feeling of inadequacy in the self is denied and the blame is placed elsewhere.

There is a suggestion, that there might be some acting out by Susan of some of her "parents" unacknowledged wishes to attack the school as a system, especially in view of their feeling that the school was unfair. While we cannot describe this as a literal family picture, we did often hear that families felt this way. Children often feel trapped between parents who distrust school and the school which distrusts parents. Often each accuses the other of being uncaring in the child's presence and the child is left not knowing where to turn, but suspicious of both sides.

The fuel for the fires of blaming seems to come from the shared despair about Susan's fate. No-
one can imagine that she will find productive employment or that she will be able to stop "messing up" her work life. All the adults are depicted as withdrawing in despair from her, acting out the processes of withdrawal from the school-leaving, poorly-performing adolescent. Susan drifts from teacher to teacher looking for help, and finally turns to home. There she again meets the frustrated despair of her parents, who are able to muster only a last gesture of help. As the despair deepens, no one has any energy to offer help to Susan, and her plight worsens.

**Susan's Regression and Recovery**

From the adolescent's perspective, the search must go on despite overwhelming depression. The teacher is seen as distant and uncomprehending, yet as the only source of support. Susan perseveres in making repeated approaches to
various teachers. It becomes apparent that the more the teacher is devalued by the student, the worse the plight of the adolescent who must still rely on him. This may explain why students who feel they cannot get along with teachers tend to do poorly themselves, since they are cut off from their major source of support at school.

In Susan's search we can follow a regression of coping mechanisms. Having failed in a part-time job, she reverts to a fantasy of becoming an actress which the class sees to be inappropriate and beyond her reach. She develops no strategy of approach to work except to wander from one person to another asking for help while avoiding office work. Attempts to fashion her own approach to life are abandoned until Sally picks them up for her. Her regression to more childlike strategy involving more fervent longing but little planning demonstrates the hypothesis described by Hill in
the first section of this volume. Under stress, Susan reverts to childhood approaches to work and life.

The anxiety present in the group during this search was connected to several issues of social and psychological development. First, Susan is faced with the situation of having contaminated both work and school for herself, and of frustrating her parents as well. She has no area of clear achievement as a source of support and self-esteem. Secondly, she faces the end-stage of the school extrusion process: once she leaves school, she cannot come back. Leaving school is a one-way ticket into a world she cannot control. Thirdly Susan is coping with a good deal of sexual anxiety, with its subsequent guilt, and the sexual guilt is a serious impediment to the feeling she has a "right" to help from parents.
Let me expand on this point. If Susan has been found doing something illicit, why should parents help her? She volunteers to play the "naughty girl", recreating something from her own life. Her drama initially caricatures small children "playing school", in which a sadistic, brutal, rigid teacher smacks children who are naughty. She described getting the sack from her Saturday job for "playing in the stock room with toys". The childlike and sexualised aspects of this infraction are echoed a few moments later when other girls, taking the role of teachers, discuss Susan's excessive concern about sexual topics. The parallels between playing with toys in the intimacy of the "hidden back room" (as stockrooms usually are) and masturbatory adolescent fantasies is striking. In alluding to masturbatory fantasies, I mean to refer to them as normal aspects of adolescent life which are a vehicle for hopes for and growth process
toward the capacity to build intimate relationships. The parallel between sexuality and Susan's misbehaviour can be extended because it is frequently around sexual areas that parents feel unable to cope and express despair about persistant activity. Here despair is expressed in the warnings to Susan, "You must not mess about in your lessons", expressed repeatedly by parents and teachers.

Over the last session, Susan's story becomes a Cinderella tale. She has fewer and fewer resources. Everyone who could be helpful drops away until a new adult, a fairy godmother in effect, takes her in tow. The Cinderella theme echoes her state of feeling like a desexualised orphan without loving, live internalised parents, a person with unrecognised inner beauty constantly placed among the ashes (her messing up).
The Cinderella story carries the hopes for a future life of intimacy which will fill the present void. Susan is in many ways the archetype of the unloved adolescent. She has acne, is overweight, and she "answers back" to adults. Although felt to be lovable, she is impulsive and disruptive to peers and teachers. She uses a kind of diffidence to show off and to defend against her lack of confidence. No one feels able to help her get back on the right track. None of this keeps her from wearing short skirts and a "David Cassidy" button in the form of a red heart on her bosom. She readily brings sexual material as idealised and impulsive into her school life in a way which is tantalising and threatening to her schoolmates. The adolescent component of her sexuality is blatant and at the same time frustrated.

But in the final sequence of the story, there is a growth of sexuality as she becomes more
confident, self-sufficient, and attractive. Andy, who previously had the role of the frustrated father, spontaneously picks up the new role of sexually available "laundry boy" while Judy, previously the mother, becomes a haunting step-mother, a Harpy, who is only vanquished with Sally's help. Thus the boy who previously played a disapproving parent becomes available as a peer and boyfriend, helping Sally counter the destructive, growth-impeding aspects of parental disapproval, now placed in the ex-mother, Judy.

Susan’s "sexual growth" demonstrates an interaction between "Careers work" and the aspect of personal growth involving sexuality and intimacy. New personal skills and recovered sexuality reinforce Susan’s work functioning, at least in her play, conquering the helplessness and despair of her earlier searching. It is significant that Andy pairs with her finally—for it was Andy
who introduced the theme several sessions earlier of "buggering up" his own job. Now he adds his encouragement to a fellow traveller by taking up a sympathetic supportive role. In many ways, this duplicated the way parents legitimately overcome problems unresolved in their own development and adolescence by helping their children grow through similar phases.

**An Adolescent's Odyssey and the Growth of Supporting Adults**

Susan's search for a job and a new life after school involves the kind of restless, poignant searching which is associated in literature with growth Odyssies. She turns from real, but disappointing parents, to inadequate and dangerous substitutes, while her ability to manage her own life deteriorates to a more fragile and dependent stage. Yet her search is ceaseless: she will have no home, no work, until she finds
someone to help. Her wish to be rescued expresses the child's belief that caring adults will know what to do when job and life choices must be made. She finds they don’t, that under pressure to know and help, they retreat; but she pursues them. Finally, she succeeds in finding a guiding adult, very like a fairly godmother, who produces instantly a ride by magic coach into a new home and job at the Dorchester Hotel where Susan becomes apprentice gate-keeper.

Susan did not find supporting adults easily. In fact, she had to induce her own support. Sally was the same authority figure who refused the idealised solution in the past, but she now enters as fairy godmother to rescue Susan, her Cinderella. She acts first as the career/employment agency adviser, who becomes the good parent, who then "flies" off to the job with Susan and paves the way for her. She saves her from all the difficulties of the
unruly and sadistic hostile guests (the impinging and hostile world) and tells Susan that the sadistic people can cheerfully "go to hell". Sally lets Susan gradually grow into adulthood by trying things on her own while Sally remains a "button-call" away. On one level, it is a fantasy solution to the problem of persecuting adults who make life difficult to helpless adolescents. It is also the use of a model of supervised independence to facilitate growth. Notably, it was Susan's persistence in searching for support which finally mobilised it. Without her efforts, it would not have existed.

It is worth noting that the "magical" solution finally achieved resembles the story of Mr White's which was employed by the group; a student is a failure and sacked from school, only to become a professor. Although the tone of the students was belittling of Mr White (whom they like and trust) they also carried his message of hope and triumph
over all the belittling by parents and teachers. The meaning of the story—although contradicted by the satire used in telling it—summed up the group's ambivalence about adults and about becoming an adult.

The Feelings Experienced by the Teacher or Group Leader

As group leader I experienced a mounting anxiety during the last session, despite the fact that the action within the group was beginning to move imaginatively and the group was quite involved. Because I think the anxiety I experienced is analogous to one which teachers and parents often feel, it is worth discussing briefly.

A few moments earlier, the group as a whole had been quite paralysed—confronting Susan's inability to solve her own mess and her abandonment by older helping people, both teachers and parents. A group depression set in as
a result of Susan (and the group as it identified with her plight) taking all the blame and feeling of doom into herself. This situation required my increased activity, lending the group my support in much the same way Sally gave hers to Susan a few moments later. To lend them support, I had to share, tolerate and contain the anxiety I picked up from them, so strongly expressed in the silent responses to my attempts to crystallise a solution. I only had time to experience my own anxiety a few moments later when they had been able to use my support and move on to their own activity. Then I felt bereft: they no longer needed me. A competent adolescent does not need his parent or teacher and at that moment the adult may feel abandoned himself by the adolescent.15

It was this feeling of abandonment, accompanied by the return of the shared anxiety I had avoided previously while under pressure to
act which moved me to suggest to my co-leader. Miss Davis, that she make things "more realistic" by becoming a difficult hotel guest. What I meant by 'realistic', I think was that she "punish" Susan for me for what I had had to contain for her only moments earlier.

My momentary experience of striking back at Susan for moving away from me just after I had helped her, echoes resentment voiced by her 'parents' and 'teachers'—and in fact her real teacher. For a moment, I experienced the pain of losing a child and was angry at her for going. I "retaliated" and tested her just at the moment she was beginning to feel competent on her own. Fortunately, she had another figure—who had modelled herself on my more helpful previous role—who knew enough to stand by and tell me to let her have time to grow up.
If an adult tries to accompany a child through a difficult voyage, he is bound to experience some of the same frustration, disappointment and despair the child does. Inescapably, he will at times wish to be rid of these feelings as they impinge on him either by getting rid of the child or by retaliating. Having helped Susan and the whole group, through a paralytic impasse, I could no longer contain my own anger, and made a retaliatory gesture. The fending off of the "attack on growth" by Sally and Susan enabled them to continue to consolidate gains I had helped them with, although it left me (and Miss Davis on my behalf) temporarily nursing our own wounds.

The adult advocate and guide for adolescents will feel overwhelmed himself at many points; at these moments, he may turn against the adolescent as the source of discomfort. In doing so, there is a danger that efforts made in support of
growth, autonomy, and productivity will be attacked along with the shared depression, loneliness, and dissipation of effort.

The adolescent's struggle to leave school in a productive manner pits his wish for autonomy, productivity and growth against the fragmentation of growth by loneliness, depression and dependency. When the anxiety becomes unbearable for adolescent and adult, aggressive responses are likely to occur which will drive them apart. The victim is often the child's growth and autonomy. I cite my own experience of this struggle as only one instance of a daily classroom struggle for teachers of adolescents.

**Susan, her School, and its Solutions**

Susan's frantic search for help from her school as she is about to lose it reflects a last desperate hope. The feared consequence of her
misbehaviour, for which she is about to receive her just deserts on leaving school, is unemployment or a 'boring', repetitious job. A kind of inner death is feared, the killing and hell-like torture for eternity as a matter of punishment well-earned for the misbehaviour for which she is daily warned. The part of Susan and the parts of her friends which carry the "admonishing parents" inside themselves unite against her and she feels doomed. This occurs despite her several attempts to find productive work, including her interest in "drama" to fashion a life for herself. Her ready participation as a central figure in our role-playing demonstrated some of her inner resources, but her anxiety, loneliness, and fear of retribution for sins—real and imagined—keep her from effective resolution.

The only solution is apparently a magical one presented by Sally—not involving any
premeditated strategy of approach to work, but a juxtaposition of fantasy with an imaginative reality in an instantaneous solution to a very depressing problem. But there is more to the quest than magic. The driving force behind the series of sessions is Susan's need to find another caring person in order to solve the problem of "messing up her life". Susan and the others in the group agree implicitly about this need, and the whole Odyssey of four sessions can be viewed as an attempt to find a person who will be an "inner" and "outer" guide from the "hell" of adolescence to the "paradise" of adulthood. The rejection of realistic adults is a familiar theme for the adolescent struggling between his wish to be parented and his wish for autonomy—and caught furtively by his feelings and by his own aggression. He is alienated from the people he needs most, and finds himself abandoned partly as a result of his
own ambivalence.

But the ceaseless search confirms the fundamental need for guidance from a benign person, internally and externally, as a condition for the growth of self-reliance. The search Susan represents in many ways is universal. The search for a parent and for a home-away-from-home, for a life as a loved child and yet as an independent adult, is a fundamental aspect of the transition from school to work and from family to a wider world. This is the magic in the solution Sally presents.16

Lake School's inability to provide an effective, available tutor for Susan and her peers occurred despite having launched a programme to do just that. Mounting a substantial careers programme, and linking personal needs, assets and development to Susan's future job or schooling,
looms as a significant project only in early development. Despite the considerable competence, sensitivity, and dedication of Lake's staff, teachers were not available when Susan and her friends came under the greatest stress. Their play at solutions for negotiating the difficult tasks ahead suggested that one critical lack was the absence of exactly the careers and tutorial programmes which were being implemented slowly. But some of their feeling unsupported will remain, for it stems not only from an institutional failing, but from the struggle of the adolescent for autonomy. For this reason, such a programme would need an underpinning of understanding of the adolescent's developmental needs during school leaving.

Lake School has such a clear dedication to facilitating the growth of its students that the fact that students still feel there is a gap is significant.
We were given a particular tutor group partly because the administration felt tutors for that group could use some support, and that the school could exploit our presence to strengthen a weak link. So it may be that the situation for our group was less supportive than for some others. Nevertheless, there was a considerable gap between the ambition the school held to extend tutorial assistance to virtually every student, and the reality that most teachers had little or no training for this work, and had varying levels of interest. Our work with the faculty partially confirmed the students' representation of them: they often felt lost about how to help students and, in effect, were forced to turn them away. Student and teacher then both felt frustrated in attempting to seek and give help. In addition, an ideological split in the faculty about whether adolescents "needed more understanding" or could be
expected to "buck up", increased the possibility that the student might receive inconsistent responses.17

Our experience with Lake School points out the need for specific planning for meeting adolescent needs. Where this planning is going on, as there, resistances will emerge on the way to the goal of helping with adolescent needs. But Lake School's experience also raises the question of the need for a group of people with specific training to attend to those needs, a group who would keep them in focus as a priority in a busy school with many conflicting priorities.

NOTES

1 According to Mr Greenen, the headmaster, the intake of Lake School has always been largely from the working class, but over the last 5 years social and demographic changes have meant that many "upward aspiring working class families" have moved out of Lake's area.

2 Mr Greenen, Personal Communication
For a brief discussion of the effect of school size, see Chapter 14.

That the racial issues are alive for these girls was underscored by the active and involved discussion by this group of immigrant girls while in a homogeneous group. In marked contrast, no West Indian adolescents spoke in the mixed group we finally found—although it included some of the same girls.

The use of part-time teachers as tutors had been implemented to cut the tutor group size down from 30 to 20. We also knew that the group which we chose had been one of those with the least pastoral support in the school. It was also crucial to the school that their inability to turn to their own tutor rather than to the Head of House after 3 years in streamed teaching spurred the school’s motivation for increasing the pastoral responsibility of each tutor and teacher. Thus, this would not be the expected pattern of seeking help for the later crop of students.

For a fuller discussion of role-play and psycho-drama, see Chapter 3.

Andy was one of those for whom the Careers Interview provided a springboard to a more ambitious, probably more appropriate, ambition in engineering.

Note the contrast of this view of themselves as unbearable to the acceptance of Andy’s view of bosses as sadistic. In some ways they assign themselves the "bosses" they think they deserve.
The reader may find it easier to read through the dialogue in the left-hand column entirely before taking in the comments given on the right.

Taking a female role may be especially threatening for a 16 year old boy.

The use of a double to speak the thoughts of a role character is discussed in Chapter 3.

The 'button" offers a connectedness only if Susan feels she needs it.

These internal parents and teachers are not the same as the real ones, but do have a significant effect on the reaction of the adolescent to the real figure, if one expects harsh treatment from an adult, one will be ready to interpret ambiguous behaviour as harsh, or even to distort intended kindness or firmness. It is also of course possible that some of the adolescents have parents or teachers who are indeed accurately represented here.

See Chapter 9 for examples, especially the case of Annette.

A common experience for parents is to feel, themselves, cared for as if by their absent parents, in the act of taking care of their own children. It is Wordsworth's paradox, "The child is father to the man". Thus, loss of a child as he grows up also contains a second loss of one's own parent.

Bowlby (1973) has discussed the need for another person as the requisite condition for self-reliance.

Mr Greenen himself highlighted one kind of difficulty in recounting that certain faculty members were so envious
of adolescents’ burgeoning sexuality and unfettered position in life that they reacted angrily to the students without apparent cause.
CHAPTER 8

South End School

The experience in this school was different from that in the two schools already presented, we had not intended to work with a group of sixth form adolescents, and were caught by surprise when we arranged for a single meeting at a large mixed comprehensive. South End, and found ourselves spellbound. This group of "non-academic" sixth formers described feelings and difficulties which closely resembled those of the other groups we had encountered.¹ They could explore issues which, in other settings, we had to elicit painfully and painstakingly, for they seemed a more articulate and mature group than most others we met. But when they laid them out, the
issues were the same as for those other groups. In this chapter I will first give some detailed attention to varying attitudes in the school or to the progress of our group. I will then trace the difficulties of one group member and relate them to the split in attitudes in the school.

**The Second Master**

To understand the context in which we saw the group of adolescents, I want to outline the picture we gained of South End from our contact with staff. After initial discussion with Mr. Box, the headmaster, we relied for extended contact on frequent meetings with Mr. Madling, the Second Master in charge of the 6th form. We found him a sensitive man who was easily available to students and to us, who talked freely and flexibly, and who had a sense both of the worth and of the failings of education. For instance, the programme he had
established in General Studies encouraged development of the students' individual interests by discussion groups and forays into the community. But he also readily examined the shortcomings of his programme. He repeatedly questioned the rationale for the overall school experience of the adolescents whom we met.

"One of the problems of this school for this group of children is that although it was a secondary modern school, the 5th and 6th curricula cater principally to the grammar-school type of pupil studying 'A' levels or re-sitting 'O' levels. The curriculum is not well-tailored to the needs of your group. We really don't know what to do for these children who are not going into academic careers. More and more we're faced with children who are not headed for academic careers. We try to give them an experience of the larger world by sending them out to look at and study it. We are just beginning to look at the possibilities for developing non-academic general studies courses for everyone."
Our group came from the less academic group of the lower 6th form (16-17 years old), and was originally randomly selected by Mr. Madling. The meeting had replaced one morning’s community studies activity. When we subsequently volunteered to meet regularly with the group, membership settled down to a group who apparently found the innovative aspects of making forays into the community difficult, and therefore had no competing Friday morning project. We speculated with Mr. Madling why this produced a group in which there were 5 out of 8 coloured adolescents—4 of Indian and Pakistani derivation and 1 West Indian. Of the Caucasians, one was from a family which had immigrated from Italy just before his birth. This group did not reflect the overall ethnic composition of the school. There was a large group of such children, but they were still only a prominent minority.
"The children you are working with are the ones who were not able to start a project of their own to General Studies; it may have something to do with racial issues. The Indian and Pakistani children have a respect for formal education and its significance. They're often forced into this pattern by their parents. They have a blissful ignorance of what is going to happen to them and may tend to stay in school for protection longer than others. Or they might stay on for the prestige and valuing of education itself without any particular goals. I am not surprised that the group who have stayed with the discussion are the coloured children because I think they feel more protected in school. When they go outside into the community, I think they often feel more vulnerable. They may be coping with this by looking unmotivated and taking a back seat. When you come along and talk to them it's a salutary experience for them."

In other discussions, Mr. Madling considered several crucial areas including the multiple pressures on the school from parents, local authority, and internal school pressures. Many of
the issues we felt to be of importance were touched on at one time or another with him.

"We have a lot of pressure from parents to continue with the traditional curriculum. One father wanted his child to learn Latin because he had as a child—even though this child was barely literate. Others want their children to take some exams without any particular reason, with a feeling that exams are a good thing. We feel that there is a lot of pressure from parents not to change our curriculum. There is much less pressure from County Hall, although at times we act as though they might object if we did not teach certain kinds of things. We tend to expect trouble if we try to overhaul the curriculum, but the only thing actually required by British law in education is religious education. So, in fact, we really have a free rein and I think we feel mostly checked by practicalities, parental pressures, and our own restraints.

"We are going to re-examine the system for lower stream children but it takes a total commitment by the staff. In many ways the curriculum is 20 years out-of-date, but there
are some things that you cannot change, that have to do with universities and so on. It may take 10 years before the changes will be effective but in the meantime you're dealing with human lives. How do we re-allocate resources and develop curricula for these non-academic children? And it's not just the curriculum. It's the pastoral side as well. How would you set up a tutorial system that really was responsive to the needs of this group you have been talking about?

"Consistency of teaching is very important, but as Mr. Box (the headmaster) has probably told you, we have a very high staff turnover. We have people who are pastorally conscious but only stay two years. One of the problems is that the pastoral needs take second place to discipline.

"South End's pastoral system is largely an administrative one. Heads of house have an administrative post with roughly 45% of their time for teaching. They each know their house well, but they mainly come up against the delinquent or bright children and don't have an in-depth knowledge of most of them. Since the pastoral set-up is administrative, the caring comes only in crises. There are too
many people to do it properly, so you deal only with the problems. Each teacher has 25 children in his care and spends much of his time marking and writing reports. He should go around and talk to students and get to know them, but if he did he would only have about 15 minutes left every day. Our only clues to trouble are academic or behavioural ones: we do have a remedial department and our staff frequently has a group discussion on a particular individual who is in trouble. Unless you have a system of more general pastoral care you do not pick up children who have achieved at a low level but could do better."

Some additional points emerged in a subsequent discussion with Mr Box, who felt that the pastoral system was more responsive to the general situation than did Mr. Madling. He felt that the remedial group had a generous share of the resources and an exceptionally well-trained staff, but he agreed that the larger proportion of non-academic children did not have any special
attention paid to them. "We tend to provide generously for remedial children who need help, but the next group up is more difficult. We don't know how to provide for their special needs." He spoke as well about the bitterness of the children placed in the bottom regular stream without any special provision for their teaching, comparing it with the remedial group who seemed adequately cared for.

**The Tutorial and Careers Staff**

Discussion with the Careers Master, Mr. Nelson, and three Heads of House gave a contrasting view of the difficulties in modern education and in the problems presented to South End. These senior teachers presented a unified view that there was an erosion of experience, a disintegration of traditional values and an insistence on personality cult among younger
teachers. They felt that students needed "the discipline of work" in order to learn anything and that the modern ideas of getting students interested in something in order to "turn them on" had had its day. The pendulum was swinging back to hard work, moral commitment, and "character building". They presented a thoughtful picture of the difficulty in dealing both with younger staff and with a new generation of students, but there was a general consensus that an effort needed to be made, not so much to make everything relevant to the students, but to make the students understand the relevance of traditional values.

Consistent with this view, was their feeling that relevant curriculum revision could be accomplished within the existing educational framework—that the need was to make subject material relevant to the occupational opportunities in the surrounding area, rather than
to make the student alert to problems he would encounter later in his life.

In response to a question asking whether current curriculum was suitable for working class children, Mr. Nelson answered: "Yes, there are three modes whereby Certificate of Secondary Education examinations are set, and Mode III allows us to design our own syllabus. With the school-leaving age going up, we will have more disgruntled students. We must ask ourselves, "Is the work we're doing relevant to this group?" We will be making changes in the curriculum. For instance, we are surrounded by computer firms, so we have set an examination based on computer maths. We are also surrounded by historical places, which we could use for local subject design. We can therefore make the curriculum suitable for a more working class population but within the guidelines set by the Examination Boards."
In discussing the relationship of career choice and tutorial (or pastoral) care, this group stressed the acquisition of traditional skills—as demonstrated by examination results and formal qualifications—and the value of disciplined work and character formation. They agreed among themselves that adolescents "in nine cases out of ten just do not know what they are intending to do." Describing the multiple pressures on children from parents, work requirements, and school, one head of house, Mr. Jacobs, said, "In the world we are moving into now, at the end of the 5th year they are sophisticated and adult—craving to be out and part of society. I have to say to them that qualifications give you a better chance. If examination incentive were removed, they wouldn't stay on. I know it is wrong in a lot of ways, but it does succeed in getting them a better education. Perhaps it's better to stay into the
lower 6th even with this form of blackmail."

They eschewed "modern notions" of acceding to student interests, and held instead that discipline and hard work would leave the student with more to show for his education. Mr. Nelson said, "People have been saying previous things such as, 'If you interest them they will go along with you and learn', for instance. I don't think that's proper," and in this statement he was seconded by a house master; "It's the climate that is different, the way people are brought up. I would like to see some of the old-fashioned discipline come back. Hard work imposes discipline. If we had no examinations in this school, many people would not learn." They indicated that younger, less structured teachers felt they had the answer, but it was generally to the older, more traditional teachers that the students turned when trouble.
All this points to a split in the faculty between those who feel that current lack of guidance for students is a sign of the dissipation of traditional values, and those, represented in part by Mr. Madling, who feels that new skills and approaches are required. This split was further illustrated in Mr. Nelson's view of appropriate preparation for career choice. He was satisfied that the standard 5th form careers interview, combined with good exam preparation, enabled most adolescents to make appropriate decisions about occupation. In reflecting on the Careers Guidance programme, he said:

"If I heard you correctly, you feel 5th formers feel leaving school is leaving a friendly place, and the world they are entering is a hostile one. We find the less able ones are anxious to leave because they feel or have been made to feel inadequate. They have failed or partially failed in academic things and they are anxious to get out into the world, to get a
fresh start, to earn money, and to have the adult status that comes from earning money. It is probably true to say that these people have wanted to go to work, but in a world where they would be better adults and better able to cope. Those who come back tell us that then they want to be known and recognised and that they feel more successful now."

P.S. Thus the school staff was composed of people with at least two views about student guidance and school leaving. We can keep this as a background while considering the adolescent group, and then relate issues from the two sectors.

**The Group**

We now turn to the student group at South End. We were struck immediately with the ability of the members of this group to articulate their concerns, to reflect, debate and grow. The easy use of verbal material came as a striking contrast to the less articulate 5th form groups with which we
had been meeting. Since this group represented a significantly different population of adolescents (one which had grown a year older and had twice elected to stay in school) many issues were clarified for us by them.

The group made particularly rich use of their experience. The dream material of one of its members around examination taking and school leaving is most illuminating. But, first, I want to consider some of the major issues confronted by them during the 5 month span of our meetings.

"Leaving school is like being born"

Mid-way through our first meeting with this group, one boy, Benjamin, said, "Leaving school is like being born; it's like being pushed out of your mother's womb and when you're out, you're useless. It seems your whole life is getting ready for and taking exams—and that they all lead to
nothing." Another boy, Tom, compared school to a prison: "Even though it's like a prison. I'm scared to leave because I don't have anything fixed up outside. I'm afraid if I leave without anything fixed up that's good, it will be like going to pieces. It would be nice to be pushed out into something you enjoy or want to do."

The view emerged quickly of the school as a poor parent—one who does not prepare her children for growing up into the world outside the womb. In contrast to Mr. Nelson's view that non-academic adolescents were happy to leave, we had this group—somewhat more academic to be sure, saying that they could see no sustenance beyond school. That feeling persisted throughout our work with the group, and our focus came to lie in modifying the feeling of dread about the unknowns which lay ahead—unknowns stemming both from the wider world, and from within
oneself.

"It's frightening because you have no one to turn to"

By analogy, therefore, no breast awaits the helpless infant this time—the mother is felt to abandon her newborn to the threatening world. Mr Madling's feeling that school was a protected place for several of our group members was confirmed by contrasting the isolation they anticipated in facing the world after school. There seemed to be no knowledgeable, sympathetic person to turn to as the adolescent began to grow up, and the process of leaving school and beginning a career was seen as having to be done alone. It was here that the inability of the pastoral or tutorial system to be more available seemed particularly evident, for parents were also felt to be frightened and not helpful at this point for several reasons. Group members agreed that a
sister or older friend might be most helpful, and not too frightened to help. Consequently, the adolescents felt most isolated at a time they had expected to be able to look to wiser adults for help with major decisions.

Bhunu, an Indian girl said, "My parents are more worried than I am, and I don't want to worry them so we don't talk about what I'm going to do. My mother married early and can't communicate with me because she thinks I should be sitting and revising all the time, and should never go out. She kept on at college while she was having children and worked hard at it. She liked it when I wanted to be a nurse, and now that I'm changing my mind, she's upset." A west Indian girl, Sonya, said, "Parents know less than you do about what jobs are available because it's all changed since their time."
Contrasted to the feeling that parents did not know how to help, was the feeling that one might "let them down" during a "descent into adulthood". One of the childlike advantages had been the ability to fulfill parental fantasy about what one would become. Now, our group expressed the feelings that one of the liabilities of growing up was that parents grew more anxious as the children are seen not to be becoming what they had hoped for.

Teachers are also seen as not able to help. Often this complaint came out around the feeling that inadequate course offerings and poor counselling about subject alternatives seemed to threaten career choices after school. There were complaints about high staff turnover "so that no one gets to know what you can do in maths." The school was seen as a place which often functioned without adult personalities, and treated the
student as a cipher. The more intense contact with teachers for some students came in disciplinary action. In one case (that of Paolo who is discussed in a few pages) the student seemed to have provoked the disciplinary action in order to get attention immediately before exam period, when his anxiety was extreme.

From the school we heard that it had felt the difficulty of responding to the needs of many children in several circumstances. For instance, scheduling of this year's timetable had been handled by the deputy head, who had then been transferred. For one group of courses, students complained of having 6 maths teachers in a year and a half and this was confirmed by Mr Madling. It was due to the very high staff turnover rate, we began to feel that the school often felt as helpless as the students to overcome the constraints of circumstances.
The picture emerged of school, and parent, and child, all losing the idealised view of each other simultaneously. The parent and child were losing the ability to carry idealised fantasies for each other, and the school could no longer live up to the fantasy the child and his parent both had shared—that the school would provide when the chips were down. When child and parent realise that they each have human failings, the child loses the notion of the all-powerful parent, and the parent loses the notion of the child who will fulfill all the dreams and expectations. And both turn to the school as the place to fulfill more "realistic dreams" of worldly success. But they find the disappointments are here as well.

Under these multiple pressures, individual adolescents felt increasingly isolated, even from peers. For instance, the group members discovered that mostly they did not talk with each
other about their anxiety as exams approached, out of a fear they would further frighten themselves and each other by sharing worries.

**The Fate of Earlier Ambitions**

Some of the reluctance to pinpoint specific goals at the turn of school leaving seemed to relate to earlier disappointments. One boy, Ranjit, said, "You drop an idea when you find it is too hard and the qualifications required are beyond what you can do." Sonya said she wanted to be a doctor but decided not to when shown a film of people cutting up mice. Another boy said, "You don't set your eyes on something that is impossible. I wouldn't even try to think of something that is out of reach." And Paolo joined in, saying, "I wanted to be an architect, but was always told by teachers, 'You're a year too late to be an architect. You can't get into the courses now. You would waste a
Instead of seeing the increasingly real needs for their ambitions each of them felt a sense of loss at having to cope with both fantasy and reality. If we bear John Hill's work in mind, the developmental step at this stage would require a personal incorporation of the sense of increased vulnerability to failure along with an increasing notion of how actually to plan for a career in a way which surmounts the vulnerability. But in this group, the members often cover suspicion that their personal resources are inadequate by narrowing the number of options to be considered, and by surrendering to depression. It is as though the options had been stolen from them by their growing up, and nothing given in return in the way of increased adult options and ability to cope. Paolo could only see narrowing options, so that now he hung to the wish to
become a draughtsman as a kind of lesser architectural career. Benjamin felt he had had to forsake the system and go outside it for his interest in becoming a maker of musical instruments. And Ranjit felt he might not do well enough to become an engineer, but had nothing else to turn to. Yet it was hard to begin a search for other occupations.\(^9\)

**The Uses of Education**

The debate among members of staff about the relevance of various aspects of education to occupations was echoed by students. Benjamin felt one should sample a bit of everything to keep all possible human potential open, while Paolo said that he was accumulating specific skills to trade in on clear goals toward a specific job that he wanted. There were questions about whether learning had any intrinsic value of its own, and in a
more work-oriented sense, whether one should accumulate the specific skills and move into an area quickly. Could one afford to deal in favour of more growth, but more vulnerability as well? They questioned the relevance of various areas of curriculum for gaining an understanding of life, and themselves, although a need for the acquisition of more specific skills was not held in doubt.

In one discussion, the acquisition of knowledge and skills was discussed through the analogy of collecting trading stamps, and using the stamp catalogue to determine their value. Did the stamps have any intrinsic value (i.e. was knowledge of value for its own sake), as Benjamin maintained, or were they only useful for their trade-in potential (knowledge as a means to an end only), as most clearly stated by Paolo. What, in either case, was the use of the catalogue, and was the
process of becoming familiar with it part of the educational process itself, or merely a shopping trip?

Surprisingly, we discovered that either view, that the stamps were valuable in themselves, or through their trade-in value, could be used as a defence against anxiety. The dialogue between Benjamin and Paolo which began as theoretical, developed into an argument. And beneath the heat of the argument lay the fear of each that his approach would leave him vulnerable. The discussion of the shared discovery of vulnerability in any approach led several class members to express considerable relief. In fact, Paolo, who began by seeming more fixed in his approach, ended by feeling he had more alternatives while Benjamin who at first seemed more flexible was curiously untouched by this session.
The Development of a Strategy

The entire course of the group focused on the development of a strategy of approach to occupational choice, melding the effects of one's own anxiety with the constraints and the opportunities in reality, but one session was a particularly graphic demonstration of the way in which planning any strategy involves a weighing of the defensive aspects against the creative and destructive aspects.

In this session, we took up the question of what group members would do if they failed an exam en route to pursuing a career—for instance in attempting to become a doctor. Paolo said he would have to choose an entirely different life. The difficulty became more graphic when we decided to describe the route of two friends who had the same ambition, but one of them had difficulty pursuing it. By diagramming the life course of
each, we located the nodal decision points, the kind of performance required in different phases, and the consequences of success or failure. In so doing, we were able to imagine, describe, and investigate, the kinds of anxiety and the personal constraints for each of the paths, and to compare differing personal reactions among group members. The diagram of this session is given in Figure 1, but the discussion of anxiety, constraints, and consequences is the crucial part of this experience. For instance, Paolo felt that if he wanted to be a doctor but failed, he would have to change fields entirely. A major reason he gave was that he could not come face to face with a successful friend if he had to take a lower position than the one he originally hoped for.

The Pull to Regression when Anxiety was High

Anxiety about impending exams, school
leaving, and planning for a job became greater as the year progressed. Some adolescents withdrew to a new isolation, others became more ambivalent and undecided about plans for the following year. One boy said, "I'm staying on because I'm too lazy to leave." We knew he was not particularly lazy—but he did become increasingly confused. They discussed the temptation of old, discarded ambitions, although no one opted for them.

The threat of the feeling of impending helplessness, the loss of the school, and the crippling effects of anxiety became more manifest. The anxiety began to yield at the end of the year with the acknowledgement of sadness and a feeling of loss. I doubt that they could have recognised the significance of the feeling of loss without the kind of experience we shared. But with it, they were able to look at the defensive
aspects of shutting out sadness. In our last session, Gopal said, "A friend comes up and talks to me and I begin to feel sad and out of place because I'm leaving. I was happy at home this morning, but when I get here. I'm sad."

Our role in helping moderate anxiety involved promoting awareness of the effects of unrecognised mourning and thus modifying them. We will have more to say about this issue in the chapter on mourning of the loss of school. I do not think Gopal would have been able to understand the significance of his sadness without an experience such as the one he shared with us.

**Paolo's Dream**

One of the group members, Paolo, failed dramatically to complete his plans for successful school-leaving. And because he had frequently stressed the importance of doing so, it was a
particularly poignant failure. And because he had shared a good deal of himself with us, we were in a position to learn from his experience. Paolo is presented as a vivid illustration of the role of anxiety, loss and mourning during the psychosocial transition from school to work. Our intervention was not enough to help Paolo overcome his anxiety, but it was clear that he had cut himself off from others at the school who were available and might have been able to help him. His anxiety mounted unnoticed at a time when he was threatened not only with the loss of school, but also with the loss of his entire family. After the following detailed recounting of our experience with Paolo, I will return to contrast the school's assessment of its pastoral system with the needs he presents.

A tutor had summed up a view of Paolo two years earlier in saying, "This is a good report of a
solid and reliable worker." There was a brief mention that his mother had died four years before we met him and that a family agency had been involved with his family for about six months following that. He was said to have coped well, with his father's support, and to have continued to work hard throughout the period immediately following his mother's death. He worked harder in subjects he liked and did well in them, but occasionally made a poor effort in subjects less related to his interests in architecture.

About three weeks before our group ended, there was a lull in discussion. After a discussion of the way dreams and daydreams fill gaps, Paolo paused and then said that he recently had a dream.

"I have my art exam in ten days' time and don't think about it but I had a dream about my art exam. I saw myself drawing these pictures and had several small pictures of ideas on one picture and showed them to Mr.
Z., the head of art. He said, "You can't do that for the exam." Then I drew a picture of a crucifix, looking down from above in the centre. (Here Paolo sketched the picture forms. See illustration). A man was on the crucifix and the picture rotated so that I could see his face which was very blurred. It wasn't at all clear who it was. There were two other pictures, one above and one below the crucifix. One was a house and a car; it was in colour, all red and misty. In front of the crucifix it was pale brown and pink; and behind it was a dark cloud and there was nothing there. I wanted to do that picture. Mr. Z. keeps telling us to make a selection for the picture we're going to do for our exam, to choose the best idea we have and then improve on it. I told him I wanted to do that one, but he didn't quite get the idea of it."
When I asked Paolo who it was on the cross, he said he didn't know, but it might be him when he was taking the exam. He described the picture as rather pink with rosy clouds before it and that neither the face nor the genitals of the man could be seen, because he had a loin cloth on.
"There wasn't any face on it. I thought it might be me up there. I'm going to be dead if I fail my exams. The picture of the house and car is a symbol of a job and of passing exams. The whole area is cloudy but I couldn't see any other people whose face it could have been. My art teacher, and the head of art, were there when I said I wanted to do this picture. To begin with the teacher wouldn't let me do it and then he said I could. I think it's a "get down to work" dream. That night I was meant to be revising for the test. I went to see my girlfriend who was out so I came back, but I had trouble working."\textsuperscript{10}

I asked about his going to see his girlfriend. He said,

"I hadn't been thinking about my art exam. I'd just been out and it was late and I had been thinking about my girl friend. I was thinking 'silly female'. I went to her house and she wasn't in. I was thinking she was at a party, maybe baby-sitting, making up things where she might be. Perhaps she went with her mother to the cinema."

I wondered if he had been searching for his
girlfriend as someone who could give him comfort when he was feeling anxious about revising, and when he was feeling that he was in a dangerous position. I said to the group that "sometimes when people are anxious about exams they like someone to make them feel more comfortable, and girlfriends might be a pretty good bet for that. If it were really Paolo on the cross, it sounded as though he was pretty alone." He added,

"Well, I wouldn't have been able to revise if I had been with her, so we planned not to be together that evening. I got home and sat down to study and then decided I wanted to see her so I went 6 or 7 miles by bus, I could have called her but I didn't want to. When I got there she was out. I felt even more alone, so I came home and went to bed thinking about her; that's when I had the dream. I don't know why I didn't telephone her, I could have."

Gopal then said, "My girlfriend called me up earlier in the evening. I said I'd like to go over and see her
but she wouldn't let me. I got the feeling that something would happen to her." Bhunu said she thought it was the usual practice for the art teacher to allow people to do pictures they wanted to paint, and Paolo replied, "In the dream I asked because I wanted to be sure I was doing the right thing." Bhunu said, "I think it has something to do with his girlfriend. He's left alone and then he has to decide to ask the question. Gopal agreed that talking about this dream stirred something up. He also was thinking about Paolo's dream.

At this point I said I thought that the anxiety in the dream was about "getting crucified" if one failed exams. That was a situation that all of them seemed to be in. Paolo's earlier denial of anxiety left him in the more vulnerable position of having to look for comfort without knowing quite why, and therefore seeking solace in ways that kept him from meeting his anxiety with appropriate steps.
For instance, he could have revised part of the time and then arranged to meet his girlfriend. The issue was shared by the whole group, so they should be able to learn from looking at Paolo's dream and his vivid picture of the consequences of exam failure. Paolo was then able to say that he thought,

"The cloud in the back of the man was very threatening—dangerous and dark ... I can't say anything about it. But it is what will happen if I fail."

I said in a few words that anxiety could be used as a positive force towards work rather than as an overwhelming inhibition. After all, "People don't have to put off revision longer than they should, and it might answer your anxiety to buckle down to work."

What I didn't say had to do with thoughts about the nature of the anxiety; the castration
threat implied in the very vague genitals, the isolation of the figure, the loss of identity in the blurred face as Paolo faced the threat of exam failure and the fantasy views of either success or failure. He seemed "nailed to the spot", unable to move either ahead or backwards. At least some of these things could have been discussed with him, but there were limits implied by the context in which they emerged and on the time available to us.

The next, week Paolo arrived in the middle of the group session, reporting that he had seen the Senior House Master even though he had not been called to see him. He had accompanied his girlfriend who had been called in for something else and had proceeded to get himself into trouble. He said it was time to tell the House Master off. The predictable result was that he was censured severely. The previous week he had only dreamed
about "being crucified". This week he had effectively got himself crucified. I wondered out loud if this wasn't still a function of his continuing anxiety. His open physical relationship with his girlfriend in school was constantly getting him into trouble with some of the more traditional masters. And we were able to wonder together whether Paolo wasn't in the process of getting into the trouble for the first time in his school career as a solution to his anxiety about leaving it. Paolo said, "I decided to go and see him because he can't throw me out of school. So I can have a go at him and say what I've always wanted to say." It looked as though Paolo's acting out was not too severe to be managed.

The last week of our regular meetings Paolo showed a great deal of denial, saying,

"I don't think leaving bothers people. People have left me. My mother left four years ago
(when she died), then my little sister left, now my big sister has left. Being left is nothing new to me. It's what happens every day. You get used to it. School just seems to fade away in the background. I don't feel anything great about leaving school. I'll just go home the same as usual, and that's that."

This was just before exams, he was also able to report on having finished his art exam that the dream had been about the previous week.

"I did the dream as a nightmare and painted an open cavern, a tombstone and a broken cross. The man was asleep. All the things in the bedroom were with him. It came out quite well. I used dull greys and greens, pale brown, and only a little pink. The bed was pink. I thought I'd use dull colours for a nightmare to make out that he was all alone."

I pointed out that he had left out much of the previous use of pink which might have been more optimistic. He only retained that for the bed. Someone else pointed out that he was having a bad dream, but on a comfortable bed. We did not
pursue the art exam, and Paolo seemed satisfied with it.

Alarmingly, we heard from Mr. Madling that on the evening before his first set of written exams, Paolo had been sitting revising in his bedroom and had thought he had seen a face in the window outside. In alarm he hit out at the face breaking the window and injuring his right hand so badly that he could not write. It developed that all the exams had to be handwritten, and Paolo was unable to take any of his exams. It was clear both to Mr. Madling and to us that Paolo had been overwhelmed while studying for exams. He had not been able to contain the anxiety that had been evidenced in our sessions. In his denial, the staunch containment of his anxiety had broken down, and the worst of his nightmares had been realised. Fortunately, he left school to take the same job he would have taken if he had taken
exams with a plan to take them the following year.

Paolo's projective stories given on response to the Authority Relations Test,\textsuperscript{11} taken soon after damaging his hand, tell us a good deal. He sees a world of hopeless, broken families, of people wishing for help but coerced into giving up ambitions and love, threatened with murderous extinction. Two responses are particularly useful. To a colour card of a variety of people in a park setting he says:

"This is a girl all alone, most probably her boyfriend has just left her. Her mother and father have been arguing with her. Because of the argument she turned to her boyfriend to get love and understanding which she didn't get from her parents. She sees all the people enjoying themselves—the little children—and remembers that she was going to get married and now she doesn't know what to do. She has been rejected by all the people she needed the most. There's a man in the bushes there, waiting for
someone like her to come along. She'll probably go with him, in his car—not because she wants to, but because she feels so alone. It'll probably lead to one of those murders or something."

In response to a TAT card showing a small boy staring at a violin he says,

"I think this little boy is looking at the violin because he wants to learn to play it well—like a great violinist. But he just can't do it, and is thinking of failure. Perhaps he has been told that if he practises hard, he will make it but I think he knows he won't. He has considered dropping it. It is something he'll have to decide for himself. He wants to play it well but would it just be a waste of time and effort? If he loves music, he won't want to give it up, but I think he knows it is just not worth the bother."

Paolo's experience was one that we saw developing right under our noses and were unable either to predict or to contain. For him a brief intervention was inadequate to avert a crisis that
had been developing over a number of years. Paolo's denial, his search for superficial solutions and his refusal to face the underlying issues make up a long-standing pattern which had gone unnoticed and remained hidden while it formed. His contact with tutorial personnel was intense only when he finally went essentially in order to be punished.

In retrospect he is an adolescent severely threatened by a number of major concurrent losses. His mother died four years ago and his family, we knew, were moving out of the country just as he was leaving school. The superficial "Maginot Line" erected defensively against "invaders" from all directions failed finally when the unexpected invader from his fantasy appeared in the window. (The description of the face in the window seemed clearly to Mr. Madling and to us to be an imaginary, almost hallucinatory
projection, an anxious messenger from his inner world).

There is nothing in the available records to indicate that Paolo had had an unstable or anxiety-laden young childhood. Indeed his development and presentation was that of a rather stable solid citizen. A bit of bravado and mild superficiality formed a shell surrounding a ferment of anxiety. His facade was only a cover masking a tumultuous interior. The interior was unavailable to his own process of inspection. In the group, we seemed to be making some inroads, but at a time when the turmoil was becoming more overt than it ever had in his past—even more than at the time of his mother's death four years previously.

The mode of coping with the crisis presumably established at that earlier loss was to get by with a good show, without any outward sign of weakness
or emotion. This detachment was a poor defence against the later overwhelming anxiety which came up during exams. The complex, intense focus of issues from several courses, surfaced dramatically as exams began. It was as though he had to defend against the process of revising itself since attempting to revise brought the anxieties to mind. It was when he finally tried to revise that the illusion appeared, embodying the anxiety he had been running from. In Paolo's own terms, the black, unknown, nightmarish fate he feared if he failed his exams had descended.

Paolo should be seen within the theoretical framework of someone who has handled his losses and his mourning by becoming detached.12 Overtly he gets along well with peers, but from the material volunteered in the groups and given in his projective tests we know that he clings to important figures who he feels always threaten to
abandon him. The pattern is reminiscent of children who cling anxiously to mothers whose continued presence is felt to be uncertain. One of the responses to loss in early childhood is the development of a kind of detachment with "pseudo-independence" which makes the further growth of personal relationships difficult. This pattern leads to a personality characterised by superficiality of relationships which serve to avoid the danger of being abandoned by someone with whom one is in a deeper relationship. Paolo fits this pattern of someone who is unable to find his supporting mothering object. In one projective test he says, "Perhaps the man's wife is expecting another baby and he doesn't have a job." In another: "A girl all alone, most probably her boyfriend has just left her ... she turned to her boyfriend to get love and understanding which she didn't get from her parents." His stories are full of
characters seeking love, unable to get it, being fired from jobs, being unable to support the ones they love, and feeling abandoned. Paolo's "pseudo-independent" single-mindedness emerges as a fragile attempt to cover his loneliness, grief and fragility. There is no one in school to turn to for guidance through the final educational experience of examinations and a haunting internal figure coming to pay a visit.

There is no way of knowing who it was that appeared in his dream. Was it his mother? Or himself with a blurred face, the failing Christ-like figure of his dream, threatening him with failure in his Messianic attempts to save himself and restore goodness to his family? Breaking the glass, he also breaks a fragile ego strength and literally fractures his ability to produce. Temporarily his hand was so acutely scarred that he was unable to write and as the rules of the examinations forbid the use of
dictation for sitting an examination he was unable to complete his exam schedule.

From Paolo's own report, what happens to him from this point on is, to use a favourite term, "a bit dicey", we know that he has trouble with the idea of restitution, reparation and recovery. We also know that he has now passed out of the tutorial system of the school and that whether he takes his exams or not in the future will depend almost entirely on whether he can muster the ego strength to face his anxiety yet a second time. From covering his wish for attachment with a pseudo-independent detachment and a pseudo-self-reliant stance, Paolo has entered the unknown world of his own nightmare. Although Paolo's own comment about this event was, "I guess I'll have to stay on until January and take my exams then", it fortunately turned out that his employer was willing to give him provisional employment so that
he didn't "have to stay on" in defeat. A benign employer could help him overcome this major setback.

**Paolo and the School**

In the beginning of this chapter, I drew the contrast between two staff attitudes: one group wished for increased flexibility and attention to student development through increased tutorial programming; the other group advocated a firm approach to work tasks and goals. An interesting aspect of the student group was its sharing of both attitudes, and the difficulty resolving the two sides of the school's split: the adolescents felt the school lent them less support than they needed in achieving goals for specific skills, and that it provided too little of the more personal aspects of support. And this dissatisfaction echoed the feelings of some of the staff, some of whom felt
that neither task was adequately served. Mr. Madling had felt that the pastoral tasks were given too low a functional priority, while the group of senior tutors felt that inadequate attention was paid to traditional learning.

In a sense, the adolescents’ debate in this school about the uses of education echoes the staff division: is education an end in itself or is it a means to an end? And if the question is asked in this polarised way, is the adolescent the one to live out the debate, feeling torn himself in the process? Paolo, living half the argument by treating his education solely as a means to an end, is confronted finally by his dread and isolation. Agreeing with one of the positions in the school, he is let down by his own inability to use the pastoral system for support, and by the school's inability to provide adequate support to him in the crisis deriving both from his personal situation
and from the process of school leaving.

My purpose here is not to decry the school's lack of support: indeed, as it happened, Paolo had more recourse than could reasonably be expected of any pastoral system. It is rather to present his dilemma as representative, and clear because more extreme, of the irresolute student whose inner conflict echoes the polarisation of policy within the school. When the school cannot mediate such differences, the student is also thrown back on his own failing resources.

NOTES

1 We were unable to meet with 5th form students from this school because of a clear priority given to examination preparation for them. 6th form scheduling was more flexible, however.

2 The intake at South End was changing as an effect of ILEA policy removing discretionary selection and emphasising more geographic assignment of students.

3 For a discussion of prejudice and its role in school leaving, see the discussion in Chapter 15.
As previously discussed, the words "pastoral", "tutorial" and "counselling" were each felt to be inadequate expressions for the function of a teacher attending, as his principal duty, to aspects of personal growth needs. To a large extent, we began to use them interchangeably.

It was interesting for us to hear this, for several students in our group had complained that the new computer maths syllabus had been so alien to them that two of them had sought tutoring outside the school in order to pass standard maths 'O' levels. They were quite bitter about what they perceived as the refusal of the school to continue to offer standard maths.

This may be part of the lack of a middle group in London schools described about Lake School. There is in general no group to mediate between these two sides as there is no large group with an intermediate level of experience.

This is a partial statement of my understanding of adolescent reactions to leaving school, which more accurately was intended to encompass the notion of the idealisation of the lost object.

Among all the groups we saw, it was unique to this one to have a concept of a "career", with all the developmental implications that implies. Whether this difference corresponded to a higher educational level, a year's more maturity, or personal differences could not be determined.

The school had colluded in a delusion for Ranjit. For years his reports read, "Ranjit will have to work harder if he wants to pass examinations in the subjects required for
engineering." The same subject reports also said, "Ranjit is working very satisfactorily and diligently, often at his top capacity."

10 Although my interest in dream material derives from my training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, the material was used by the whole group to explore the shared themes of anxiety, loss and mourning in a learning sense. No attempt to be "therapeutic" was made or intended.

11 See discussion of this instrument in Chapter 2.

12 Bowlby, 1969: 1973
CHAPTER 9

The Adolescent in his Dilemma

We have now taken a look at some of the groups of adolescents as our research team saw them in the school. In the case of Susan and Paolo (Chapters 7 and 8) we relied on individual group members to focus our understanding of some more general and group adolescent issues. I would now like to consider the dilemma of the individual adolescent from his own perspective. What does it feel like from inside the adolescent? What anxieties does he feel in approaching the transition?

This chapter draws on experience with seven adolescents in schools and in a clinic offering psychotherapeutic intervention. It represents an
attempt to understand aspects of the adolescent's anxieties in those two environments: a) the anxiety of the adolescent in the school; b) the anxiety of the adolescent within his family and of the family about its adolescent. What we discover (certainly not for the first time) in looking at our subject in his two major environments, is the discontinuity between the people in those settings who influence him the most. The adolescent himself is the only regular go-between for family and school. Since this will turn out to be true for the adolescent's role as the lonely go-between for school and work as well, we begin to see him as the sole convenor of the complex, competing systems which he alone must span. In the final section of this chapter, I begin to discuss the policy implications of this finding—to wonder if it must continue to be so and whether we might begin to modify it.
The first three adolescents presented here were seen only at school. They embody particular difficulties in negotiating the transition from school to work. Of these, we will focus on Annette primarily and then add further material to that previously presented about Susan and Paolo.

1) The Dilemma in the School

ANNETTE (Thomaston School)

Annette is a pretty if somewhat dishevelled girl of medium height with shoulder-length black hair who looked quietly depressed all year. She usually sat amongst a group of four girls and often talked quietly with Cathy during the sessions at Thomaston School. From the beginning she said that she had plans to stay in school for another year in order to get the requisite credentials for art school. She had talked to the careers teacher who felt that things ought to go pretty well and
that she ought to get into art college. In the beginning of our meetings in November she seemed to be the member of our group who was most clear about her future plans, but she always looked depressed and slightly withdrawn. I learned, as the year went on, that she was one of a group of four girls who kept themselves to themselves and felt that the school was against them. Although all four were of above average intelligence, they had not been able to do lessons and work responsibly all that year.

Annette's participation in the group sessions was only moderately active to begin with, but suddenly became more intense in April.

In one session we suggested that we take up the theme of "a parent's response to a bad school report". Annette initially agreed to play the role of a child who had the bad report. Her friend, Cathy,
also from the clique, wanted to be her mother. She wanted to model the role after her own mother, who was irate and indecisive and went on to say, "We need a Dad, as well, and I can't do it all on my own." Annette objected. She wanted a kindly mother, and refused to have any father around at all. "Let's pretend the father's dead", she said. I suggested that they reverse roles. Because Annette seemed blocked in trying to play the daughter, she agreed to play father, while my colleague, Miss Davis, played mother. Surprisingly Annette now seemed extremely eager to take up the role of father. She seemed to have excluded it because she had all-too-good an idea of how she wanted it portrayed.

As the story developed Cathy as daughter came in with a poor report. "Father" began to beat her around the head and shoulders, shouting, "You're not my daughter anyhow." When "mother"
intervened and said that he shouldn't beat her, he stopped and reluctantly consented to go up to the school. Annette (playing her own father) said to the teacher at school, "Do you think it's worthwhile leaving her here for another year?" The "teacher" gave the advice that "although she had mucked about in the 5th form, she might realise some things in the 6th form."

Father/Annette said, "well, at least if she leaves school she'll earn her keep. I'm annoyed and fed up with her because whenever she's had a bad report she's promised to do better and hasn't."

When I asked Annette what she was going to do with her resistant daughter, she was hesitant to answer. Finally she said that she was really just sending us up and that "I didn't mean that Cathy isn't my child but I do get annoyed." "Everyone else has always bent over backwards for Cathy", she said, "and she ought to realise what people
have been doing for her."

It wasn't clear what the implication of this group session was at the time but it became clear when we were faced with a much more immediate discussion about school-leaving as the end of the year approached. Annette told us she was "on report" which meant that "after every lesson the teacher has to sign a card and comment on the lesson so that my tutor can see how things are going". This was the reason that her parents were coming to see the head of house and had decided that she should leave school. "My parents said that I should stay last year but now they say it's a waste of time. They don't want me out. They just say I'm not doing enough work in all my subjects. It's a possibility I could stay on but I don't think so." We asked if she or her parents would decide. "I don't really know. They do all the talking. Miss Stern often tells me what to do. My mum has to
look after me for another year if I stay on. They seem to think that if I stay on it'll be a burden to them, so they have to have the teachers' confirmation that I've been to a lesson. They don't believe me any more; they have to have the teacher's answer."

Mike asked what home was like and Annette answered, "There really isn't anything wrong at home. When it comes to school, and I skipped a couple of lessons this year, they blew up about it when they found out. If you don't do any homework, for instance, they think that school isn't doing you any good. They come home, have done a hard day's work, and think that we've had such a good time at school. When my mum's doing jobs you feel you ought to be helping in the house, too, and if you don't they think you're a burden and you ought to go to work."
Annette went on to talk about her position at home in response to questions from other group members. "I'm the oldest, 16. I've a sister 14 and a brother 13. I think that I get treated unfairly; everyone ought to be treated the same. If there isn't enough to go round it ought to be shared out. When my mum was young she wasn't allowed to listen to pop music and she went to a convent and my dad was just the opposite. He did as he pleased. But now it's my dad who makes me take down my posters and won't let me have my room the way I want it, not my mum. One of them gets jealous of what the other one decides. They're like that because they don't get on."

When we returned to the discussion of how the school might be helpful to Annette, I asked her how we might help. She said she didn't know but it did appear that we were expected to write something for her report. I suggested that the full
class join in and write something that reflected group sentiment and "would stand a chance of being helpful to Annette". She really didn't know what she would like us to write, so I asked if she felt she knew what the trouble was. She said, "I don't know really. I don't know if it would be helpful for Miss Stern to know anything. I don't know what she ought to know." I asked if it would be helpful if she knew that Annette was concerned about what was happening to her and about her feeling that her parents were making all the decisions. Mike chimed in at this point to say, "Tell them that she's aware about what's going on."

After more discussion, we wrote the following note:

"Our group feels that Annette knows a lot about what's going on in her life, but has some trouble talking with other people who might help her. She would like to stay on at school, but is afraid that the school does not
want her to and that her parents feel that it would be a waste of time. She thinks she's getting adequate help with this problem, but I think she could use more help. (Signed) Dr. Scharff."

I knew from group material of the previous week that Annette was quite envious of "favoured classmates", because she joined heartily in a discussion on the unfairness of the prefect system in which students who behaved themselves were accorded more privileges. She and most of our group felt excluded by the school, treated as "unfavoured stepchildren". When we asked why she felt this had happened, she said, "It's because I've made a mess of school. I can't go to the teachers after I've made such a mess, because they don't want me to stay. A lot of the teachers have complained because I haven't been to my lessons. They say I've messed up and that I cannot stay at school. I don't think I can ever clean up the mess
I've made. One teacher told us there's no point in wasting their time if we don't co-operate."

We met with staff later that day and they brought up the question of Annette. It turned out that Miss Stern had scheduled a meeting with Annette's parents, but had no idea what she would do when she met them. Her subsequent report revealed that the parents were fighting violently and using Annette as a lever between them. Mother apparently had always thought Annette should stay on a school, but when she proposed this father would shout that Annette "had made a mess of school" and begin another fight. Annette seemed trying to please both mother and father by dropping out of school to avoid being the cause of these family fights. Her school career seemed about to be ended as a sacrifice to her family. The feeling that no-one cared about her at school followed the feeling that nobody cared about her
at home. It put her school career very much in the middle of her parents' arguments, but it also followed from a chronically poor performance at school and from her own low self-esteem. In sum, it reflected both family dynamics (her role as the bad child at home) and failure at school.

We were able to learn from Annette's school record that she was a child who had a progressive slide during her 3 years at Thomaston.\textsuperscript{2} When she came from primary school her parents had wanted her to go to grammar school. But there was already evidence of a disorganisation in the family. Her previous records contained reports of frequent absences and of a wavering attitude. During 4th and 5th years of school she was reported to be doing better. She was said to have good language ability, but to be distracted in subjects which she didn't like. For instance, she had been quite skilful in art and needlework but
was noted to be dreamy and unstable. She could be original and verbally creative, but in some subjects she hardly worked at all.

Miss Stern was eager for advice about how to best work with Annette's family. In the absence of a general programme of tutorial training for her, we offered some recommendations to Miss Stern about investigating with the family in order to begin freeing Annette's future from her parents' turbulent marriage. It looked to us as though Annette's wish to stay on in school was being exploited by the family. The threat that her parents might split up over her decision made her feel that she was the cause of the difficulty. At the same time, her self-sacrifice could only lower her self-esteem and deepen her depression. Staff also told us that, of this clique of four withdrawn girls, the other three had responded to previous intense tutorial efforts, but Annette's had become
increasingly inaccessible. It looked as though she was now acting the role of the "non-performer" for all four girls. Her withdrawn rebelliousness, common to certain groups of adolescents, continued something they had shared until recently.

As we continued consultation with the school staff, we were able to be of some help, although it became apparent that more training in counselling would have been of more help to them. Eventually, they were able to help Annette persuade her mother to allow her another year at school, aimed toward art school. The note that Annette brought to Miss Stern seemed to have been instrumental. Miss Stern had been interested in helping Annette from the beginning. What she could not convey to her was that it was not a punitive effort as, indeed, it had not been. The note was instrumental in bringing part of Annette's ego that could form an
alliance with Miss Stern "into the room" for them to work with. Until then Annette had felt that if she tried to help herself, she would be sabotaging her family. Now she began to split off her alliance with her family from an alliance with her own growth, and she could therefore engage in constructive work with Miss Stern.

Annette represents one kind of depression in adolescence. Her situation reflects both the dynamics of her family and her chronically low self-esteem. Her inability to plan her next year, even in view of some very clear life goals, was a result of depressive anxiety coupled with a real family situation which had the active, although unconscious, effect of inhibiting her continued performance. Both parents felt her presence and her schooling impinged upon them, but intervention, through our group and, more importantly, through the tutorial staff, enabled her
to clear a space for an additional year of "moratorium" from the outside world, and, hopefully, from her family.

Annette's view of Herself, Her Family and Authorities

Since we did not conduct interviews with either Annette or her family, the responses she gave to the "Authority Relations Test" provided us with the best indications of her views and expectations of family and school. They are presented in some detail to add up in considering the relationship of her perceptions with the difficulties she had in making decisions about her future.

Annette's responses reflect her hopelessness and doubts about her own work. Without any anger about the authorities around her she expresses a pervasive hopelessness about whether people can expect to lead a worthwhile life. It's not
surprising in this light that she doesn't feel it's worth the trouble to make advances to teachers. For instance, the response to a card which shows a teenage couple facing a policeman, is particularly relevant to her inability to approach Miss Stern despite Miss Stern's expressed interest in her.

"A boy and girl have just been to a dance and there's been some trouble up there and somebody starts fighting. And they came out because one of their mates is involved. Otherwise they wouldn't have bothered. And they find this policeman. And they tell him what's going on down there and the policeman and a couple of other policemen go down there too. And they stop the fight, close the dance hall because there's too much fighting around there. And the consequences are, there's more fighting now because there's nothing to do at night except to make trouble in the streets."

In this story an innocent boy and girl approach the authorities who take what seemed to be interested and helpful steps. The consequences
are that a whole generation of children are left without a "home" for leisure, or any chance of enjoying themselves. The relation of this to their own aggression, displaced onto their mates, their innocence and attempts to do only what is right and sanctioned by society in reporting to the police, underscores the hopelessness of attempts to get help from authority figures. In Annette's view attempts to please elders end up benefiting no-one.

This card in the context of several other stories gives a consistent pattern: "No matter how hard one tries it always ends up as useless. There's no-one around who can really help." Responses to three other cards support this theme. In the first card is a young teacher.

"He's a new teacher at school and he's having a bit of trouble with the class. He finds he's always telling them to stop talking and he thinks he is not very good. They don't make
him feel very welcome but he keeps on because he thinks he's just got to keep on trying with them because this is his first teaching job."

The second card depicts the back of a woman seeing a doctor:

"Mrs Jones has come to the doctor for the third time in a month. There's really nothing wrong with her. She likes to think there is and so she complains about her legs, her back, her hips and so on, but every time he just sends her away with a prescription that won't do her much harm but not much good either because she's just wasting his time. So one day she comes and he's so fed up with her coming for no reason when there are other people around in genuine need, that he could be seeing to, that he tells her there is absolutely nothing wrong with her and only to come when she is genuinely ill. She's very annoyed as she gets up and walks out calling him names."

To the card showing a man leaving the house with a briefcase, she says:
"He's so bored that he steals money and runs away but is caught and gets 20 years in jail because it wasn't a planned job or anything."

These cards can be understood as relating to family matters and to Annette herself. Responses to two standard TAT cards are also informative. The card of a girl watching others on a farm gets this response:

"The mother and father of this girl whose name is Mary aren't well off. They work on this small farm they own. Mary goes to school and she would like to stay at school and pass her exams and get a well-paid job but her parents are unsure whether to let her do this as they can't afford to keep her at school."

To the card of a young boy staring at a violin:

"The little boy has just been given this as a present, and it's the last thing he wants because he doesn't know how to play it. He was expecting something different. He can't play it and he doesn't like the idea of learning and practising with it. His parents
insist he learn and he's not feeling very happy about it. He's just thinking to himself, how can I get out of it. I think after he's been made to learn, he'll enjoy it and he's glad of it after all and in the end he finds it a nice pastime."

Annette's description of a destitution of internal resources, the inhibiting effects of hopelessness and "sloth", the parents and social authority figures who may well try to help but cannot, lends her to point the finger at herself. There's no hope or job. She is clinically depressed. The chronic depression surrounding her and her hopelessness about trying to change her fate are magnified by the response she gets when she finally does reach out. What little we know about her family tells us that her family is inconsistent. When support does come from one parent, it is immediately undermined by the other parent. Small wonder that she brings to school the expectation that one cannot expect support even
when in desperate need. The story of the man who is so bored that he commits a crime and ends in jail voices her despair about ambition.

Annette's failure to implement a strategy of growth toward a chosen career was not a result of her own indecision. Her career interest has not wavered for a long time. The clinical term "depression" emphasises the immense distance she feels between her fantasied goal and any hope she had of reaching it. There was no doubt that she had the skills and intelligence to enter art school but her hopelessness, low self-esteem and impoverishment of internal figures make her feel too worthless ever to reach anything she wants. The harder she tries, the harder she fails.

Annette's version of the failure to synthesise fantasy and a hoped-for reality stems from a family struggle between parents which is carried
on through her. It is the negative picture of the use of work and career to satisfy inner needs. For her, work is sacrificed in order to maintain an inner world of stormy relationships to her loved figures. Pursuing an art career has grave implications in terms of Annette's hopes to realise ambitions. Satisfying one parent harms the other parent. The process of pursuing her career is dominated by the ambivalence of her relationships to both parents. A career which can usually be employed creatively to resolve inner conflict and thereby to overcome hopelessness, had become the vehicle for the very conflict it sought to solve. The continued life of this conflict is the real world and in Annette's inner world keeps her from pursuing schoolwork towards a productive career. It threatens to kill off any possibility of satisfaction in work for her.
PAOLO (South End School)

An extensive discussion of Paolo is included in the previous chapter on South End School. There it is presented as a demonstration of the use of material provided by one adolescent in carrying forward group themes and group work. I will not restate the details of it. Here, I wish to contrast Paolo's particular difficulties in realising his fantasies, hopes and ambitions with Annette's. Paolo had a clear ambition with clear consequences. Success in becoming a draughtsman could be directly transferred into a material wealth which would allow him to take care of those he loved. In fantasy, they would in turn take care of him and would not desert him in the way his mother had four years earlier by dying, and the rest of his family by moving away just as he left school.

But it was the feeling of abandonment by those crucial people which came back to him as he faced
exams. His own efforts to succeed in examinations triggered unbearable anxiety about the threat of impending separation from school. Success itself became the most threatening possibility, even though it was also the most hopeful one.

In Paolo's dream (see Chapter 8) material success was pictured facing him, but behind him was "something unmentionable." "It is what will happen if I fail my exams." It was not only failure which was "unmentionable". There were consequences of success which were also dreaded. Paolo's dream indicated that he was only "facing" success. But failure was always "at his back". In the final version of the painting, during his actual exam, he drew himself asleep on a bed of "something good" (which might include sexuality and productivity) but which was a very small part of an overall nightmare. Paolo pictured himself not only living in a nightmare, but also unable to
produce anything but artistic nightmares.

We can speculate that this may have been true because of the loss of the one stable "figure" left to him—that of the school itself. This is given partial support by his paradoxical behaviour concerning school figures in the last weeks before leaving school. From one he angrily seeks reprimand, from another help, from his girlfriend support, from ourselves understanding. It sounds like the paradoxical assortment of reactions shown by newly grieving people. Thus, the reaching out to teachers was partially done self-destructively. While asking one teacher for help in containing his anxiety, he reached out to others in ways that were sure to bring punishment. That he did this in the name of defending his girlfriend demonstrated which part of himself he felt he was defending with his aggression: the soft, feminine, and helpless part of himself, which needed the most
help but which might also be the most creative.

At exam time it did not need the "school authorities" to frighten Paolo. He was much more frightened by his own anxiety. Had it not been for a benign, thoughtful employer, Paolo might well have been out of school, out of a job and out of a family all at the same moment. Hardly an auspicious beginning for a 16 year old!

Paolo is an adolescent who demonstrates an intolerance for anxiety different from Annette's. The loosely applied controls of the school are inadequate to bolster his tolerance under stress. His oft-rehearsed theme of being left by mother, family and school adds up to an overwhelming feeling of separation and abandonment. He then imposes the expectation and fear of abandonment on the world around him and finds confirmation for his fear. There is no-one to turn to at school
and it becomes a nightmare. He comes back to report what happened to him, but there is no-one who is responsible for being available to him after his failure. Despite the presence of caring figures at school, Paolo stands a strong chance of becoming a chronic failure. He illustrates for us that the school has provided no-one to stand beside him as he moves into work, with a feeling of failure in school at his back. The absence of a supportive figure at school makes the most crucial difference for those adolescents who are without family support. Paolo points up the dual failing most graphically.

**SUSAN (Lake School)**

Susan is the "central character" of the sessions presented in Chapter 7. These portray her difficulties in school and her attempt to begin thinking about building a career. A pre-reading of
the psychodrama and discussion concerning Susan in Chapter 7 will allow us to focus here on her personal plight. Susan played an adolescent who was essentially orphaned as her school and parents reject her in frustration. The help that she gets from them is grudging, distant, and of no use to her. Her father's reluctant attempts to help her obtain training for the job of her dreams in drama school fail. Only when Sally comes to embody the process of mediation between school and work do things improve. Reparation by a kind adolescent posing as a slightly older adult helps Susan overcome the consequences of her internal struggles and their external ramifications.

Susan's persistent search for a solution exploits her fantasy of becoming an actress. Her skills as an actress are useful in our psychodrama. She paints a world in which, ultimately, she can find a solution, and demonstrates the personal
ability to "play with" her future, albeit often "with a giggle". She seems to enjoy life even at its most depressing moments. Her laughter is often compensatory, but it also has the healing balm of humour.

Some facts about Susan's life will be helpful. Her mother died six years ago. Her father remarried two years later. What we heard as themes of the "witch-like step-mother" and "the idealised fairy godmother" related to a Cinderella theme, which has a realistic echo in her own life. Our reading of those themes was confirmed by review of the school records and learning that she had actually lost her mother.

**Susan's projective Testing**

Here I will juxtapose material from Susan's responses to the Authority Relations Test, to the world she painted for us. In this series of test
responses she identifies a number of characters: the first is the child who wants to resist his parents' wishes and ambitions. He attempts to get along with them despite disagreements and an urge to argue with them. She then identifies the "innocent girl" and the "guilty boy", and authority figures who have bad news to bring to her despite personally "really being very nice." She consistently views relationship with authority as ending badly for the young, the innocent, and the unprotected. But these same youthful innocents are responsible for consistently upsetting elders, although "they don't mean any harm either". In general, responsibility for actions is not taken by Susan's characters. Here are some of the responses:

The teacher card:

"This bloke is teaching in school and his first name is Bertram. His second name is
Cassidy. (The relationship with her idealised pop star, David Cassidy, blends with the first name of a young, idealised teacher at Lake School). He's a bit upset because the class won't pay attention. He's holding a stick saying "the next one who talks gets a belt and I'm taking him to the headmaster personally and he will get a caning." He's a nice man with a lovely personality. You can talk to him about anything, but he just gets very upset about this class."

The parallel between the frustrated teachers and Susan's own behaviour as the key disrupter in many of her classes is quite clear, as is her empathy with the teachers whom she is upsetting.

The young couple and the policeman:

"This policeman is really very nice, every kid likes him on the street. His name is Bertram. This is a boy and girl and they're getting married next year. The young man, Robert, has got into the wrong crowd of people. To try and get money for getting married, him and his mates took stuff from a shop and were selling it. Jill didn't know about it. He
thought he was doing all right. He got found out. The policeman had to tell Jill that he was taking Robert into custody."

Again the sexualised, oedipal triangle of an authority figure, a young boy, and a girl ends up with the authority figure being friendly, but unable to help. The "badness" of the boy causes his downfall, although the "badness" and his "good" wish to care for the girl are closely linked. The tragic story is full of good intentions by everybody. The theme fits Susan nicely.

A TAT card of a man and a woman:

"This is a dramatic love scene from a film. The man is going away and is about to break it to his wife. She tries to stop him and asks why he's leaving and in the end, he stops with her. It's a war film. He gets court martialled for not going, but says that he doesn't care as long as they are together. But she doesn't really love him; she loves his best mate. He finds out about it after he's court martialled and commits suicide by shooting himself in the head. She kills herself as well
because she finds out his friend is not good. He was just after her money, so she jumps out of the window, so the friend is left."

This histrionic story perhaps reflects Susan's flair as much as anything, but the oedipal theme and the competitive triangle with the difficulties and deaths of a number of well meaning people in the situation is clear.

Finally, two "family theme" TAT responses, the first to a card of an older and a younger man:

"This if a father and son. The father has got a big business and wants his son to be the heir. But the son doesn't want to because he wants to go his own way. They just had a disgusting argument and the son walks out. The father dies soon after, leaving the son nothing because he hates him. He leaves the business to his partner—the whole of it instead of just half of it."

The card of a girl in a farm setting:

"It's set in the country. It's very hot. The man is ploughing the field and his wife has just
been helping him. The daughter looks like she's been studying. It's set in the olden days. The girl is upset. She can't concentrate; she's just had an argument with her mother. The mother and father are quite rich because the farmer's doing well. There are beautiful horses and wild horses roam about.

The last two stories depict children arguing with their parents. All of the principal figures are upset, and the children are then excluded from a kind of "inheritance" which is symbolised by money, business or love. Clearly, however, both the parents and the child are upset and, therefore, "cannot concentrate." In the midst of pictures of richness, kindness and beauty, Susan emerges as an ugly duckling, excluded from a longed-for world of plenty. The reunion with the world would include a loving reunion with her parents. She feels thoroughly excluded from that world and from them, as illustrated by responses to two more cards—one about work, the other about
intimacy.

"This is a doctor's surgery, and this man—his name is David—came to get examined for a job ... the man is only 20—young, goodlooking, very fit. The doctor has found there's something wrong with him. I can't say what it is because I don't know. The doctor has to break the news that he might not get accepted for the job."

"This is a park. It's summer, very hot. Flowers and trees are in bloom, and everybody is happy. And all the children are enjoying themselves and behaving themselves. The fathers have taken their wives and children out for the day. This boy and girl have always liked each other, and seen each other on the way to work. He is going up to her and boldly asks her out. But she is going to slap him in the face and say no."

Unlike Paolo and Annette, Susan does seem able to conceive of "strategies of approach" to work and life. In the psychodrama she is helped because she persists in a search for Sally and is
then grateful, responsive and imaginative in using her help. Susan presents herself as a poor, needy child whom adults try to help in vain, driven away despite their good intentions to help by something inside her. Nevertheless, she has a kind of optimism which keeps reaching out to them. The solution she arranges fits well with other things which we knew about Susan from our work with the group. She is outspoken and readily able to compare feelings about old losses to current difficulties. She is able to empathise with someone even though she feels he may be in her way at the moment, and to attribute part of the difficulty to herself. She is also able to empathise with both males and females, and therefore, with masculine and feminine parts of herself. She often identifies the bad and destructive parts of herself with the more masculine or assertive aspects, therefore leaving needy, softer, feminine parts of herself to
be "uncared-for children who cannot speak for themselves". This is poignantly illustrated in describing the father who in death abandons his son, but Susan also voiced once an ambition to be a policewoman, a flirtation with more positive aspects of "masculinity".

Although Susan superficially resembles the child the staff would label "immature and bent on destroying her own school situation", she also shows many strengths. Susan's ability to play with and even circumvent reality emerges in the psychodrama. She enthusiastically fashions alternative solutions to emotionally laden issues. She recognises the teacher's hopelessness which she tends to induce regularly, and goes on despite it. Her resilience and optimism keep her from collapsing into Annette's kind of depression. She has positive peer relationships despite being, at times, a "pain in the neck". She often works
satisfactorily and is well liked. Her worries about work are a realistic reaction to the immediate situation. She can be disruptive, but she is also a leader who has considerable insight.

As a result of a kind of balance of strengths and difficulties we could think "diagnostically" about what to expect for Susan's future. Many of her difficulties seem derived from family stress that is relatively recent, and from the adolescent struggles with autonomy, self-esteem, body image and shame about sexual urges discussed in Chapter 7. We might therefore expect interim difficulty with employment, but her energetic ability to work and her wish for a positive figure in her life may be major assets which would lead us to attempt to support her through the interim difficulties. Although she has a major problem with self-esteem and self-image, she seems to have a great deal to offer to important people in her life.
The confident rebound when she finds someone to accompany her is reassuring and a clue to what she feels is needed. She has little envy of people who are doing well, even when she is not, despite the fact that she has enough greediness to eat more than her friends. This lack of envy should enable her to take support, eventually, without driving the supportive person away.

We then might predict a relatively satisfactory career for Susan both at work and in family life. She has a persistently positive attachment to boys, and an ability to relate to women in her life. The ability to relate to people, if the destruction of relationships can be overcome, seems to be her strongest asset and hope.

Susan's behaviour as the end of the year approached recalls both Annette and Paolo. She and her peers increasingly panicked about their
uncertain positions in the late spring. There was a regression to increasing misbehaviour. Her teacher said, "Susan's more and more trouble. I'll be glad when she leaves." Her behaviour could also be seen as a response to an impending loss.\footnote{5} Loss of school may well cause her to recall the loss of her mother six years before, and induce pain. Susan was among the adolescents whom we felt regressed to earlier stages of behaviour, fantasy life, and relationship to reality, as a way of handling the stress of school leaving. She did not, however, give up her relationship to her peers or abandon herself to hopelessness.

She therefore stands in marked contrast to Annette and Paolo. She managed her anxiety well enough to survive the school year without feeling struck by total disaster. Although her plans at the end of the school year were open-ended, she retained her ability to face the future
optimistically and flexibly. Although Susan seems to be having trouble, support from one consistent figure would be helpful. She does not need help so much to arrange a job, but to maintain optimism and relationships to supportive people. She will need someone to accompany her in the transition into work, but support to her could be limited to shoring up her own capacities. For Annette and Paolo more active and thorough intervention is warranted, they are less able to use their own assets and are struggling with more crippling anxieties.

2) The Dilemma in the Family

The same issues which haunt adolescents who are seen in the normal setting at school haunt many of those referred for psychotherapy, usually for more severe, underlying, personal difficulties. Although the personal difficulty for the adolescent
may require a formal therapeutic approach, nevertheless the issues involved are often similar. I will present accounts of four adolescents I saw with colleagues in a clinic setting. Three were seen in joint interviews with their families. A fourth was seen alone and her parents interviewed by a colleague. Less attention will be paid to aspects of psychopathology than to the issues which seem to bring pressure on the patient and his family. These adolescents are not presented in order to make a case for the pathological elements of the issues involved, but to present a clearer exploration of issues than is usually possible in their school setting. For the psycho-therapist, however, many of the anxieties stimulated by the impending transition critically stress the adolescent who presents as a psychiatric patient. We also get a picture here of the reciprocal involvement of families with adolescents. From the clinical
experience with families such as the ones described below, I have come to trust teachers' and adolescents' assessments that the role of the family is crucial in the transition from school to work. It may greatly facilitate or impede growth in this period. While the role of the family needs to be explored thoroughly in the "normal" setting, I can only offer to date some explorations within the psycho-therapeutic setting. I will begin this section by presenting the three adolescents who were seen with their families, and follow with an intensive examination of one adolescent who could not deal with separation and loss. Significantly, she could not relate successfully to her family and lacked their support at a crucial moment.

**RAYMOND KING**

Raymond, age 16, presented at a Child
Guidance Clinic suffering from active ulcerative colitis which began 6 months previously. He had an episode of confusional psychosis while taking drugs which are known to produce psychoses. Although it was for this acute confusion that Raymond was referred to the clinic, we felt that the ulcerative colitis might well be a symptom of family pressure which centred on him.

Raymond's ulcerative colitis had begun just before his first round of 'O' levels 8 months before his referral, and subsequently his family had felt great stress around the question of what career he might pursue. He saw a vocational guidance adviser and had formal vocational testing over the previous year with a recommendation that he should not pursue further education but would be better off in a craft apprenticeship. Raymond felt the recommendation as a severe blow and went ahead to take his 'O' levels, surprising everybody
by passing 5 of them. The ensuing summer, however, he had his first bouts of ulcerative colitis. They were severe, and culminated in psychiatric hospitalisation for an acute confusional state, which at first was thought to be a psychotic episode resembling adolescent schizophrenia. It was later thought it might be caused by the drugs used in the treatment of the ulcerative colitis.

When Raymond and his family came to the clinic it became quickly clear that the ulcerative colitis had become the focus of the family anxiety. They had rallied to his support, but were consumed with worry about him. The family's tentative solution for reducing their unbearable anxiety was to apply pressure on Raymond not to pursue an academic career or to do any meaningful school work over the coming year. The effect on Raymond of their prohibition was to make him feel increasingly anxious and tense.
Their pressure was in direct conflict with his own wish to pursue school work vigorously. He expressed the view that their fear made him more anxious.

The family was now seen as a group—Raymond, his 12 year old sister Mary and his parents. We discovered the father's career had been one in which he had initially not pursued academic credentials and had emigrated to work on an Australian sheep farm. After Raymond's birth, he returned to England in disillusionment and took up night studies in the efficiency aspects of production management. After 5 years of study and work, he felt that he would not get further with his career without university qualifications. He became a self-employed shopkeeper, a position in which he made more money than as a professional, but one with rather insecure prospects. He was bitter about the pursuance of
academic credentials, and had a feeling that one could be easily let down and led astray by investing too much in education.

Raymond's mother, on the other hand, had given up a promising secondary school career in order to emigrate with Mr King. She had been evacuated into the country during the Second World War without her family. When she returned to London at age 15, she had to live alone. She felt that growing up alone had defeated her academic aspirations and was bitter that she had been without a career of her own. She fervently wished that Raymond could have a career on her behalf but was frightened that it might be more than he could stand.

Raymond's parents had been unable to contain their anxiety about their wishes for his success and their fears of its consequences. They,
therefore, applied every increasing pressure on him. As they did his ability to function dropped and his ability to operate in school could only be maintained at the cost of continued colitis, on which they could all focus as "the problem". They began to fear that his pursuit of various skilled hobbies which might have career implications, such as stone polishing, jewellery making, and film-making might be too much for him. When the situation was clarified with the explanation that the parents' disappointments and anxieties about their own careers led them to impose their fantasy wishes and fears on Raymond, thus beginning to recreate their own pattern, he was able to get on with his work of preparing for 'A' levels. While his colitis began to improve, Raymond could understand the notion of the recrudescence of family issues around a career conflict. Although his parents remained anxious about the
consequences of his pursuit of education and a career, he was able to decide that not pursuing his career left him with more anxiety than the routine pursuance of it. This clarification also allowed his parents to relax their fears and allow him to begin the work they also wished for him.

HUGH WALDHEIM

Hugh was a 16 year old boy sent to the clinic because he seemed to be drifting rather aimlessly during his 5th form year in a private progressive day school. He had played truant from a prestigious comprehensive so much during his 3rd and 4th form years that he had been thought not to have received any effective education. Now in his 5th year, his direction was unclear. Whether any of the school work would result in any exam success and what this basically bright boy would do after this year were unanswered questions. In
addition, his parents were consumed by his combative and "spoiled" behaviour in which he seemed to take everything they could give him for granted.

Hugh was of medium height, a boy with shoulder length, dark curly hair, who spoke with great self-assurance, with a matter-of-fact air, he said his life was going very much as he wanted it to. His image of his father who owned a small but successful clothing store was of someone who "got to be an executive without any effort". He pictured his father going to work reading the newspaper all day, making a great deal of money, and finding his greatest happiness in giving Hugh anything he wanted. They had recently had an argument about whether or not Hugh should have a motorised bicycle. When father put his foot down about it Hugh became withdrawn and depressed. Father relented and gave him the bicycle. But Hugh
continued to complain that he need never have become depressed if his father had told him in the first place he was going to relent.

Hugh's mother, at 37, was almost 20 years younger than his father. Hugh had been her constant companion until 4 years ago with the birth of his only brother Thomas. Now Thomas was mother's companion. It was within a year after Thomas' birth that Hugh began to truant from school. He left classes in the comprehensive to spend time in the pub with boys from a more prestigious private school who were also out of school. He viewed himself as quite grown up, at being at ease in a pub. Indeed, he felt more grown up than his friends who were worried about what jobs they would hold or what further education they would receive at the end of the year. He said of himself, "I don't need to worry about that. I can act like a grown up—I can go to a pub or discuss
going abroad."

Hugh wanted to go into drama and thought he would gain ready acceptance to the drama school of his choice in view of talents which he felt were obvious. He saw no need for 'O' level examinations although he had considered the possibility of taking exams in lieu of there being anything more profitable to do in the near future.

Much of Hugh's difficulty can be understood in relationship to his parents. His father, after spending his young manhood at home looking after his immigrant parents, married a woman 20 years his junior when he was close to 40. He had given her anything she wished, although his shop had not done particularly well until the last 3 or 4 years. But they had not been emotionally close and Hugh who was born 2 years after their marriage, was much more of a companion for her. As Hugh
grew to secondary school age, his mother had another child, partly to keep her company as Hugh grew up, and partly to solidify the shaky marriage. Thomas was now the apple of his mother's eye and Hugh felt quite displaced.

Hugh saw his parents actively in conflict with each other. Their distance from each other caused him great anxiety, particularly because of his feeling of guilt about monopolising his mother's affection. When he was displaced by Thomas' birth, he began to identify with his own fantasied view of his father's success in a way appropriate to an 11 year old boy. He moved almost immediately into the semblance of an adult world in which he saw his father, spending time at pubs which duplicated the magical conception of his father's success. He seemed to stop developing further personal or occupational maturity and remained fixed at this stage of development. His refusal to
work towards any goal in school may have been a way of identifying with his mother's position—both being put into and putting himself into a position of living off father as she did. This let him live with a sense of fantasied omnipotence, but made it essential that reality remain untested to maintain unchallenged the notion of his omnipotence.

As his fifth year proceeded, one could have expected Hugh to grow increasingly anxious. 'O' level examinations were approaching and it looked very much as though he was unprepared. Instead, he adopted a stance which involved a great deal of denial of reality and flight into fantasy. He decided that exams were unimportant. There was no need for him to work for them, because he, himself, was too important. He took refuge in his mother's fantasied ideas about him, which also happened to confirm his father's
equally untested ideas about him that he "wouldn't amount to anything and was only sponging off me". Instead of being able to pay more attention to work as the year drew on, he paid less and less. He grew increasingly arrogant, flippant, and withdrawn from any work reality. Finally he decided that the way to handle the exam situation was to forget about them and spend a year in his grandparents' native Austria. This plan he identified with his father's heritage and ability to speak three languages fluently without having studied them at school. He therefore had no plans to study German while in Austria.

Hugh's progressive flight from reality betrayed an anxiety from which he was constantly running. He could not face the transition from school to work or from school into further education. Some adolescents perform acts of delinquency rather than face a feeling of inadequacy in themselves.
They deprive others rather than feel depressed themselves. In the same way, Hugh (with his family's help) spent more energy getting things "free" from his parents to prove he was entitled to them, than learning how to earn things in the "Real World". Whenever teachers or therapist were in the role of suggesting that work might be productive in providing a better reality adjustment for Hugh, they became a persecuting element to be scorned and ignored. Hugh could run away from anxiety in the way that adolescents with less financial backing could not. With fewer financial resources, he might well have resorted to delinquent behaviour as an expression of being "entitled to support" by the world at large. As it was, his father had enough money that Hugh could extract support to which he felt entitled directly from his own family. He avoided direct expression of his continued fear of the outside world and a
complete inability to meet it by continuing his child-like extortion of continued support from his parents. That his family would continue to accord him this support represented their feeling of guilt at not having given him enough to form a firm foundation. It also represented a wish to cling to him as a basis for their own security.

Hugh broke off treatment because he could see no reason to face his incapacities. Happy being allowed to do as he pleased, he felt no call to face the anxiety of his exams or to move into the world of work. He was quite sure that everything he wanted would fall into his lap, requiring no effort on his part. Hugh was able to avoid the fundamental issues of the transition from school to work by retiring to a child-like dependency on his family. His family were equally unable to resolve issues of letting go of him and, therefore, tolerated the dependency despite the strain it
meant for them.

**KEITH HOLMES**

Keith is a boy who came to the clinic shakily established in the world of work at 16. He left school after 5th form and moved into an apprenticeship as a draughtsman with provision for one day a week release to a college of further education. A diploma in draughtsmanship would come at the end of 4 years. In the same way that he found school difficult over the last year before he left, he also found the day at college difficult. He was afraid of being called on to speak publicly in class, an old fear he carried from school. To his alarm, he found that the public speaking phobia was rapidly spreading. He suddenly became afraid to use the telephone for fear he might be asked to read a letter over the phone and would be unable to do so. He began to refuse to answer the phone.
Since his job involved frequent telephone calls, he grew increasingly afraid at work—fearing he would be asked to answer the telephone or explain himself. When he went to his general practitioner's office to explain his problem, he coincidentally found his father there and was quite alarmed. Nevertheless, the general practitioner referred him to the clinic and we asked Keith to bring his family with him.

In the first interview, Keith was able to outline the phobia and the potential difficulty he was having from it. It also emerged that his family had been under terrific strain. They had just made a major life move, entering as a family a period of psycho-social transition. Mr Holmes had given up a job of many years' standing as a minor executive in a printing firm and bought a dairy shop previously owned by Mrs Holmes' family. There had been difficulties in arranging the move into
the flat above the shop and at the time when we first saw Keith, the family were just about to move. In addition, in an individual interview, Keith revealed that his family had a secret which he wasn't supposed to know about: Mrs Holmes' father had died of a very late stage of syphilis and he thought the family was quite ashamed of grandfather's having contracted syphilis in his youth. This set of grandparents had apparently not got on very well and the syphilis had come as a very late life piece of news, accompanied by great shame. It had the effect of adding to the bitterness of the long-standing arguments between Keith's grandparents.

When Keith was seen together with his mother, father, 6 year old brother and 18 year old sister, it became apparent that mother "bore all the burdens of the men in the family." They made her set limits for them. For instance, she knew
how to manage the dairy shop since it had previously been owned by her family. She had never been able to move very far from her family, and they now would be living just around the corner.

Mr Holmes had had a checkered career. He had worked his way up in a printing business until he reached a supervisory position. Because he lacked a university degree, however, he felt his opportunities were limited. Over a number of years he was not promoted. He had been commuting long hours in order to work for this company after it moved out of London. Recently, he decided because of his lack of credentials his career growth was effectively at an end, and, with his wife, made the decisions which resulted in their investing in the dairy shop which would be more lucrative although less "Professional".
Mr Holmes also recounted having overcome a public speaking phobia of his own. Several years earlier he deliberately set out to organise religious forums in which he would be called on to speak, and had only in adulthood, and only by conscious effort, overcome a dread very similar to the one now confronting Keith.

Keith's growing uncertainty about work expressed a crippling area in his work through the symptom of an inability to use the telephone. The family's crisis as they underwent a change of career, a change of dominance within the family (with mother now assuming a major bread-winning role), was echoed in Keith's crisis. Both father's bitterness about his own career and the general pattern within the family of "pinning everything" on mother was consistent with Keith's having increasing anxiety about pursuing a new career which involved learning, promotion, and a
progressive assumption of independence and responsibility. Like his father, he had pursued a career which would be without academic acknowledgment. He was not aware of any of the same bitterness that his father felt. He was also not aware of any overt anxiety about pursuing his career. All that he was aware of was that he had a crippling symptom which threatened to remove him from his career. Our exploration of the family pattern dealt with father's disappointment and bitterness, the threat of Mrs Holmes becoming more of a manager than either her husband or Keith could tolerate and Keith's own uncertainty about moving into the world of work with the kind of responsibility that would be required of him. Interlocking and reinforcing family themes emerged. Mrs Holmes was able to see that the life issues he had found crippling did not need to be passed on to Keith. He and Keith began to work
together to relieve the anxiety present for Keith at work. Keith found himself able to use the phone, to take on more difficult tasks, and to move more confidently towards a competence at work which included continued education.

3) Family Aspects of Adolescent Anxiety—losing parenthood

In all three of these cases, the anxiety of the adolescent is held on behalf of the entire family and relates to family strains. In two of these cases, it was also clear that the school was put very much in the middle by demanding something from a student who was unable to face school work, although for very different reasons. Hugh was unable to face course work because it threatened his status as the special kind of boy who could have things for the asking and need not, therefore, work for them. The work itself would jeopardise his fantasy of being an "omnipotent infant". In
Raymond's case, he was under a family and medical prohibition against working. Since he disagreed with the prohibition, the school's approaching him with an offer of work or a choice about work put him in an impossible middle position which increased his anxiety enormously, even though it was an offer he wished for.

In each of the preceding cases, the whole family faced a crisis in its own growth and development at the same time that the adolescent family member faced a developmental crisis. The inability of the family and of the adolescent to negotiate these crises magnified the anxiety of each. For parents to let go of a growing adolescent while supporting legitimate aspects continued dependency, requires that they be confident of their own adult accomplishments. Unmet dependency needs of their own will be recapitulated in terms of the child. This is partly
true because the parent recaptures something of his lost relationship to his own parent in the relationship to his child, and therefore stands to lose his parent again as the child departs the family. In addition, when the child begins to become a competent, wage-earning adult, he stops being the cherished child.

Thus, when a family loses an adolescent to adulthood, parents lose that which defines them as parents. They undergo a psychosocial transition of their own. For them this will involve processes of mourning and wishes to "hang on" at the same time as they are faced with the task of facilitating the adolescent's growth. And it is this very growth which threatens them with the loss of the child in their adolescent. This particular "mid-life crisis" may be particularly acute for parents who gain much of their self-esteem from their role as parents. With the loss of a child parents must face
renewed questions of self-definition.

These two aspects of parental loss are present in the fantasies the adolescent contains for his parent. We have seen in the families presented how each adolescent's difficulties represented a condensed version of his parent's hopes, fears, and fantasies for the solution of personal issues in the new generation. As the adolescent faces the reality of the world, he can no longer magically "contain" the unrealistic, contradictory aspects of these fantasies, which represent issues the two parents could not resolve for themselves or with each other. In addition to all this, the diminishing capacity of the adolescent to "hold a magical promise for the future" as he grows up represents yet another loss for himself and his family. To weather these losses and use the resolution of them as an opportunity to build a future, the adolescent and his family must work together. A
failure to do so will be marked by increasing tension and mutual withdrawal. Frequently, it is at this time that a social agency will become aware of such a family.

The last case is presented in considerable detail to allow an exploration of the effects of loss and mourning in therapy. The parallels of this aspect of psychotherapy to problems of loss in school leaving make this an important area.

MARY LIEF

Mary had long intended to pursue a career in art and art history. Both she and her family assumed she would attend university at 18. She was referred to the clinic at 17, during her second year in 6th form, by her family GP because of long-standing depression. She often burst into tears in the middle of class, declaring that she was unable to handle the task at hand. When Mary first came
to the office she was resistant to the idea of "getting help", maintaining staunchly that she was forced to come to the clinic as punishment. She felt unloved and unlovable. Although she felt undeserving, she craved affection and attention. She apologised for slights she imagined she made every time she disagreed mildly with me or expressed anger about having to attend the clinic.

During clinic sessions, she described impoverished peer relationships, talked about feeling depressed, and frequently burst into tears. I knew from Mary's GP that she had great appeal for those who had contact with her in school, even though they were frightened by the constant demands for attention and care that her unpredictable crying represented.

Mary said that as a child she had been frequently hit by her mother for mild
misbehaviour. She grew to be frightened of her mother by the age of 6 or 7, while her brother and sister (both older than Mary) got along well with mother. She vividly remembered one occasion in which she hurt her mother's feelings by insisting on sitting in the back seat in a car because she was afraid her mother would hit her—causing her mother public embarrassment. When Mary was 9 her family left Kenya to return to Britain where both of her parents assumed responsible jobs, her father in medicine and her mother in a publishing house. Although she was British, the loss of Kenya was a loss of home and motherland, and she frequently cited "moving home" as a turning point in her life. Her school experiences on coming to England lingered on as bitter memories. She recalled children teasing her for her "proper accent" and the burden of a kind of specialness. She described pulling away from her father at
about 10—finding him increasingly "immature" and possessive of her. Her withdrawal from father during adolescence, over the few years after her leaving Kenya seemed to me to represent internal prohibition on close relationships with him for fear they would be sexualised. This was confirmed by her angry memories of seeing her parents together holding each other. Between the ages of 8 and 10, she could recall asking another girl to beat and hit her, finding a purgative in the excitement. She had not sought physical beating for several years, but frequently found herself in situations which "felt punishing". Mary's charm and concern for others, her scholastic achievement in the more intellectual aspects of the visual arts stood as substantial personal assets. Her school was upset, wondering why this talented adolescent had failed to gain entrance into university.

Mary refused to be seen with her parents,
although it seemed clear to us that her difficulties represented a family "symptom" and shared family issues in the same way as Raymond's and Keith's did. In therapy the task of working through her persistent masochism and the relationship to a punishing mother figure was begun. To extricate those elements from her self-defeating behaviour in learning and exam taking, they had to be explored in the arena of her personal relationships.

We discovered that the process for revising for exams meant mentally "letting go" of the important figures in her life for long enough to attend to the material, a process which was the mental equivalent of letting those people die for a little while. She said to me once, "I couldn't revise because I couldn't think about you at the same time. If I'd stopped thinking of you, it was as though you were dead. " Since Mary was
extremely concerned with her own destructive powers, she frequently apologised in order to undo what she imagined to be her destructivness. "Letting people go" became a potentially murderous act. It was as if they died in her mind and, therefore, were really dead. ⁹

Another aspect of her inability to revise was the threat posed by success in exams. Her relationship to her mother was predicated on punishment by her which bound them closely, although angrily, together. It formed the basis of an active relationship and kept her mother close rather than distant. Mary was unwilling to relinquish the closeness of the relationship. Success in her courses would have meant literally leaving home at the end of the year to go to university. It would also have symbolised growing up and giving up the dependency of relying on mother—even if for punishment. Successful
revision and success in the exams themselves would remove her from her mother whom she both hated and loved. Failure safeguarded her place at home and provided the basis for a continuing relationship with her parents.

During the 10 months I met with Mary, she was able to acknowledge and understand elements of her destructive behaviour in preparing for and taking examinations. She successfully revised during the spring holidays, "giving up" the images of both her parents and her therapist in order to study. As she 'buckled down to work" she received some reassurance from early success and became increasingly confident. Simultaneously, she came to recognise that the frequent shedding of tears represented weeping for the "mothering" she sorely missed and had never received from her own mother, as well as an attempt to get teachers to take care of her.
Another aspect of this unmet need was the persistent wish to steal something from me, although all the material goods she wanted could be obtained legitimately. She never actually stole anything. The persistent wish and impulse to do so pained her sorely. As she increased her understanding without being able to induce punishment from me, her weeping at school fell off dramatically. She grew more able to work on sexuality—especially in its aspects of wanting attention and of fearing that the sexuality itself would be punishing.

Remarkably, she was able to do this without indulging in any promiscuous sexual behaviour which would itself have been punishing. Instead, she was able to clear the air in preparation for more balanced future relationships with boys.

While therapy progressed, Mary approached
school-leaving and exam taking. With support she was able to tolerate anxiety and sit exams with relative calm. As school-leaving approached she began to feel the loss acutely. The teachers on whom she had depended, whose attention she had sought by the spontaneous crying, became people she had to mourn. She had longed for them to hold her in their arms. Now she felt a great sense of loss and emptiness which reminded her of the sense of loss and emptiness she had experienced in childhood. She told me of self-destructive urges which were both an expression of the feeling of loss and a way of getting cared for as a potential psychiatric patient. She resisted the urges, and instead, began to cry over the loss of school, friends and loved teachers.

*Termination of Therapy and Some Parallels to School Leaving*

It was unfortunate that external circumstances
dictated termination of therapy with Mary at this point, as I was returning to America. The losses of school, family and childhood were echoed in Mary's feelings of loss of me—a trusted friend and companion through the first part of this transitional phase. In our last sessions she brought in a poem about separation, loss and death, offering it as a description of feelings which she no longer felt compelled to act on. Significantly, the poem is a letter to his sweetheart by an American soldier killed in Vietnam, perhaps an allusion to her feelings about me as an American, and the distance between us on my return to America.

This day was given to myself for the preparation of leaving. Packing uniforms and one last look folding memories neatly inside myself and folding underwear into bags. Taking only what I need and hoping that will be enough...

Bien Hoa is more than 10,000 miles
from a city in Wisconsin by the lake.
They have nothing in common
except that one is where I wish to be
and one is where I am now ...

This must be the hardest time
because I'm not even sure
I ever knew you ...
Like dreams carved from bars
of ivory soap
you float by and melt away
with the passing of each day,
growing smaller
and smaller
until there is nothing
left of you to touch.

(Michael Davis O'Donnell
published source unknown)

The experience of increasing distance and loss
of touch, a feeling of never making the transition
from one place to another and the terrible sense of
death which awaits those who cannot maintain a
loving relationship is deep within Mary. She
expresses it more poignantly and directly than
many adolescents, both because she is so articulate and because her feelings are uncovered, threatening to burst out and overwhelm her. But they are the same longings and fears that we heard from many others. The transition from one place to another seems to require the presence of another person as an escort, a source of internal reassurance and a support for self-confidence.

A few days before I left, Mary received result of her examinations, indicating that she had failed 2 out of 3. Her parents were on holiday at the time. With her plans for the future shattered she became quite desperate. She appeared for her session with the material for a dress she described as "her shroud", and began leaving suicide notes. Loss of family, therapist, future plans and self-esteem assumed terrifying magnitude. Rather than make a transition into a new world without hope, she could see no other way than to kill herself. It
was necessary to find a hospital to provide containment for her self-destructiveness through this period of despair and loss, time to establish a new psycho-therapeutic relationship which can again become a source of support, and will allow Mary to continue the work of overcoming her inner sense of loss as she moves into the wider world.

In a letter to me a month after our parting, Mary wrote of her grief, feelings of worthlessness, gratitude and the glimmerings of hope.

"I don't actually know yet whether I'm glad to be alive. I can't answer 'How I am?' let alone 'What I am or why I am ...' I honestly feel no anger or resentment at your leaving. I was upset primarily for me, but also for you ... I wanted to say goodbye, smile and be brave, but I wanted you to understand that it did hurt, and that I did feel very lonely, that I had really not wanted it to end in quite those circumstances.... I probably hope that you were sad too, or felt something, some sort of
quiet regret ... I don't know whether you would have that much confidence in yourself (to acknowledge that you also valued the relationship) but please believe that despite the agony, the guilt, the pain, the despair, that self-knowledge brings. I'm really glad to have known you. It was interesting, sometimes even fun, and often illuminating."

The end of Mary's therapy was also a sad moment for me—both personally and as her therapist. It is a loss for both of us to live with, partly together, but mostly separately.

4) The "Sense of Loss" in Therapy and Parallels for the School Leaver

Although Mary's experience was more severe than that of most adolescents, it is similar in kind and in terms of the underlying dynamic issues to that of many adolescents. Many patients come for psychotherapy because they cannot see their way through a "life crisis". The psycho-therapeutic process involves lending a supporting figure in the
form of the therapist to facilitate growth during the resolution of the crisis. Together the patient and therapist examine the needs expressed by the patient's fantasy and behaviour, within the context of the relationship of the patient to the therapist and others. This examination is complex and often extended. But the principle of providing a supporting figure to facilitate engagement in the work of removing obstacles to growth is the same as the principle of education. At school, a teacher teaches the subject material which itself is critical to the growing adolescent. He must also lend himself as a personal figure in support of psychical growth. For the adolescents presented in this chapter, the support they could obtain from teachers and parents was not enough. Nevertheless it could be seen that often the adolescent's need for support was also the need of his entire family for a kind of support in a process
in which the frustration of their fantasies had resulted in great personal disappointment which had then been projected on to the adolescent already caught up in his own crisis.

Adolescents between the ages of 16 and 18 are usually involved in the move out of school in a way which emphasises their anxiety. The process of crossing the bridge from school to work or school to further education frequently becomes a focus in psychotherapy with this age group. The gains in understanding of the way adolescent developmental difficulties interact with critical life issues.

Under the stress of leaving school, all four of the adolescents I have described were thrown back on to more child-like, simplistic ways of handling anxiety. But earlier models of handling anxiety are growth-impeding if clung to for
extended periods, and the alarm of the adults around these adolescents becomes acute as the severity of the block to growth becomes evident. It is worth noting, incidentally, that this group of patients is more "middle class" than "working class". With more resources, they readily find opportunities for higher education or interesting work. They can therefore "buy time" in which to achieve maturity more slowly. In the same way, they can more easily find psycho-therapists to provide personal guidance in this enterprise. There are ways in which this group of adolescents is very like our groups of non-academic school leavers who were blocked by anxiety and failed to achieve their potential. Like most middle-class groups, these four found resources more available either because they knew better how to work the system or because they have more margin for error. The adolescents we see as a "normal" group
in school may include several who are very much like those who seek help at a guidance clinic. They, too, need someone to aid them in the process of negotiating the transition.

The course of Mary's therapy has been presented in particular detail because it illustrates also the vicissitudes of the "termination" in psycho-therapy. Termination is the technical word to describe the ending phase of therapy, a time when all the issues of personal loss and mourning contained within the therapeutic process must be revived and relived as patient and therapist experience the loss of each other. For a long time, it was assumed by therapists that this process of mourning during termination was exclusively the task of the patient. It was his therapy after all. But it has become increasingly evident that the therapist experiences a loss too- and the denial of the importance of this loss by the therapist leaves
the patient feeling belittled. This is not to say the therapist must saddle the patient with his own feelings - merely that he must come to terms with them himself in order to avoid dehumanising the relationship as a part of distancing himself from it.10

That is one aspect of the patient-therapist interaction around "termination". The exploration of loss and the patient's feelings of helplessness which ensue in the termination process is the same as the one which goes on around the loss of school and teachers as the adolescent leaves school, and around the loss of parents as he leaves home. In psychotherapy we examine it in detail. At school leaving, as will be clear in the chapters which follow, it is usually ignored. Ignoring the process, however, distributes the burden of these feelings in such a way as to place them squarely and solely on the adolescent. But we can see in the
case presentations of the "adolescent as patient" how much he is dependent for guidance on family and therapist. We cannot make a clear distinction, and dismiss any need of the "normal adolescent" for guidance at the time of loss merely because he does not overtly seek clinical help. Adolescents like adults, only acknowledge the need for help when there is nowhere else to turn. Long before the point of turning to someone in a clinic or admitting personal defeat in asking for help, an adolescent may turn away from adults in order to avoid the pain of losing them. It is at the time of "termination" that the patient or student is in most need of a guide to help him bear the loss he faces. Separation is a time when the good gained from a relationship can be undone by the urge to react to the loss by expelling the internalised aspects of the lost person. Or it can become a time for making it clear that the adolescent carries the good of the
relationship inside himself and can be personally stronger as a consequence of the separation. The role of reciprocal mourning in impeding of facilitating growth after separation will be explored in the following chapters.

5) Policy Implications of the Adolescent Dilemma

We have seen that when the adolescent becomes anxious as school leaving approaches, his concerns frequently go "underground", no longer available to those who would help him. We have also seen that he is often the only person to travel among the separate spheres which influence his life: there is a discontinuity between home, school and work, for everyone except the adolescent himself. As he becomes more anxious, he is increasingly in the middle between these disparate influences. He is a convenor amidst chaos. The lack of any real integration between
parents and school, and between parents and the world of work becomes crucial.

We are therefore faced with the question of whether there should be a closer working alliance and integration between these worlds. Can we devise ways in which a closer alliance can be developed between the family and the institutions which foster the growth of children? The adolescent is the sole convenor, but the one with the least experience of all the people involved. Someone with the skill, knowledge, access to all parties, and personal resilience, might bring aid to the adolescent in his transition.

In the ensuing chapters we will examine those people who are currently available to the adolescent. While each of them has something to offer, each is comprised in ways closely parallel to the compromises the family feels in trying to help
its adolescent. It may be that the complex developmental issues of the adolescent in transition require the development of a new person or function to help him. We will consider this recommendation in detail in the final chapter, but can already point out that the processes of loss and mourning may accentuate the adolescent's withdrawal from accessibility to the usual sources of help. It may require both special training and a special mandate for school staff to respond to this kind of problem as a regular part of teaching. If that proves impractical or impossible, we may have to face the development of a new kind of teacher or pastoral counsellor who would be responsible for guiding the adolescent during his transition.

Notes

1 See Chapter 3 for a discussion of this technique in psychodrama.
Background material gained about all three students discussed here was gathered after the conclusion of the groups, by a confidential review of the school record. Consequently what is presented here is only what is available to teachers in the respective schools.

See Chapter 2 for a description of this test. It was administered to Annette after the incidents described above.

See Chapter 13 for a more general description of the relationship of work to inner needs.

For an extended discussion of the regression of the adolescent during the terminal phase of school as an expression of the mourning process see Chapter 11.

This selection of examples is of a clearly higher socio-economic group than the more non-academic adolescents presented elsewhere. This reflects both the population apt to seek psychotherapy and this particular clinic used. However, there is a striking similarity of the issues that these adolescents bring to those we have been discussing.

Raymond's parents, in their fear, obliterate the difference between work and play for him, thus tending to push all intellectual activity, even that followed in the pursuit of relaxation of tension, into the area of anxiety. The effect of this is the destruction of all useful mental activity by family anxiety. This runs counter to the useful interchange of play and work in the growing person. See Chapter 13 for further discussion on this point.
Underneath the entitlement lurked Hugh's suspicion that there was indeed nothing he could do to be a success. This feeling of personal failure was the driving force reinforcing his fragile presentation of omnipotence.

This form of thought can be called "magical thinking". It is common in the unconscious thought of adults and in young children. It is not usually thought of as a component of adolescent behaviour, but I believe it must be considered here too. For instance, when Winnicott discusses the murderous qualities of adolescent growth, he notes that growth is often thought of as taking place "over the parents' dead body". The fear of the aggressiveness of growth is shared by parent and adult, and is often reacted to as though it would kill someone off. (Winnicott, 1971, pp. 143-5)

For a particularly useful discussion of the mutuality of loss in termination, see Harold Searle's paper "Oedipal love in the counter-transference", 1959. He says, "A successful psychoanalysis involves the analyst's deeply felt relinquishment of the patient, both as a cherished infant, and as being a fellow adult who is responded to at the level of genital love." We can substitute here the appropriate responses to adolescents.

It fits John Bowlby's notion of "detachment" as a reaction to loss, to expect that the most vulnerable adolescents will have the most trouble asking directly for help. See Chapter 11 and Bowlby, 1973
CHAPTER 10

Some Dilemmas of the Teacher

Once the teacher moves into dealing with the non-academic adolescent, he is put in a new mediating role. He can teach subject matter to the academic child, that is one who will pursue further education. But with the non-academic adolescent he will be at a boundary between the child's world and his own. What I mean by that is that the teacher has chosen not to leave school, which is not to say he has never worked. He will be trying to help the child to do something he has not done—to leave the protective walls which the academic institution affords between the child and the world at large. For both of them, this will also
involve using mediating processes between interior and external worlds: between fantasy and reality, and between the protection of school and the confrontation of the wider world.

The teacher has shared a world with the adolescent within and guarded by the school boundaries. Now, in 5th form, the future is at hand. If the teacher accepts the role of helping face it, he is in a position to accept the role of mediator between childhood and adulthood for and with the adolescent. This situation puts new pressures on both pupil and teacher around the psychosocial transition the adolescent faces. And as the pupil experiences increasing stress, so does his teacher.

In this chapter, I would like to examine some of the contributions the teacher can make, and in particular the effect of the psycho-social transition or life crisis facing the teacher as he attempts to
help the adolescent. In doing this we will attempt to explore what different teachers might have to offer which is based not in their particular personality or background alone, but which has reference to their own stage of life.

One salient characteristic of psycho-social transitions is that they tend to recur throughout life. While the specifics of the challenge and growth to be undergone vary with each stage, life crises share the fact that they are times of choice, and of the mourning of losses (of people, opportunity, or familiar surroundings). The teacher will be either in, or between, life crises. And if he is between ones, he may be closest either to one recently resolved or to one which is approaching. His ability to manage those may facilitate his interaction with the adolescent, or may promote a reaction which builds an impassable barrier between them.
In the examples and ideas presented below, I try to view the teacher from the vantage of others in the school, and will therefore make no attempt to draw complete people in doing so. The examples quoted are only presented as illustrations of interactions; and are given with the idea that teachers are also in limbo, caught between several masters, and that they share with the adolescent the difficult burden of sorting out complex loyalties and divided tasks. These are illustrations of some pressures which teachers confront, and the reactions triggered in them. Indeed, many of the teachers who could best articulate these pressures were, therefore, those best equipped to recognise them and deal with them, while some who denied that the pressures existed would be unable to take personal corrective action.

**The Interlocking of Life Crises**

Psycho-social transitions are, by nature,
repetitive, and are part of the general flow and unfolding of life development. They are involved, for instance, in the movement from adolescence to young adulthood and mid-life. The "rites de passage" may be more obvious at some stages than at others. When the adolescent faces his transition into the world of work, he is under more strain than in previous shifts because this one is a test of reality which is "for keeps" in a new way. If this is true for the student, then it is also true for the teacher: he has to justify himself as someone who can successfully "extrude" well-prepared adolescents. The worth of both is being tested. For the adolescent, the question is "Can I make it?" For the teacher, "Can I help children make it? Do I know anything worth knowing and teaching them when the real test is made?" This question can then be phrased another way for the teacher: "Can
I verify in the external world that my internal sense of worth is warranted?" We can note that this puts a burden on children of having a large share of the responsibility for satisfying teacher, or parent for that matter, who is applying this test to himself. The child's ability to take a step away from the parent or teacher (in his role here partially as a surrogate parent) has therefore to be done in such a way as to reassure the adult that he has a good parent (or teacher) inside him.

How well the teacher handles his current life crisis can have a direct and important effect on his ability to respond to that of the adolescent at a given moment. If it is going well, he may be able to use his experience to be more understanding and facilitating for the adolescent. If it is going badly, he may be bitter and depressed; or he may push the adolescent away as a painful reminder either of the process by which he is feeling defeated, or
which he is attempting to ignore. For instance, if he is having difficulty coping with approaching mid-life, a time when people must acknowledge the inevitability of death and limits on their own body and existence, he may become envious of the youth, promise and easy sexuality of the adolescent. This is illustrated in the following example:

A middle-aged male teacher was looking in through a crack in the library door at two adolescent girls who were clowning flirtatiously in their apparent privacy. Looking up as a colleague passed, he said angrily, "Look at them. I could just take a cane to them."

**Some Stages of Life Transitions**

The different stages of life transitions suggest that at each one there may be a particular role for the teacher undergoing that stage in terms of what he can offer the adolescent.
The Young Adult

The young teacher is coping with the assumption of his professional identity for the first time. For him the transition from school to work occurs the first time he steps into the classroom, and is tested and modified over the first few years in his job. It is a time for doing, with many questions of adult identity still to be answered, and it is a time of turbulence about these questions, but the young teacher can often rescue himself from difficulties by his own vigour (which includes a physical vigour which comes from having a full-grown body which is now familiar). The healthy young adult teacher is full of life and is not yet confronted with death—either his own, nor, as a rule, that of those around him. In Erikson's terminology, it is a time for the establishment of intimacy, co-operation and competition.¹
The teacher in this phase of life can lend his vigour, his grasp of a solid identity, and his ability to do and to make as a model for the adolescent who is still struggling with his own identity. But if the adult is still dissatisfied with his own solution, stuck, or fixed at a stage of anxious wondering and of fighting adults, he may reflexively push the adolescent away or convey a sense of deep personal distrust of the world. If he fails to convey any sense of solidarity, he may increase the adolescent's anxiety about his own entry into the world.

For example, one young woman was of working class background and unsure of her role as an adult and teacher. She repeatedly made disparaging remarks about her students. For her, they were defined by their misbehaviour, which she saw as always lurking in even the best behaved children. When we arrived one morning
to find only one student present on time, she said, "Thomas was here early as usual this morning. He must have been kicked out of his house." Her wish to distance herself from the adolescents was typified by her statement toward the end of the year, "I'll be glad to see the backs of this lot soon."

Another young woman was an advocate of social reform and of student rights. She was in general suspicious of the established social order and traditional authority. While she taught in a school which was generally supportive of her views, the head noted that this teacher was not effective. She seemed not to have enough of a sense of her own identity to provide a model for the adolescent who might be interested in looking for new ways to do things. As if confirming this, she said in one meeting, "We have to educate kids to be crap detectors, but if we do, the crap they detect will be in what we're teaching them."
In contrast to these two young teachers, were the many who worked hard, shared of themselves and encouraged positive identifications between themselves and the adolescents. Often they could remember the pain of their own adolescence enough to be obviously sympathetic. One example of a notably empathetic young woman is provided in the following example of a student teacher, given during a weekly tutorial group of student teachers.

During her first practice teaching experience in studio art she had been assigned to work with a middle-aged man. Initially, crusty and formidable, he warned her of upsetting his studio. She reacted politely but was quite frightened and awed. After she had worked patiently and unobtrusively in his studio with her own groups, he one day offered to share with her some of his glaze recipes, a usually well-guarded set of secrets among potters; she was disturbed, however, by something that happened in the studio: he had worked quite hard with a group of first
year students to help them make a collection of pots which had been stored carefully. Another young teacher had brought in a class and failed to watch them carefully. They had destroyed this collection of stored, drying pottery. Marilyn was there when he came in. His composure was utterly destroyed by the catastrophe. Over and over he would mutter that he didn't have anything to offer the children if their pottery was destroyed.

Marilyn's struggle about what she might have, as a student teacher, to offer to adolescents was made more acute around the question of what a middle-aged teacher might have to teach his students and her. "What is it", she asked, "that we have to offer the children? I don't have the feeling that it's just pottery or the pots that they make. How can we help them learn to stand disappointment if we can't stand it? He really seemed to think that the only thing he had to offer was those pieces of clay. I can see his sense of defeat, but there should be more to it."

This young teacher has already begun to cope
with the relationship of her own professional identity and skills to the wider life of the children, and to actively question her contribution to them. Included in her thoughtful response is a notion which more often comes into focus as the teacher has more experience and approaches the middle of his own life. In her case, it was triggered by seeing an older teacher who could not incorporate the sense of disappointment which is part of what must be taken in during the middle phases of life.

The Mid-life crisis

As a person approaches mid-life, he can no longer rely on straightforward physical vigour, or on the belief that love or activity can indefinitely outweigh death. As he approaches death, he begins to need to believe that what he has done is important and worth doing, for it begins to be too late to change what he does, what he knows, and
who he feels he is. The question posed for him now is, having become really a teacher, is it worth it? Does he have something to teach, and is doing so worthy of his professional life? His options are closing, and the recognition of this involves the kind of mourning present in all psycho-social transitions—the loss of alternative opportunities. Meeting this challenge head on rather than ignoring it or responding by depression, can lead to an increase in reflectiveness, in the acceptance of the relative worth of different activities, and a sharing of the sense of defeat which must be part of every endeavour.

It is the acceptance of failure as a part of life which does not exclude growth and success which allows the acceptance of an adolescent's destructive parts as a piece of himself he is in struggle with, and which can therefore allow the teacher to use that stage of his own development
to lend increased self-tolerance to the adolescent. The reflectiveness and the lessening hurry to do and become may also foster acceptance of support by the adolescent. This is in many respects what a grandparent, aware of his own failings in raising his children and the need for tolerance now that it's their turn, can lend to his children's children—the need to tolerate one's parents with their human failings.

The inability to accept the limits imposed by aging can lead to depression, despair, and impatience with, and envy of, youth, while the embracing of this developmental challenge can lead to new personal growth. An example is given in the statement of the teacher quoted earlier: an angry response to his envy of adolescent bloom and sexuality. Another sort was offered by a middle-aged tutor:

In a discussion about the need for
constructing a more relevant curriculum for working class children, this teacher put forth his feeling that to design a curriculum appropriate to working class concerns and to negotiating the world as a working class citizen would be vastly inappropriate. He, himself, came from a working class background and felt lucky to have escaped it. Wouldn't such a curriculum mean consigning those children to a working class life and militate against the escape of the few who might be able? He felt he could not personally justify that kind of direction in a curriculum design.

Leaving aside the questions of class structure, one can sense the fragility of this teacher's own identity in relationship to the many adolescents he teaches who will not "escape the working class". If a teacher cannot imagine a curriculum relevant to the satisfactory entry of a working class life, what will he have to offer to the adolescent attempting to make the transition into such a life?

Another senior house master told us that he
felt that the young teachers weren't sufficiently differentiated from their students, and wanted only to be loved and accepted by them. He felt they were terribly confused about what was involved in teaching and he felt outraged that they refused to set any limits in their own classroom. He felt that this disintegration of discipline and order was a great loss and was something that the larger society was asking for. He resented the arrogance of young teachers. "When these teachers get fed up after 2 or 3 years and become desperate, they come to me and I say to them, 'Now you've tried it your way, try it my way.'" He also saw the needs of students in terms of curricula that are rigorously tailored to the opportunities in the industrial and commercial world. He was nevertheless well liked and was known to reach out actively to adolescents in trouble.

The insistence that young teachers and pupils admit defeat before this man could be helpful to them (in his perception) could be seen as marking a defensive rigidity in his supervision of younger
staff. In contrast, a deputy head of approximately the same age (early 50s) could balance the difference between real destructiveness and the adolescent version, and could accept differences in students and staff, feeling that the facilitation of growth was the most important thing he had to offer. He liked teaching students who had the most difficulty in maths, as a challenge to his skills (perhaps with a competitive edge towards some of his colleagues too) just as he enjoyed helping a young teacher learn to handle a difficult problem.

"I've seen real trouble (in the army) and it makes you take what happens here with a grain of salt. I think that experience was helpful to me. It's too bad that more of the teachers can't have had experience with serious trouble to compare with what goes on here. Without it, they become overwhelmed with some of the troubles inside schools which are really quite minor."

On one occasion, after skilfully handling a covert
adolescent challenge to authority, he noted that it was a matter of time until the junior staff learned to do it themselves.

It is in mid-life that the threat of depression becomes an active possibility, but the benefits of having teachers in the middle of their career to teach adolescents is the wealth of experience, the calmer pace which allows the adolescent time to experiment himself, and the tolerance and facilitation of the growth process as a good in itself. One head noted that with the high turnover and financial difficulties presented to teachers with families in London currently, it is precisely the teachers from this middle group who are becoming increasingly rare. He lamented the loss. It is a crucial group, for it can provide to the adolescent a model of balance between doing, becoming and reflecting.³
Later Life Crises

In late life, the questions about the value of what one has done and whether one has the wisdom of experience to pass on become salient. Can one find evidence in the world around that validates the value of one's professional life. And with the growth of interest in the transmission of wisdom, and the need to face the approaching end of productive life and even one's actual death, should come increased tolerance for difference and failure. In the healthy development to this phase, one compensates for a diminishing life span by increased value both for life remaining and for life past.

In some ways this is the most difficult of the life crises to face, involving a review of achievements with less chance to make up for a sense of failure than at any previous time in life.
In this group we will see not only the older teacher, but the headmaster and many senior educational officials. For them it will be the last in a series of career tasks before retirement and the "death" of their own working life.

The benefits to be given to the adolescent of the relative serenity and acceptance of the teacher who has come to terms with this life phase are great. It may also be someone at this phase who has an overview of the process of growth itself and who has the greatest tolerance for individual differences and for individual failure.

This is partly illustrated by the deputy head just described, or by the head who made sure that all adolescents had a personal sense of belonging to school as they left—something to look back on in the same way that he looked fondly over his past career.
But the dangers of despair and doubt also present considerable difficulty to the teacher in this life phase. The head of one school said:

"They've raised the school leaving age for next year. I don't know what we're going to do for these kids anyhow, but you've got to pretend they'll do all right. We don't really have anything to offer them. We've got to keep the teachers' morale up. I don't know how we do it."

His despair summed up an apparent inability to conceive of and embody an appropriate developmental task for students and staff, in contrast to those mentioned previously who could embody it despite a keen awareness of the depressive issues. The denial of death and its inevitability at this stage can produce a thinly disguised defence against late life depression which leads to a blaming of society and the adolescent for failure. This can be heard in this headmaster who continues to go through the
paces without any active hope for the future.

**The Interaction of Life Phases within a School**

A school contains many people at different stages in life, each dealing with their own stage of developmental crisis. Adults can, like the adolescent, become stuck in a life transition, can slip back to old and now inappropriate ways of doing things, and can become bitter. But they can also learn to use the sharing of a transitional phase to provide an empathetic link with the adolescent which can begin an alliance as fellow travellers through such transitions. Humour, the acknowledgment of failure and patient persistence are tools in such a joint venture. To be able to work sensitively with the adolescent who is frightened about his transition means to be able to keep alive in oneself the experience of the pain of such periods, with enough spare optimism to keep
growing.

We can enlarge then on the knowledge that there are different ages and vintages of teachers within a school to think about the contributions specific to each age group. In a simplified sense we have described the sharing of doing and making with the young adult teacher—the verification of a new professional and personal identity; the encompassing of tolerance and reflectiveness for the mid-life teacher; and the acceptance of limits, differences, and wisdom in the older teacher. These can be seen to resonate with different qualities of adolescence; an age which includes boundless energy, the search for identity, endless reflection, and penetrating philosophy. By the same token, difficulty for a teacher in any of these stages will often be reflected by difficulty in coping with the corresponding aspect of adolescence. And for the adolescent, difficulty in one of these
aspects of his development will perhaps trigger different responses to certain teachers. For instance, difficulty achieving independence from parents (the more reflective adults closest to him) may trigger a specific hostility towards the middle-aged teacher, while uncertainty about being able to "do and become" may spark intolerance for younger teachers.

The teachers we have listened to are speaking from different times of life and developmental stages. If one is feeling vulnerable as an authority at mid-life when knowledge is called into question, for instance, the challenge to that knowledge by the adolescent may be felt as the final straw and draw an angry, defensive response. Or the teacher may be able to use his reaction to promote insight and as a clue to the adolescent's fragility.

Another Aspect of the Denial of Sharing: the Teacher's Experience of Work

One other area of shared experience warrants
special attention, in dealing with the adolescent in the transition from school to work. Teachers often said, in good humour, that they had never been able to leave school themselves. One said, "How can I help them leave? I've never been able to do it myself!" Behind the good-nature cynicism is an element of doubt about the qualifications of the teacher. Having chosen, generally, to stay within the protective school environment, what does he know about the outside world?

Paradoxically, the teacher has an experience of work which can be made immediate to the student. The teacher makes his own transition the day he steps in front of his first class. But all too often, he discounts this as well as any previous outside work experiences he may have had, assuming he has nothing to share with the adolescent about the experience of work itself.
Perhaps it partly related to the way in which those work experiences were partly extended play-jobs taken in the summer or for short tenure. Nevertheless, both these and the experience of working which is contained within the *job* of teaching offer a substantial area of shared experience. The exercise of responsibility, the demands on productiveness, the need for colleague and peer relationships, and even the experience of daily tedium have much in common with all work including working class jobs. On the other hand, in order to use these similarities usefully, the teacher would have to be aware of the differences as well as the parallels.

What often happens instead is that both the teacher and the student idealise the job of teaching, out of the needs of both, while denigrating the occupations the working class adolescent may enter. The student has a need for
an idealised adult figure—teacher and parent—and the teacher has a need to believe in his own worth. But the empty idealisation leaves the menial working class jobs and those who will fill them (i.e. the adolescent now in the classroom) without an apparent avenue of verifying the worth of the work he does. The elements of productivity, colleague-relationships, and inner satisfactions to be gained from jobs remain and can be shared.

Ultimately the teacher’s experience of work has something direct to offer him as an experience which can be passed on to the adolescent. The rewards he finds in his job are the ones of work: the feeling of doing a competent job, the passing on of knowledge and skills, the overcoming of the conditions which impede productivity and personal stagnation. An examination of the differences as well as the similarities of these experiences would lend to the teacher something
of value to be shared with the student. If the feeling of vulnerability is pervasive, the defensive maintenance of a status is adopted to shore up teachers’ shaky self-esteem. The adolescent who is leaving school is led to assume that he is the only one suffering from fright and potential despair, feeling abandoned at a time when he actually has company—a well-disguised fellow sufferer in the teacher.

It is a commonplace that the school master is a man among boys and a boy among men. But we have seen that there are many variations on this theme. Both as a boy (or girl) and as a man (or woman) the teacher continues to develop and change. And like the adolescent he teaches, his own development will be uneven, will suffer regressions, and be subject to the influence of those around him. If he is caught in one phase of growth, he will have trouble responding to the
needs of adolescents and teachers around him. As we have seen, one particular relevance of this difficulty is highlighted by the fact that teachers have often not made the transition from school to work and hold a great many unexamined and unresolved feelings about the world of work and their relationship to it. An acceptance of these difficulties can add strength and depth to the work with adolescents, but defensive guarding against it can isolate the teacher from the adolescent approaching school leaving. A teacher incorporating new self-awareness can avoid slumping into mid-life, remain full of life while not being full of impatience, and become a more trusted ally for the adolescent. One who avoids mid-life issues, even as he feels he avoided work by staying in school, may seem to those around him to be a leaky container, always trying to plug the leaks. He will be a poor support to the
adolescent trying to contain his own anxieties.

One of the psychological processes shared by everyone in school is so crucial during many phases of life growth that it warrants detailed description. The next chapter will discuss the processes of mourning from the separate vantages of the adolescent and his teacher.

NOTES

1 Erikson, 1959

2 See Jaques, 1965 and Rogers, 1974, for germinative discussions of the impact of death in the mid-life crisis. Rogers has conducted an extensive study of the vicissitudes of the mid-life crisis.

3 In addition, these teachers are most likely to be the age of the youngsters’ parents and therefore doubly missed.
CHAPTER 11

Mourning

"A friend comes up and talks to me and I begin to feel sad and out of place because I'm leaving. I was happy at home this morning, but when I get to school. I'm sad."

Gopal, South End School

Mourning the losses that life brings is a necessary part of the process of growth. This chapter will attempt to discuss how each of the participants in the adolescent's movement from school to work must deal with his own issues concerning loss during the school leaving period. It is not only the adolescent who suffers a loss when he leaves the secure base of school which he has known virtually his whole life. Even as he must undergo a grief reaction in some form, so the
teacher undergoes the loss of the adolescent and must mourn him. And so, too, does the family of the adolescent. How the adolescent handles his process of mourning the school will affect the teacher. How the teacher handles his own mourning will greatly affect the child. They are interlocked, reciprocal, and mutual. In addition as outlined in the last chapter, both adolescent and teacher will be caught up in mourning losses of parts of their internal worlds appropriate to varying phases of their psychological development. Those processes are an integral part of mourning an external loss for each student and teacher, and form a complex pattern when seen superimposed at one time. In this chapter we will continue the process of examining the individual strands. In chapter 14 we will consider the school as an organisation which contains or inhibits personal growth through them. Here it will be
enough to say that in some ways schools not only fail to promote mourning, but actively impede it for students and teachers.

The concept of mourning is central to the discussion of all psycho-social transitions. The transition from one phase of life to another involves the giving up of the old, familiar world, and the anxious movement into the unknown. For the adolescent the loss of the world of school includes both the caring of teachers and the familiar place. The transition involves making the first mandatory decision of one's life, while acting like, and in some ways becoming, an adult. This is in many ways ironic, because the adolescent feels still largely a child. Indeed, in giving up the protection of school there are new threats to his tenuous identity as an adult.

A brief general description of the process of
grieving will aid in examining the adolescent's experience with it. The psychological studies of mourning and grief, as in the death of a loved person, point to a consistent pattern of response to loss.\(^1\) Since mourning is a part of all major life crises and transitions, and its acceptable completion is required before reattachment to a new life situation or a new phase of life, it becomes and cornerstone process in the adolescent's transition out of school.\(^2\) Furthermore, it must be carried out reciprocally and simultaneously by all those around the adolescent, who must be faced with it both in relation to their feelings for him and, as discussed in the previous chapter, to their feelings about their own life processes as they go on concurrently.

Grief follows a process which can be clearly described: an initial stage of "denial" of the loss gives way to restless searching for the lost person.
As the fact of the loss is accepted, there is often a period of angry protestation against the loss or the lost person. Later, depression and sadness appear as the bereaved person gives up the hope of recovering the lost one. Finally, resolution of mourning leads to reorganisation and the building of new assumptions about the world and attachments to new figures.

To summarise:

i. A phase of numbness and disbelief of the loss is followed by
ii. searching and acceptance of the fact of loss which may accompany the phase of
iii. angry protest which may be directed against the lost person or thing, others who are held to blame, or the self.
iv. sadness or depressed feelings are then followed by
v. gradual detachment from the lost object and reattachment to other objects. However, parts of the lost person will still continue to be carried as memories. The detachment is not a
complete one, but energy should be freed for the establishment of new relationships.

Pathological grief develops in a person who cannot carry this process to completion and becomes stuck at any one of the intermediate stages.

In the context of the adolescent's psycho-social transition, we find a particularly difficult pattern of "loss and mourning", for at school leaving time the non-academic adolescent feels himself not only to be "unfavoured", but often to be a burden to those around him. There are repercussions of this state for the adolescent, his family, teachers, and school.

Adolescents with widely varying abilities to cope with the impending transition from school to work experience many stresses in common. But since development is uneven, some who are less able or more anxious will stumble in making the transition. For instance, the difficulties may be
intensified for those who feel that they have failed to grow at school and who have few tools for building a better next world for themselves. When confronted with the imagined harshness, punitiveness and exploitation of the world of work, they can muster only feelings of anger and unworthiness: their school experience has given them little internal assurance of growth potential or of an ability to rise to the challenge of new and unknown demands.

We have discussed the frequent complaints of adolescents we saw about school, examinations, teachers, headmasters, families and potential or current employers. They frequently alleged that society is generally unfriendly and hostile to them, through the agency of authority figures—teachers, the police, employers, the examiners. In this feeling of personal inadequacy and loss, the adolescent may be jealous of others who do not
face similar difficulties because of superior academic skills, wealth or favouritism. There are also, of course, more optimistic attitudes expressed, but pessimism, feelings of exploitation and helplessness are frequent. His reaction to these feelings may range from active counter-assertions and denial to withdrawal, anger, delinquency or depression. Many of the learning and performance failures in secondary school seem related to these reactions, or the anxieties behind them interfere with learning and with the motivation for learning.

**Mourning the Loss of School and Childhood**

Let us look at some of this apparently puzzling adolescent behaviour in the light of "loss and mourning" in school leavers. Faced with the loss of the "mothering institution" of school, some adolescents deny the importance of the loss,
becoming numb and unavailable to teachers. They may be reinforced in this denial by a forbidding environment or apathetic school. In living through the phases of loss and mourning, desperate searching for alternatives may alternate with angry blaming of teachers and family for the failure and isolation the adolescent feels. Adolescent surliness, so resented by adults, will often stem from the "protesting" aspect of being abandoned. Examples of each of these and some other defences against the feelings of loss and inadequacy will help clarify an understanding of the adolescent struggling to come to terms with the loss.

The clique of girls around Annette at Thomaston School were significantly depressed and withdrawn. Annette (discussed in detail in Chapter 9) became the most depressed, withdrawn and unavailable of her group, as a
reaction to loss. Notably, this was not only true in relationship to the school but in relation to her family as well, where her quandary was compounded and complicated by her parents' inability to work out the loss of each other inherent in their prolonged marital quarrel. They focused on Annette as a way of avoiding the risk of losing each other. We will refer to the parents' experience of loss of their child in a few moments.

Susan's reaction to loss was even more complicated and hidden. (Chapters 7 and 9). She had lost her mother by death four years earlier. Now she was at times surly, at times flippant and arrogantly insolent, at other times clinging and "over-attached". She seemed the complete "spoiled and ungrateful child". Her underlying neediness was recognised by her peers, but, even so, they were put off by her disruptive behaviour. Susan's behaviour was particularly apparent
around the time of leaving school, as it defended against acknowledging the loss of school itself. One of the reasons for her clowning and curtness to teachers may have been her need to deny that her teachers and parents were unavailable to her and that she had, in effect, lost both. For example, she persistently resisted attaching importance to her mother's death. Only in the last days of school did she acknowledge anxiety and a sense of loss directly.

Paolo's brittle and defensive posture is betrayed by his dream (Chapter 8), which expresses the difficulty of mourning for the lost 'mothering' school and his fears for his own death. He is literally losing his family who are moving away, and his mother had died a few years earlier. His overwhelmingly anxious response keeps him from taking exams: he maims his hand while striking out at the "intruder" who appears one
night at his window, and who represents inner threats only seen to be coming from outside. His dream image of a man asleep on a bed alone resembles both a mourning, weeping man, and a dead man—intruders into his sense of well-being. He seems to be mourning his own death of opportunity as well as the loss and death of family members. Paolo's grief and isolation are perhaps the most stark and poignant of the examples we saw because he described them so creatively without being able to ward off the immediate consequences of his own fears.

The "case histories" given in the second half of Chapter 9 all form variations on this theme. Mary and Raymond, for instance, struggle with forms of pathological mourning and blocked growth, "pathological mourning" of school seems especially likely to occur in adolescents already mentioned who feel school has been a "bad place"
for them and has failed to provide them with the equipment to face the new world. When Jock, a Thomaston student, said, "There isn't any teacher in this school who likes me or cares about me", he found himself unable to mourn a place that he felt would not be mourning him. But he also felt that it had failed to provide him with the equipment to face the new world. When he found suddenly that he had allies among the staff as he tried to take his exams, it was too late for him to be able to make them part of him in time to mourn their loss. All he could mourn was the lost opportunity—that he's never been able to benefit from them. It is consistent with our knowledge that mourning is apt to go badly when the lost person or place has been desperately clung to because it was felt to be disappointing even before it was lost.

During our contact with adolescents, our awareness of the issues of mourning was triggered
by two kinds of responses, both from them and from their teachers. In the Thomaston group experience, there was a persistent feeling of the deadliness of the material we were handling—that going out of school and to work represented not even a painful second birth, but an extrusion into a world of death. As adults in this group of adolescents, we felt this repeatedly, but in addition the words used to describe events and threats in the world around were described in terms of morbidity and loss. Thus the room in which exams were taken was described by Steven as being “cold and impersonal like a morgue”. Steven and Mike depicted the work world of the Army as leading to a lonely death away from home. There was also the jealousy of the favoured students for whom it was worthwhile to stay on at school, which contrasted to the feeling they had of being discarded.
When the group depicted the alternatives after school in graphic form, beyond the boredom obscuring choice we found death, disintegration, and destruction lurking everywhere, (see Chapter 4 on Thomaston School). The threat of the outside world was then contrasted sharply to the golden age of primary school, which was described as caring and intimate. Anger and envy expressed by Steven, Jock and Cathy in the opening meeting was directed at the headmaster, Mr Paul, who "thinks he's so great. He doesn't even know who we are and all he wants to do is be famous", implying that their sense of anonymity compared to his "fame" was part of the loss implicit in the process of growing up.

But as actual school leaving approached the initial moods changed. Annette became more overtly depressed and less withdrawn and numb, while Mike exhibited progressively more manic
denial of loss and wished to flee. His panic and inability to tolerate the sadness of loss is expressed in what he said to us. It illustrates clearly how the inability to tolerate the loss of school and the ensuing sadness inhibits him from making any rational choice about job, despite considerable work on occupational choice in our group. I give Mike's example in particular detail because it illustrates an attempt to handle acute anxiety around school leaving. In the course of trying to calm his anxiety, Mike rejects the career in catering which he has previously planned for, and makes regressive occupational plans.

Mike "I changed my mind. I'm leaving school. I'll start in the borough of X. I haven't had an interview, but I'll definitely get in. I'll be jumping on scaffolds. In 4 years time I'll earn anything from £50 to £100 a week ... Did you ever see an Irish 'O' level paper? They ask: What time is the 9 o'clock news? They're really thick. Revising for exams doesn't do
anything."

Dr. S: "I remember you didn't do any."

Mike "I knew all the questions in my exams ... You should get fresh air on a building site. Imagine I'm the boss in a Rolls-Royce when I'm driving the digger on a building site ... I might still work in a restaurant. I don't know what I'm going to do really but I will try. I might take this apprenticeship course with the borough and once I'm trained. I'll leave and start my own business. I'll walk about, buy a van, ladders, pots of paint and call it "Mike & Co. Ltd." My mum would like me to be a teacher and have my hair cut, but she knows I can't be a teacher. I'll be a presser or a caterer. There's good money doing that, all the Greeks do it." 4

Dr. S: "You're not frightened by working on a building site?"

Mike: "I was frightened once, but I'm not scared of anything except spiders. I'm petrified of them... I want enough money to be rich."

Dr. S: “What will you think about when you go for your interview?”
Mike: "The pay and the facilities. I'll wonder what the day at college is like and what the people are like. I'll be making £12 a week as an apprentice and I'll be taking exams."

Dr. S: "Mike, you seem edgy about what's really going to happen."

Mike: "Can I go now?"

Dr. S: "It sounds as if leaving school and finding work feels like sure death to you."

Cathy: "He won't be happy until he's dead."

Dr. S: "You seem to be worried about becoming an old man because you're leaving school, what will you do? What are you really building towards, Mike?"

Mike: "Can I go? I feel restless."

Dr. S: "The question is whether you feel you are yourself. You look as though you're feeling pretty anxious."

Mike: "I'm enjoying myself and having a bit of fun ... it'll be hard for me to find a job because I like doing everything."

The pressured quality of Mike's speech, his
retreat into fantasy, and his repeated flight from my confrontation of him all serve to hide his overwhelming sense of loss. To triumph over that loss, he instantly and magically makes himself the boss instead of the labourer—but it is a boss full of sadism, greed and childishness—one whom he fears. Unable to see any other kind of "boss" within himself he sees bosses and their world as threatening and thereby exacerbates the acute pain of losing school. Under the threat of this loss, he regresses to early, fantasy-bound occupational choices, abandoning the one he has worked and wished for.

As we looked further, we found ample evidence of group-wide trouble with mourning the loss of school in all three groups and in many individual adolescents. A short section of the last session at Lake School illustrates group expression of grief.
Nan: "I don't want to leave school. Once you've gone, all right. You get into your job, you don't think about it any more, but when you're at school it's your whole life. You don't know about the world at all. But when you start thinking about the outside world you tend to forget school. This is the worst time. You're never going back to school again. You only go to school once, don't you?"

Linda: "We're secure here at school."

Nan: "The hours are short, it's pleasant."

Linda: "We don't have any responsibility and feel a bit sheltered. When you leave here you're in the world then."

Thomas: "When you work, you work—even in the holidays—until you're 64."

Susan: "I think I'll be a professional layabout."

Linda: "My two years of typing has been a real waste of time. I should have done an academic course. I wish I'd thought of it sooner. If this is the way I feel now, I must have been able to do something better."

Andy: "I don't want to leave now, I did last week."
Dr. S: "What'll it be like next week?"

Nan: "When I left primary school I didn't like it."

Susan: "Coming here everything is so strange and big."

Nan: "This time it's worse. You're never going back to school again."

Andy: "You only go to school once, you know!"

Dr. S: "Everyone's saying they don't want to leave school and they don't want to grow up. It seems to come out at a time when everyone is upset and feeling lost and abandoned. Getting out of school doesn't seem to be all roses and sunshine."

Judy: "I don't want to leave school and I don't want to be older than 21."

In this group panic reigns. My questions are met with statements of regret, nostalgia, fear and wishes to regress. The mood in the room was one of chaotic terror tinged with occasional ironic humour.

The South End group provided an interesting
contrast, a year older and more academically successful. It was this group in which Paolo described the dream previously discussed. Here I want to comment on the group’s use of his dream to explore their own reactions to leaving school. Several others were able to comment on Paolo’s dream, and then identify and express their own sadness and fright. Despite this, everyone except Paolo was able to manage his situation. In fact, the others were able to help Paolo in the work of understanding his anxiety without feeling personally overwhelmed. Even though their help and ours turned out to be insufficient, they themselves were helped to explore similar issues as they worked with him.5

This group's response to actual school leaving offers an interesting comparison with the more frightened tone of the other two groups. The difference suggested to us that the strengths of
this group could be felt in the way they faced loss—without retreating from sadness and without succumbing to depression. Gopal said in our last meeting:

"A friend comes up and talks to me and I begin to feel sad and out of place because I'm leaving. I was happy at home this morning, but when I get to school. I'm sad."

He said it with resignation, and with an acknowledgment that the sadness had to be faced, not with the panic we heard in the other groups. The added maturity of this group seems to prepare them better to face what comes.

These examples illustrate the expression of loss the adolescents feel, and a variety of their responses. The relevance of this to the transition from school to work is striking. Poorly-handled mourning will leave a residue of anger, depression, or detachment; a persistently blocked
adolescent who cannot continue the normal course of growth and development. It may leave a young adult who still does not want to age beyond 21, who sees an empty life spreading before him, and who is poorly prepared to meet future needs for growth. The likelihood of stunted development is increased if the environment fails to support a healthy transition, and instead either promotes regressive choice based on earlier modes of handling discrepancies between fantasy and reality, or withdraws the support of needed adults. For these reasons, the reciprocal mourning processes of the adults who form that environment deserve close attention.

The Adults' Mourning

It is not just that the adolescent mourns the adult. School, teachers, and parents mourn the adolescent even as he does them. They feel a loss
when the adolescent grows up and prepares to leave home or school, and it often seems to them that it is an unshared way that they bear the brunt of the loss. Their loss will be mitigated by a feeling of satisfaction if the adolescent is felt to be "well-launched". But when the adolescents are most anxious about leaving school, teachers and parents, the adults feel considerable guilt that "somehow they have not given the adolescent enough or done a good enough job". Such adults may be glad to see them go. It is in this context that one of them, previously mentioned, says to us, "I'll be glad to see the backs of this lot." But in her extreme rejection of students, she only expresses something that even the best and most dedicated of staffs feel in part. Many are relieved that the adolescents often are glad to have left. As the year closes the staff withdraws behind the confusion of the task of sorting out plans for the coming year
with this year not yet over, and becomes unavailable to students. There is often some private relief to be rid of those students who will not do well, which is not to deny concern and many positive feelings. But in expressing relief, teachers express a feeling that would be common to many of us. Unfortunately, it is just as the adolescents are most anxious about leaving school that teachers and parents feel guilt about the ones who have not done well. Often all they can express is relief. These teachers may well be the same ones who are proud of a successful group of adolescents, at the same time that they feel guilty about "this lot". The result is often a guilty withdrawal from the unsuccessful adolescent just when he feels in most need, but is himself withdrawing in guilt and anger. This is the paradox of the grief process gone awry, or the "shared pathological grief reaction."
The psychological mechanisms of "splitting" and "distancing" become crucial here. The tendency for the teacher to identify different children with different parts of himself and to split bad parts on to some children, good on to others is unavoidable, especially if he feels that he knows how to deal with one kind of child and can clearly see what benefits that child derives from his teaching. But with the other child—who is in the first place—"not like me"—the benefits the child derives are much harder to see, and it is easier to remain emotionally distant from that child.

It is much harder for the teacher to feel rewarded by small gains for a child he cannot identify with in a gratifying way. Therefore the academic child or the academic group of children within a given group often become the "good children". Their gains are a source of reward to the teacher. But the non-academic, working class
children, and especially the ones who are having the most trouble, are the ones with whom the teacher struggles and whom he will tend to reject as less valued unless there is some favourable circumstance.

Many of the adolescents in most need will be the most unavailable. They will themselves have withdrawn furthest from the teaching staff, and will be the most difficult group for the staff to reach. Angry outbursts, diffident detachment, or sullen withdrawal, may be regarded by teachers as rebellious, ungrateful and forbidding behaviour. They are hardly recognised as responses to a feeling of loss which overwhelms the adolescent who cannot express it, especially if that adolescent remains beyond the initial efforts of the teacher to reach out to him. And since the adult—teacher or parent—is sensing his own loss of the child, he may well feel hurt in a vulnerable and guilt-ridden
part of himself. For the child is still felt as part of himself even if it's a part he wishes himself rid of, and it still represents a loss for his world of family or school. A growing spiral of detachment begins as child and adult naturally withdraw. The active detachment by the child is countered by the detachment of the adult who is also suffering, at least in anticipation, the loss of the child. It is accompanied by mutual blaming, denigration, and wistful longing.

Withdrawal is a crucial aspect of what seems to go wrong with the school leaving process. It is to be expected that there will be a wish to withdraw from each other as the shared feeling of loss grows. But the process of successfully saying goodbye to important figures in one's life involves being able to keep a part of that figure alive inside oneself in a positive way. With the mutual feelings of guilt, blame, and letting each other down, the
tendency is to "get rid of" the other, get as much distance as possible from him, and to become unavailable to him. For the adolescent, the loss is catastrophic: he loses the teacher or parent as an available guide just at that moment he is approaching a new reality in the world of work. His reasons for withdrawing may be partly pathological grief reaction, partly normal grief reaction. While the withdrawal serves his need for autonomy, much of the motivation is, paradoxically from the fear of being abandoned when he feels most in need. Psychologically, he jumps in panic from a sinking ship—often forgetting to take a life jacket.

From the teacher's side, there is a lesser, but substantial liability. If the teacher must reject his failures each year, he is left with a residue of guilt and sense of failure. It is the inability to handle this residue successfully that appears, increasing
with each year, as anger, resignation, guilt and despair. The teacher's withdrawal from his non-academic student leaves him with a burden that is difficult to bear. This results in a significant interference in the mourning required as he gives up things from one life phase himself to move to another one. Successive phases of mourning, like successive phases of development, require a successful completion of one before the next can be undertaken. This is equally true for teacher and adolescent. If the teacher is burdened with guilt, depression, and resignation, he will find it difficult to come to terms with his own psychological development and his own psychosocial transitions, and will then have a doubly difficult task in continuing to help the needy adolescent. I am therefore proposing that is is in the teacher's personal and professional interest to be helped to mourn the adolescent, in a way quite analogous to
the benefits his student can obtain.

Let me now give some examples of the process of mutual withdrawal. In the psychodrama concerning Susan's leaving school and frustrating search for a job in Chapter 7, her peers portrayed teachers as withdrawing from her when she felt most in need. Discussions with her teachers led us to feel there was a general withdrawal from her by several of them, and from others in the class who were becoming increasingly surly, flippant, or depressed. Within group sessions, as the year drew to a close and the time for school leaving approached we felt mounting restlessness, reluctance to face issues, and markedly ambivalent attitudes about relationships with teachers. Adolescents alternated between wishing to cling to teachers and wishing to be rid of them altogether. This is documented in much of the material earlier in the book. At South End School,
students described not seeing their teachers at all for 4-6 weeks before school leaving. They were busy preparing for exams. When they came back, the sadness they felt about school had to be borne alone, for they said goodbye only briefly to some of the teachers, and never saw others again.

For the group at Thomaston, radical changes in plans to leave or stay in school were accompanied both by wishes to be rid of teachers and fond expressions about them. During the last few weeks of this process, students saw very little of the teachers. Our group apparently talked about the losses involved in leaving school only with us. Otherwise, they were preoccupied with exams.

The teachers' reaction is in striking contrast. Talk about students and the kinds of issues which seemed to concern them during the year, stops. In meetings towards the end of a school year, there
seems to be little or no mention of students—but of programmes, plans, and the teachers' own frustrations and disappointments as they hurry on to their own next stage. Just as some of the most difficult problems surfaced, the school and the teachers seemed to be too busy for students. One headmaster's 'official' recognition of the ending of school for a group was seen by the adolescents only when he called the local pubs warning them not to serve 5th and 6th formers.

The main body of evidence so far for this interpretation of teachers' behaviour is indirect, and therefore warrants close investigation. It is drawn from four distinct areas: first, the adolescents present the teachers, via discussion and role playing, as "not understanding", as hiding behind defensive veneers of various sorts, and as insensitive to the problems of actually leaving school.\(^z\)
Secondly, occasional teachers speak directly of their own withdrawal and relief. Their words do echo many others, so it is useful to listen to one of them:

"The kids get more and more to do late in the year, and their reaction is to arrive later and later. I don't mind—in fact I like it since it gives me more time. I like it better when exams have started and the kids don't come in to register. I have more time to get my work done .... Susan has been a lot of trouble. She's been rude to me and a nuisance to other teachers, but she is not the only one; it is the whole mob. I wonder if they want the teachers to dislike them, the way they behave."

To illustrate the reciprocity of these feelings, I note that the material in the group sessions with this teacher's class was replete with the adolescents' feeling of "not feeling like coming to school at all", and expressions of being disliked by staff and excluded from school. This contrasted
sharply with their clinging to school and idealising it at other times.

Thirdly, there is the sense we developed that the concern for the child and adolescent went underground entirely at the end of the year. This was especially so for the non-academic adolescent. This area will be more fully discussed as an institutional phenomenon in Chapter 14, but here I note that it formed a climate around the work of the individual teacher.

Lastly, we were able to get confirmation from the teachers we met with directly. Thus they agreed that an atmosphere of depression at the end of the year related to an unexpressed feeling of failure repeated every year. They could admit sharing feelings of resentment and relief *in part*—feelings which they had to fight in themselves. After hearing our ideas, the careers advisor at
Lake School said: "If parents and teachers withdraw, as you say, did you see anything of the children withdrawing from them so that it was not only one way?" She then went on to ask how the staff might help the adolescents, managing to block out the acknowledgment she had just made about the staff's withdrawal, although her focus on helping was a corrective to staff withdrawal. This was true repeatedly: the staff in each school acknowledged their withdrawal, their difficulty dealing with the "loss" of the non-academic child. The Head of the Commerce Department at Bradford School pointed out that teachers left for their summer holidays immediately after school-leaving time, and that no active attempt was made to be available to adolescents in the earliest and therefore most difficult phase of their transition.

It is always a bit difficult to base a conclusion on so little overt evidence. But the elusiveness of
responses to our presentation of this situation to the staff of several schools left no doubt in our minds that guilt about withdrawal from school-leaving, non-academic adolescents was a spot of considerable vulnerability for teachers. It tended to be sorest, in fact, for those who cared the most. It was at Bradford School that we found the most upset group of teachers. Bradford's programme of several years' standing was specifically aimed at easing the transition into the wider world for non-academic children, with much of it focused on the transition from school to work. As the end of the year approached, this dedicated group of staff was despondent: they wondered if they did any good at all in easing the transition, at enabling adolescents to understand the wider world and make choices. While some of this despondency related to their programme design, much of it had to do with sharing the depression of the adolescent himself.
But the strongest element had to do with the question "What is is that we have to teach and pass on which would make a difference in this brutal world? What can the adolescent take from us, and carry away with him, that will stand him in good stead?"

In this group, already actively struggling with how to help the adolescent in his transition to work and the wider world, we saw the early troubles of the next phase of the struggle. Grappling with the adolescent's struggle and sharing it with him, means sharing in his depression and being able to tolerate it. The capacity to bear depression in the attempt to resolve fundamentally irreconcilable issues requires much internal strength for continued psychological growth. Reflecting on the adolescent's pain, this group did not resort to the kind of blaming we saw in the more defensive
teachers. They blamed themselves, denigrated themselves and their leaders in these efforts, and wondered if they would be just as effective if they returned to traditional teaching methods and materials. I saw this as a regressive step in the face of a new anxiety: the need to tolerate intense ambiguity and depression coming from their students and from the position of the adolescent facing the world. The quality of work of these teachers suffered: they said the students could only be effective in the world if they learned to be "crap detectors" in relation to the social system, but then feared the students would see the "crap" in their teachers' work.

This fear of the students' response represents the beginning of a new awareness for this group of teachers. It was present here and with occasional other groups, as for instance a group of careers officers who dared to be innovative and
acknowledge the limitations of their previous work. Admitting that one has something to learn re-opens one to the painful realisation of previous inadequacy, and to the loss of a previously assumed "competence". The fear of teachers that students would crucify them on this cross is a projection of their own harsh self-criticism, and comes at a stage before they can examine the real issues involved in that criticism. The work of this group was impaired by this depressive anxiety—they found it impossible to work at the programme, and many of them left it at the end of the year. Others reacted with anger, detachment or zealous blaming of other people. All this behaviour parallels what I have described in the adolescent, and is a group response to the feeling of the loss of an ambivalently-held person (the adolescent), and a response to group and individual feelings of having failed the adolescent
and themselves.

**Mourning the Child of their Fantasies**

A further aspect of the progressive loss for the adult of the adolescent is the loss of the magical and fantasy-fulfilling child as he grows older and grows into adolescence and adulthood. In our society young children are wistfully and beautifully referred to as "full of promise, beautiful and everyone's hope for the future". As they turn into dirty, hairy, sexual and adultlike beings, they are responded to with heightened ambivalence, fear and fantasies about their violence and irrepressibility. So their very growth elicits feelings of loss in the adults around them—loss of potential and hope, and loss, too, of the child as a vehicle for and embodiment of fantasy hopes of the adult. The adult is therefore suffering a loss of his own fantasy life as the adolescent becomes an
adult—in the majority of cases without a future which promises to fulfill the adult's fantasies.

The issue is clearer often in the case of parents. Children embody the hopes for the future within families. They are also a container for fantasy-life within the family. As such they carry an imposed set of fantasy expectations that they will grow up to "become something"—a nurse, lawyer, someone who takes care of the parent. Just as the child must successively incorporate reality into his plans as he grows, so must the parent deal with the emerging reality of what the growing child becomes. A parent who has nourished fond hopes for his young child will have to deal, therefore, with a sense of loss as his child grows up looking like a working class adolescent, not a future prime minister. He must cope with his child's human limits. The sense of loss must be dealt with just as surely as the loss of a real person, even though it is
a loss of fantasied ambition for a child. Thus Bhunu, from South End says,

"How can I tell my mother I don't want to be a nurse any longer? She'll be so disappointed."  

The Second Master at Lake School outlined the problem:

"Parents in their fantasies see swans, not geese. It's difficult to persuade a parent that someone will be unlikely to get an 'O' level if they stay on. Parents put a lot of pressure on their children to become something which just isn't realistic for that child. It causes problems."

Teachers too, are coping with this loss of the capacity of the non-academic adolescent to 'hold and contain' their fantasy. It is the bitterness about this loss in its most personal sense that we have been discussing in this chapter. Many teachers make the point that it may well be time—perhaps even more than time enough—for the
adolescent to leave school and go it alone. But here is the very source of disappointment which may lead to mutual withdrawal. The adolescent turning into a lorry driver can no longer give truth to the proposition that teaching will somehow, in an undefined, fantastical way, "save society". To the extent that a teacher lives on that fantasy, the non-academic adolescent, no matter how successful will be a trial to him.

If the adult is unable to find fulfilment of his fantasy in a way consistent with reality, the adolescent will be less valued than the younger, unformed child. We have then the paradox that both the teacher and the student feel that the student, in growing up, has lost stature.\textsuperscript{10} It is in such adolescents that the school faces the "human limits" of what it can do. The school and each teacher must deal with this sense of limitation without "giving up" in relation to the students who
present it.

The inability to grieve about this limitation successfully, with a consequent giving up of inappropriate fantasy expectations, will seriously inhibit the teacher in his work of facilitating the transition out of school. Frequently, adolescents expressed to us the feeling of battling with teachers for self-esteem, as though only one of them could emerge with self-esteem intact. This may stem from a feeling of teachers that if the student is successful in leaving school, he will have done something the teacher himself has not been able to do, i.e. leave school. But it also may derive from an attempt to 'hang on' to a child in the hope of being able to make up for imagined deficits: in some way to "make over" the spoilt child.

In a family, the movement of the adolescent out of the family as he grows is facilitated when
the parent can allow legitimate childish dependency while also supporting the adult strivings for independence. A parent's insecurity about his own independence, or about the worth and effectiveness of his work as a parent, will be shown by his clinging to the child, becoming 'over protective' or possessive. The same pattern applies to a psychotherapist who must trust his patient to "go it alone", at the earliest reasonable opportunity.11 In both cases, parent or therapist must undergo the loss of the child or patient—and it is felt to be a loss. Not only are these situations parallel to the teacher's loss of a child at school leaving, but the parent's loss of the child is often occurring at approximately the same time as the school leaving. There is a chance of reinforcement of healthy or unhealthy patterns within these closely related events.
The "Work" side of the Transition

It is an entirely different institution which receives the adolescent immediately after school leaving. His new employer most probably will not know what appears as a withdrawn, depressed or unmotivated young worker is suffering from aspects of incomplete and unfacilitated mourning. And the employer has limited resources to respond effectively even if he knows. The schools complain that many employers may be unfriendly to recent school-leavers, and the school-leavers themselves are frightened at this prospect. But when the school and the young school-leaver have failed to engage in the mutual process of mourning about school-leaving, the adolescent is passed on with many unresolved issues, to an employer who has no pretence to being well-equipped in understanding problems of developing adolescents. It is extremely difficult, therefore, for him to be helpful, and if he is, it is by accident.
In this light, it is not surprising that initial job dissatisfaction is frequent for these adolescents and labour turnover among recent school leavers is high. One mechanism in initial job dissatisfaction may be that anger is displaced from the lost school onto the job and employer. At the same time, the adolescent is on guard for any evidence to confirm his worst fears about the world of work. The irritation of employers about this displaced anger could then be taken by the adolescent as evidence that the job was one to be feared and disliked. Another aspect of high labour turnover in early employment may be that the particular job was chosen as a stopgap answer to anxieties about leaving school, rather than a way of fulfilling ambitions. As these anxieties fade and become irrelevant, the job may no longer seem appropriate.

The choice of a job as a solution to anxiety
rather than an appropriate realisation of fantasy is a common adaptation, we have seen adolescents who regress to a very early mode of thinking about work as they choose jobs in the face of mounting anxiety about the school-leaving itself. Since the most sophisticated skills (those last acquired) are the first to succumb to the pressure of mounting anxiety, what the adolescent will surrender first are the more sophisticated ways of choosing jobs that are based on little-tested expectations and advice. Under the stress of anxiety, a number of adolescents regress to "latency" kinds of job choice, out of fear that job choices based on later psychological development will prove inadequate to any fantasy needs, and also out of a fear of being unable to "bring off" more ambitious choices. We can speculate that during the year after school-leaving these anxieties will fade, leaving a jaded, disappointed
adolescent who finds that fulfilling his latency needs is not enough to make him an effective adult.

It is therefore possible that it would be advantageous to industry to have resources available to deal with the stresses of early working life consequent upon the regressive choices, described above. Resolving adolescent mourning—before and after actual school leaving—is work which needs to be done. Implementation of this suggestion will be discussed in the final chapter.

**Mourning: The Wish for Immortality**

As the final note in this section I want to discuss the relationship of the crisis which occurs around psycho-social transitions, the process of mourning and shifts in the adolescent's inner and outer world.

During the crisis of school-leaving, the
adolescent is very much living on the interface between his inner and outer world, threatened by fragmentation and the fear of death as he is sent away from the world that he knows. Feeling alone and abandoned, the destructiveness of his own human processes becomes additionally threatening. He feels himself to be extruded or rejected from the "machine of growing up" that school can represent, and to be becoming part of the mass of humanity. His wishes to be loved and cared for, and an urge to retreat into a more caring world, will often find an expression in the impulsive action which emerges as adolescent violence, facile job changing, or pleasure-seeking activity. One of the things that seems most defeated is the adolescent's wish for a kind of "immortality".

In one of the sessions near the end of the year, Mike said to us:
"I went back to my primary school. My name is still in the toilet. It gives you a pretty good feeling to see your name up there. In the toilets there I've pulled bricks out of the wall, because they're going to get knocked down anyway. I carved my name on the notice board in the park. Seeing your name brings memories back and you feel better." 14

The wish for immortality is related to the wish to be loved. To be remembered always means to be treasured, tied to a caring figure always. Therefore, the wish may assume a new urgency when one feels unloved and abandoned. Mike's childish triumph over depersonalisation and abandonment confirms him as a worthwhile person while underscoring the poverty of the means at his disposal to confirm himself in more meaningful ways. The threat of death and abandonment is felt as an immobilised helplessness. The ability to be productive is fragmented by anxiety. The wish for confirmation
of life and of some kind of triumph grows as fears of death and rejection strengthen. The increasing feeling of outer and inner emptiness gives impetus to push that feeling on to others.

At the same time, we have seen that the teacher's own mid-life fear of death is often displaced from himself on to his student, since the child or adolescent is the container for a teacher's brand of the "wish for immortality". If the teacher and student withdraw from each other, each will be cut off from a source of satisfaction and the means of overcoming his anxiety. The task, shared between teacher and adolescent is to struggle to overcome chaos and defeat, both internal and external. The barriers to an alliance stem both from internal issues and from external reality. The teacher can be an accompanying sage, like Virgil accompanying Dante on a life journey of insight and growth. Or, with a failure to resolve his
own life issues, he can feel empty himself and resort to blaming and projecting hopelessness, fragmentation, and despair on to the adolescent. Retreating from a psychic reality of his own, he can resort to intellectual dishonesty and denigration of the student, with a corresponding loss of his own self-esteem. If the teacher resorts to these defensive behaviours the adolescent will have difficulty dealing with his corresponding feelings. What is needed instead, is a recognition of, and coming to terms with, the unconscious hatred of parts both of one's self and of parts of the process around the adolescent. This recognition can be used to mitigate hardship with love.

As a guide to the adolescent the teacher will in turn need someone to guide him in self-confrontation as he helps the student. Some of the help to the teacher will be his own internal
strength, some borrowed from his peers, supervisors or elders. In turn the student who is caught up in an impulsive rush would need to borrow some teacher's reflectiveness and sense of the adolescent's worth in order to develop a sense of worth out of his emptiness. The teacher, for his part, would need to accept that he shares the basic condition of the non-academic student: as a partially-developed, partially-damaged person who has the potential for growth as a human being. As he is able to mourn his own progress through life he becomes increasingly able to help the adolescent face the mourning of growing up and losing school. This process would guard both of them from obliterating intolerable feelings, and would strengthen each in ways appropriate to his phase of life. The difficulty of this task for a teacher requires that he, also, has someone to turn to for guidance and support, and the practicalities
of this suggestion will be discussed in the last chapter.

This leads finally to the suggestion that the teacher form a bridge from the life of school to the life of work. To do so, he would need to help the adolescent as he emerges into adulthood. Both of them would need to tolerate depression and the mourning of losses, and their re-integration into a life of growth. The need is not only on behalf of the adolescent. The teacher must understand the adolescent in his various guises in order to recapture various parts of himself. Strengthening his own ability to deal both with the adolescent as a worker and the adolescent as a fulfiller of one's own fantasy confirms the teacher's sense of a continuity of life. It lets them both respond to real needs while making reality serve their inner needs. In order to help the adolescent bridge the gap between school and work, the teacher needs
to bridge many gaps within himself as well as the gap between himself and his student, and, perhaps, to be physically available while the student makes the actual transition.

**NOTES**

1 Bowlby, 1973; Lindemann, 1944

2 Parkes, 1971

3 Bowlby (1973) and others have called attention to the high incidence of real loss of a parent in patients with depression in later life. Threats of loss by difficult marriages or verbal threats also contribute. Those adolescents we saw having difficulty had a high incidence of one or both of these factors.

4 Mike's parents are Greek

5 I believe the fact that we were unable to help Paolo adequately illustrates that there will always be some adolescents who require more help than they can obtain in any school setting. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the group's response to his distress was tangible and supportive.

6 Chapter 14 describes these events as a yearly occurrence in schools. For several reasons, staff see little of students in the weeks just before school leaving.

7 A good example is the sessions given in Chapter 7. My
reaction to that drama there is a first-hand report of what I am ascribing to teachers: as Susan began to succeed, I became irrationally angry and tried momentarily to 'retaliate'. I understand that as a reaction to "losing" Susan from my school—she no longer needed me and I felt bereft.

8 See Zetzel, 1970, for a discussion of the difficulties in tolerating depression

9 Another aspect of embodying "hopes for the future" of a family is the use of the child as a defence against death—either personal death or the death of a family. Adults having difficulty coming to terms with their own mid-life crisis may particularly have difficulty allowing the child to begin to face the losses of growth.

Annette played another role for her parents. While fighting about her, they avoided dealing with the failures of their marriage. Her school failure became a substitute for facing their own sense of failure, and the failure itself became a compromise solution to their marriage. This was equally true for Mary and Raymond in Chapter 9. For them, the academic failure functioned to sustain the family in a tenuous avoidance of crisis and grief.

10 Part of the adolescent’s sense of guilt may be in disappointing his adults by no longer being their "golden boy or girl". Not only does he lose this hope for himself, he loses the hope of doing it for them, and may feel he has done them harm in doing so.

11 Searles, 1959
Mike's impressions of "bosses" as punitive, harsh and exploitative provide examples of the kind of preconception which is involved. See Chapter 3 for his portrayal of a sergeant.

As Mike loses this identity, he hearkens back to an earlier identity and the earlier loss of primary school. It reaffirms who he is, but it also reminds him how he handled it.
The Careers Advisory Service
And Careers Teachers: How Strong Is The Link Between School And Work?

The educational authorities sponsor a two part careers team which forms the institutional link between the world of school and the world of work. In approaching the careers guidance system, we confront a dilemma:

*What is the existing institutional link between the school and the wider world?*

*Is it sufficiently strong to help the adolescent cross the gulf?*

The two special groups of people who have direct responsibility for choice of occupation
during the transition from school to work and afterwards are the Careers Officers, who are placed outside the school within the purview of the Careers Service, and the careers advisers or careers teachers who are on the teaching staff of the schools. Our experience with the last group is limited due to our primary focus on the adolescent himself and on his daily teachers. Therefore, while we do not contend that our experience is adequate to a serious study of the Careers Service, or any group of careers teachers, it is critical that we consider something of the nature of the role played by these two groups of people with whom the adolescent has contact over the time of the transition from school to work, for it is they who carry the official responsibility for shepherding him across the transition. Our focus in this chapter will be on the limits of effective functioning of both groups, bearing in mind our view that the
facilitating of the transition from school to work requires the capacity to accompany the adolescent while he faces it and crosses it.¹

Let us first look at the careers adviser, or careers teacher, located in the school, who is often recruited from among teaching staff and does not necessarily have any special training either in careers work or in counselling. It can be suggested that schools vary widely in the amount of time allotted to the teaching and support of careers work. While the careers adviser may know students over a long period, often from the 3rd year through the 6th year, he may have spent very little time with them as individuals. The variation among schools is great: some may allot two or three people with a major proportion of their time to do this work; others allot only one fifth to one tenth of one master’s time to work with the two hundred or more pupils who are leaving each
year. It is a frequent source of complaint from the careers teacher himself that he is not allowed enough time and that his services are not appreciated, as witnessed by the small amount of time allocated in his own schedule and the competing needs for that time. Although the careers teachers and careers officers with whom we talked generally agreed that many schools are becoming more responsive to the needs for careers work, they felt there are many schools which seem not to be allocating sufficient time or planning for its use.

When a very small amount of time is allocated, no more than a "job placement service" can be offered by an overburdened teacher. Thus for those adolescents with difficulty in knowing where they are heading the teacher will still be constrained by limits of time to give precedence to the placement of the adolescent in the actual job
and to ignore the need for time-consuming counselling towards a goal of increasing maturity of occupational choice. Not only may there be little counselling, but there may also be an absence of teaching about work, even at the level of the more traditional careers lessons, within such schools.

The effectiveness of the careers teacher is often also limited by the larger context in which he operates. Further, that he alone is saddled with the responsibility for the work-placement of students who have been at the school for at least five years is tantamount to a denial that the whole aim of education has to do with teaching a student how to leave school well. One careers officer, looking back on her teaching days, said, "When I was a teacher I never thought about the fact that I was preparing a child for life". So that it may well be the careers teacher alone who has responsibility for "preparation for life".
It would be denigrating the work of many dedicated careers teachers not to acknowledge that their placement often includes, at an intuitive level, a fit of the adolescent process of growth with a job placement. Most of these careers teachers do think about the possibilities for continued education in a job but it is seldom in a conscious or formulated manner, and there is little information available at any rate about the psychological implications of various kinds of jobs for various kinds of different individuals. If a careers teacher operates with this knowledge, he will virtually have had to learn it by himself.²

Faced with the need to help two hundred or more adolescents each year move out of school into a job, it is all too easy for the careers teacher to try to fit them into niches. A number of these teachers whom we met talked about their ability to fit all or almost all of their students into one
niche or another. One said, "Oh, I get to know the kids and I have some connections in various places around—Smithfield Market, the small industries around here, one of the banks—I can usually get them all placed."

Another careers teacher with whom we discussed this matter in detail, offered to have us talk with a group of boys with whom he met regularly for geography lessons. Mr Simpson was a conscientious teacher who made a point of getting to know students in the 3rd form and following them through, looking at their development generally and trying to see in which direction they were heading. He would keep his eyes open for those who needed a bit of shoring up here or there, and might well call them into his office to show them various pamphlets on opportunities they ought to know about or perhaps should be moving towards. He was intensely interested in
good placements for his students. As in other schools, it was his responsibility alone for the 4th and 5th form school-leavers. (This was before the school-leaving age in Britain was raised to 16, or after 5th form). Although only a third of his time was assigned to careers work, he pursued it conscientiously. In addition, he organised a yearly careers convention.

In the mid-point of our discussion with the group of boys to whom he had introduced us, Mr. Simpson commented, "Boys must not be over-confident. For example, in motor mechanic apprenticeships: two hundred boys might go for the position and only thirty would be picked. I try to warn them about this possibility." A moment later a boy commented that "The difference about leaving school is that you've got to fend for yourself. Here, if you're bothered about something, you can go to a teacher—but a governor would get
fed up if you kept going to ask him—you got to make decisions for yourself. After all, you've got to start deciding things some day, you've got to make your own mind up sooner or later."

Just as the class was beginning to feel a good deal of anxiety at this moment about the prospect of being thrown out into the world, where you're on your own and have to make your own mind up without the previously available supports, Mr Simpson intervened to say, "Well, I'll tell you about the boys in the class. Tom is a good worker, he'll do well as a mechanic. Bobby's a bit lazy and he knows I think so: I have to warn him he might not keep an apprenticeship unless he works harder", and on he went naming the boys around the class with his estimate of their prospects.

It looked very much to me as though Mr Simpson's reaction to the mounting anxiety in the
room about difficulties with placements was to fall back on to something which gave him personal reassurance—the reaffirmation that he knew each boy and his potential and he could be in control of the placements for them—in spite of the warning he'd just given them that much was unpredictable. His being able to find them a suitable spot was something that could calm his own anxiety. He seemed to be saying that if he could not find them a spot it was not because he did not know the field of available jobs and the boys. It was because of an identifiable, nameable, permanent character trait of that boy which made the job of finding a placement almost impossible.

Mr Simpson's attempt to resolve his anxiety about his work gives us a clue to his position within the school and the process of job placement. He had described in great detail how he felt he was relegated to a secondary status, and
had also noted that the curriculum was mostly irrelevant to the needs and desires of working class students. He had talked about his own isolation and the school's lack of appreciation of his work with non-academic children. In effect, the difficulty of finding work for them when they leave school is placed squarely on his shoulders, while the school at large takes flight from these problems and pays, attention to the more academic students. The work of helping this group of adolescents out of school is reduced to one simplistic concept: placement, and success or failure here is the sole criterion of success or failure in toto.

Under the impact of this pressure to get the non-academic children placed, it is no wonder then that the careers teacher relies on the single measurable result of the initial placement of as many of his students as possible. One
interpretation of this teacher's job function is to get rid of the "end products" of the educational system. As we have noted, non-academic children are felt to be "bad" and wasteful products. These are the split off adolescents who may represent the bad parts both of the school and of the teacher. They are also living evidence of the teacher's failure to turn them into people who will transcend. The careers teacher then is often given the task of taking on their failure and cleaning up their mess without letting knowledge of the school's failure over these children spread for fear of its contaminating the entire school and thus disturbing the school's continued functioning. My evidence for this is the almost universal feeling by careers teachers and careers officers that the school undervalues their work and treats it as the "dirty work", while the adolescents themselves feel as though they are given the same dirty
treatment in the school situation.

That is not to say that the adolescents feel that the careers teacher treats them unfairly. They see him often as grappling with the same difficult situation with which they are saddled, and that may well mean that they see him as an ally in carrying out some business in which they are at the bottom of the heap. On the other hand, they also see him as possessing information and wisdom that is unavailable to them which may well exceed what he feels is available to him.

The question of what might constitute adequate placement processes, and of what might offer adequate measures of successful placement, can be left until after the discussion of the careers teacher's counterpart outside the school system—the careers officer.

The Careers Advisory Service is made up of
careers officers each of whom services several schools as part of his responsibility and carries out the services of re-placement with industries of adolescents who have already left school as a secondary area of responsibility. The scope of knowledge of the careers officer includes more specific occupational information and the information about opportunities in the immediate area, as well as a general range of information about various kinds of occupations and the training required for them.

Within the school he usually has the role primarily of a kind of consultant. He may go in to teach careers lessons occasionally to 3rd year students and now more recently 4th year students as well, and will then routinely conduct interviews at one or two specific times within the adolescent's school career. This almost always includes interview in the winter or spring prior to
school leaving, for the 5th formers, or prior to decisions about future education for the more academic adolescents. It may often include an interview in 3rd year which has to do with the choice of options leading to particular career possibilities. These interviews are generally brief—being no more than a half an hour a piece—with a given careers officer, who covers three or four schools and will then have to interview all the potential school-leavers of that year within a period of a few months—an average of 450 adolescents!³

The size of this figure alone makes it quite clear that this person is in no position to be intimately knowledgeable about the developing individual and the process of growth he is going through as he approaches occupational choice.

Kenneth Roberts' 1971 study of the Youth
Employment Service (now called the Careers Service), published under the title *From School to Work* concludes that the careers officers are in a poor position to provide effective counselling to students. Since they are situated outside the school to begin with, they are badly located to counter resistance originating inside the school, or to take full responsibility for administering a counselling programme. The link between YES and the young school-leaver appeared to be tenuous. Roberts suggests that this aspect of the work be left to the school-based careers teachers.

At the same time, Roberts suggests that the future of YES (or CS) is in job placement and work with adolescent employees who have already left school. He describes a general complacency on the part of YES, in which careers officers assume they have something to offer but are severely limited by poor co-operation from industry. He also
argues that careers officers have poor understanding often, of the more general needs of the young non-professional worker, both in obtaining job satisfaction, and in general development. He suggests that it is in this area that the future work of YES lies, but he is critical of their present work in this field. From his study, it would appear that the current position of the Careers Service leaves much to be desired on both sides of the boundary between school and work. The principal difficulty in proposing that the CS as it now exists be a bridging institution is that it has few meaningful links with adolescents themselves, and little hope of strengthening the ones it has.

Finally, Roberts points out that YES is a most severely limited organization—limited by the social and economic forces which perpetuate the need for unskilled and unrewarding work. He notes that YES is not an institution which could
ever tackle the broader issues requiring reform in educational and industrial domains. By extension of this finding we would argue that the careers officers of the CS, as presently constituted, would have difficulty helping individual adolescents face the analogous difficulties within themselves, since limitations imposed on institutions are often passed on to members of those institutions.

Our own discussions with a number of careers officers raised repeated doubts about the overall value of their work in this sphere, although there were also similar doubts about the ability of regular school teachers to help children and adolescents face the reality of the world outside of school. One careers officer said, "No one seems to have seen to it that the children have in any way come to terms with reality until they come to the interview with the employment officer. It can be a shattering experience for a child to be told that an
ambition which had previously been left untouched and treated as quite realistic is in no way realistic. This seems to be particularly true within some immigrant families, especially the West Indian children." She went on to point out that with some of these children, "If you try to introduce the reality of the situation into the discussion it is immediately made into a racial issue."

Another careers officer said, "The vocational slant is too sophisticated for most children. They're just up against the hard problem of earning a living within very constrained circumstances, they're not vocational people—they're job people. The best hope is they'll stick at something. Realising their potential isn't for them."

Yet another man said, "The amount of work I
do in any of the four schools I work in is very little and it's usually spread out over three years, so I'm not sure it helps much at all. If the school doesn't have a supporting programme it's just a waste of time, and more of a waste of time the further you go down the academic scale."

A fourth careers officer noted that much of the information given during the process of the adolescent's development seemed to be washed out by the time these final interviews occurred in 5th year. It was just as though they had never had any information before and were "back to square one". But a fifth careers officer felt that it might be important just to enable a youngster to remember the employment officer so that he could feel free to come to him if things were going wrong, either at the point of leaving school or just after leaving.

In part, careers officers felt teachers were to
blame for not being realistic about the use of education for non-academic adolescents. They were quite critical of the concept of "further education without specific goals", although they agreed it might mean buying time for certain adolescents. They felt teachers and parents often shared a bias for as much education as possible, even in the absence of specific goals for the experience. Another discrepancy between teachers and careers officers' experiences was highlighted by references to the kind of teacher who felt, unrealistically, that a certain child could make a career out of a single skill although he was generally doing very poorly in school. The careers officer would then find himself in conflict with the teacher's interest in having an adolescent pursue an A-level art course when he did not generally have A-level skills. Without these skills he could not hope for a career which began by going to art
college which in turn required five O-levels. These disagreements had the potential for posing a conflict between a teacher and the careers officer, as though the careers officer were being punitive by imposing reality on the student and his teacher.

There was some suggestion by the careers officers that, as one put it, "the most realistic teachers are usually those who have been on other jobs beforehand." He went on to say, "If you really want to put teachers in the picture about work you'd have to take them around to half a dozen factories. But they're not interested. They would like to keep their myth intact that the world is an easy place. It may also be true that they haven't time."

Regardless of the merits of the careers officers' criticisms of teachers, it is apparent that there is a split between them which closely parallels the
discontinuity between school and the outside world. Teacher and careers officer see each other only across a large gap; as for the adolescent, the gap between school and work is wide.

The careers officers often have the most extensive knowledge of the industrial opportunities available in a given area, as well as the specifics of what training is required for which occupational opportunities. They spend more time than any of the other personnel involved with schools in visiting industrial settings and becoming familiar with them. They comment that their knowledge is limited in application because the teachers often feel in conflict or competition with them. They may well have the knowledge of what jobs are available at a given time and be working to provide opportunities for adolescents in view of available work. But if they try to do a job as an educator to teach about "working as a
process", they feel that teachers were often intolerant of rivals and claimed that teaching role exclusively for themselves.

Careers officers entertain their own serious doubts about their effectiveness in helping adolescents at the time of school leaving. One of the reasons put forward by one group referred to the difficulty helping children to blend fantasy and reality. During the course of discussion the hypothesis concerning fantasy and reality had come up, and one woman said, "The fantasy stage with low ability children is a long one and it involves the parents as well. Since nobody works with the parents, they are unable to deal with their fantasy ideas of what their children should become. One works with the children to introduce reality but it falls down. When they go home and discuss a new, dawning reality with their parents, the parents reimpose their unrealistic ambitions
on the child and the child reverts quite readily."

They pointed out that the parents were even more difficult to reach than the children and the problem of access to the children for them was dwarfed by the fact that nobody within the school system seemed to have access to the parents. Thus this material confirmed the teachers' view that the difficulty reaching parents was a considerable stumbling block.

A more pessimistic view of their own role was expressed by one man who said, "The careers officer acts just like a pin who comes to school to burst bubbles of unreal expectations. But that's all right because we're careers officers and never came to terms with what we wanted to do and could do. Maybe the work with teachers helps us come to terms with that ourselves." (In the discussion on parents' accessibility, it was mentioned that one school runs a course for
parents three evenings a week in the spring term around careers, but it is usually the more intelligent and less needy parents who come to such events.)

It can be seen then that the understanding of the limitations on reality confrontation with adolescents is quite sophisticated with many careers officers, but their despair is quite thorough. This despair echoes to some extent that of the careers teachers within the schools, and this similarity suggests that the two professions are poorly valued by the school system in general. The job placement of these non-academic adolescents who are as a group, "not vocation people, but job people", and for whom "realising their potential is not for them" is not seen as a desirable function by the educational system. The despair about it may well emphasise the hopelessness of the task as it is now defined.
To refer back to the question of what might constitute an adequate placement process which could be measured, the following formulation is offered. The process should combine the work of those interested in adolescent developmental stages and in job placement, providing people who attempt to align the adolescent's interests and stage of development, with the realistic opportunities and limitations for him. Within the current structure, this would necessitate collaboration between careers personnel and those teachers who know the adolescent best. Furthermore, the success of the first job placement might provide a measure of the adequacy of this process, while at the same time, in conjunction with continued close contact with careers guidance, it may provide for a continued learning opportunity. Changes in the rate of job changing in young employees would be one measure of the
adequacy of initial careers work, to be supplemented by subjective reports by young workers. But it should also be anticipated that for some adolescents, job changing may be a warranted step as an educational and growth opportunity, to be anticipated, encouraged, monitored and supported.

This leads us to consider the second statutory function of the Careers Service, job re-placement. We talked at length with careers officers about the accessibility of those adolescents who needed a second or third job soon after entering the work force. Job turnover during the first year of work seemed to be enormously high. Careers officers to whom we talked estimated it generally at more than 25% and other estimates show similarly high figures in selected industries.  

Nevertheless, the careers officers only see a
small percentage of the total number of adolescents requiring a second placement. It was summed up by a careers officer, who said, "A few children never do come to terms with reality. They come back repeatedly for new jobs and may end up on probation. But a lot of young school leavers are never seen again after the first placement. They do in fact change jobs but do not come back to the careers officers. They get jobs through other channels. It may be that the ones who can fend for themselves do not come back, but we really do not know." This is consistent with the general lack of systematic follow up of how adolescents fare in their early years at work. There is agreement that for those whose first jobs go badly there is a great deal of difficulty in learning from experience. Many continue to have the same difficulty with a second or third job placement. In fact, some careers officers also pointed out that because of
the high rate of absence from school by low-ability children, which may approach forty per cent in deprived areas, many of them were not at school when careers officers came for interviews. From these come the group who first approached the Careers Service after leaving school without any prospect. When the officers then consulted the schools they often found no information available about a particular adolescent because of his poor attendance record.

There was no feeling either that industries (with some notable exceptions) whether large or small, who employed significant numbers of school-leaving adolescents, had any knowledge or plan for dealing with the processes of adolescent development during early employment. This group confirmed Roberts' view. They felt they might well become familiar with an industry, the kinds of jobs available there, and the kind of day
release for training available. But, as was the case with their functioning in schools, they were not called upon by industry for consultation in how to deal with adolescents. Nor were they called on by the adolescents for help in coping in the work setting. As far as they could tell, they were usually called on by the most troubled group of adolescents for further placement. Root causes of difficulty within an adolescent or within an industry seemed to be seldom discussed.9

This group felt that early employment experience and the exploration of reality through a work experience during school years could be useful to adolescents. They felt it was an underdeveloped learning opportunity, and they were particularly eager to explore programmes exploiting educational aspects of work.

If we look at the twofold job of the careers
officer we see first the school phase, in which he feels in conflict with much of the educational system. He is often forced to impose a framework on an adolescent's unformed character structure, without time to pay attention to the process of psycho-social development. At this point there is little notion of an ebb and flow between the external world—including the world of jobs, information and experience—and the world of school. And there is certainly not time to monitor the process of development and consider what new needs will arise and what modifications of growth will be required in subsequent years. There is some attempt to work developmentally by giving information as early as 3rd year (age 14) in order to help the adolescent begin a process of choice which at best may lead gradually to the process of choosing a job, rather than to an abrupt choosing a job at a single moment at the time of
school leaving, but the overall impact seems still to be minimal.

In the industrial phase, an ad hoc approach is usually required, as the careers officer picks up pieces with the adolescents most at risk who happen to find their way back to his office. He has no systematic way of looking at adolescents as they develop, or of following up those who may be experiencing difficulty in a job which could be resolved by counselling, consultation, or planning. Which children find their way back to him is as much a matter of chance as which children benefit from his advice while they are still at school.\textsuperscript{10}

If we look both at the experience of the careers teacher within the school, without much access to the outside world of work, and at the discontinuous dichotomised experience of the careers officer who only meets adolescents at
certain points in their development without following them through, we come to a rather startling conclusion.

*In no single person, except the adolescent himself, is there a continuity of experience from the inside of school to the inside of industry. The adolescent himself is the only go-between from school to work.* Neither teachers, nor family, nor careers teachers, nor careers officers, are in a position to know and accompany him over a period of time as he approaches school-leaving, crosses the transition from school to work, and then tries to settle into his new world. In a way, the school system has organised a "careers team", consisting of the adolescent, the careers teacher, careers officer, and employer with the adolescent as a convenor of the team. In most ways he is in charge of his own fate, but he is the least experienced member of the team. The non-
academic child especially is more anxiety-ridden than either his teachers or the careers officers who are sanctioned by the definition of their roles to accompany the adolescent. The employer only sees the adolescent after he has crossed the transition from school to work, while he is still shaky. And the employer is only equipped to help the adolescent if his own personality happens to lend itself to this role. The discontinuity with educational goals is complete, since in industry the acknowledged goal of personnel departments is to have productive workers. In practice, it is still rare to come across the notion that facilitating adolescent development is a way of aiding industrial productivity, although many industries have begun to realise this possibility.

The point here is that although there are two institutional arrangements for facilitating the transition from school to work, neither seems to
form an effective link. The adolescent is left on his own at the interface between two worlds.

**NOTES**

1 For a recent concise review of the structure, functions and problems of the Careers Service, as well as its relationship to the new Adult Employment Service Agency, see "The Careers Service Digest", *Education*, 16th November 1973.

2 For some beginning thoughts on how various jobs and careers might fit the different needs of adolescents, see the following chapter.

3 This figure was supplied by Catherine Avent, Careers Inspector, Inner London Education Authority.

4 *op.cit.*

5 This is Hill's hypothesis discussed in the first section of this volume.

6 The careers officers echo the same feeling about themselves that is often voiced about teachers: that they are trying to help the adolescent do something they could not do—leave school and go to work. This man could focus his attention on his own position however.

7 Carter, 1966; Lipschitz, 1972

8 Carter, 1966

9 Recent legislation in the UK *divides* the responsibility for the
under eighteen group who have left school between the Department of Employment, the Manpower Services Agency and the Local Education Authority Careers Service. Careers officers generally are worried about losing touch with the youths who need them most, and who need their more psychological approach to job placement. The effect of this legislation cannot yet be judged. See "The Careers Service Digest", 1973, op.cit., which discussed the implications of *The Employment and Training Act* of 1973.

10 A proposal for a "youth tutor" based in industry who would follow adolescents before they had difficulty, was made 14 years ago by Owen Whitney (1961) but, to my knowledge, has still never been implemented.
Some Speculations on the Psychological Meaning of Work and its Implications For School

A significant argument has been made in recent years that the educational experience of working class adolescents has been subject to constraints which have the effect of limiting their development.¹ "If the developmental process dominant in adolescence was allowed to proceed unhindered, they would find the socio-economic roles allocated to them inappropriate and unacceptable."² Maizels (1970) makes the point that for the working class child, education has evolved to develop character and leisure life in
'life adjustment programmes', on the assumption that work will be unrewarding. But it has also been pointed out by Downes (1966) that leisure cannot be developed as a satisfactory avenue to self-realisation in the absence of a satisfactory experience at work. "The problems of self-realisation originate in the school and work situations to which they are destined by role allocation of the adolescent." Dissociation of the adolescent from his potential for self-realisation after leaving school therefore increases as the level of responsibility expected of him decreases. As automation of work expands, he feels more and more personally expendable. In large corporations, the adolescent may feel that he is among the many who are interchangeable.

The point is also made that, among working class jobs, unskilled manual labour is more devalued than the skilled crafts. The unskilled jobs
are viewed, even among educational institutions, as cheap labour. In school, vocational counselling time is accorded mostly to those adolescents headed for skilled crafts, who fit more readily into the role of those who are the inheritors and carriers of the society's and the teacher's knowledge. (Still more vocational guidance time is accorded by educational institutions to the applicant to further educational institutions and university because he can continue to obtain guidance during his later education).

In this chapter, I will present some speculations about the psychological meaning of work for the adolescent and the emerging adult and on some factors devaluing work life. Since the psychological investigation of this subject has dealt principally with professional and artistic occupations (perhaps confirming society's preoccupation with professional and aesthetic
fulfilment) I will draw on that thinking and proceed from it to the non-academic adolescent.

Many of our conversations with careers teachers and officers involved the need to fit a student with a job opportunity, taking into account a number of practical issues:

1. his willingness to take such a job,
2. its availability to him, including the question of whether the advisor or the student had contacts or interests which might open the job to him,
3. whether he possessed the skills requisite for it,
4. whether he had the "paper qualifications" for it.

Hill describes interviews with children who felt frustrated in their contacts with Youth Employment Officers (now called Careers Officers) and careers masters because the suggestions made had no connection with the interests of the
child. He concludes that "the children concerned reacted to the experiences they described as though they were being invited to regress."\(^3\)

In a similar episode, the father of an adolescent with a longstanding interest in joining the church after university accompanied his son to a careers interview. The Careers Officer had a reputation for recommending the Army as a career regardless of the interests of the adolescent. The father reported the Careers Officer's immediate query, "Have you thought of joining the Church Army?"

In these examples, the recommended placement seems to be irrelevant at a psychological level. It by-passes the adolescent's search for work which will satisfy his inner needs (represented most clearly in the fantasy life of childhood and adolescence) in favour of superficial links and placement suggestions.
experienced as psychologically empty. Not only does it invite him to regress, but suggests also that he give up a strategic search to satisfy his fantasies.

Whether there is a person responsible for 'careers' within the school or not, we found no one in any of the schools who thought systematically about the connection of work and the psychological meanings of a given job or occupation with the stage of development, with opportunities for growth, and with inner needs and resources of an individual student.

A good deal of work has been done on the meaning of certain occupations, generally the creative or professional level ones. Robert Gosling has described the meaning of work for an accountant who specialised in taking care of family accounts. His work was reparation to his
own remembered family whom he felt he had seriously disrupted by his incessant bullying of his younger brother. His guilt and anxiety about this was only assuaged when he was settling the accountancy difficulties of families and fending off the serious situations that otherwise might befall them. Whenever he tried to move into the field of large-scale finance he lost confidence in himself. This was because the uncertainty of the forces he was dealing with was so great that he became haunted by the suspicion that he might be contributing to the difficulties rather than fending them off. He therefore finally settled into a professional role which allowed him close contact with his clients, evidence of his helpfulness, and this gave him the requisite inner satisfaction.

Similar descriptions are given of the role of creativity in artists. Their work can be understood as a continuing process of restoring and repairing
the lost or damaged primary figures in the artist's life.5

The role of taking care of others as a response of wanting to "be taken care of and loved by" primary figures is a common theme for professionals who end up in the "care-taking" professions: teachers, doctors, social workers. The denial by these workers of such aspects of themselves often leads to depersonalisation of the care-giving process which makes the work and help feel sterile to the receivers of care.

Those investigating problems in this field are almost invariably professionals. I believe that as professionals we often experience difficulty in fully identifying with the meaning of a working class job. Presentation of our work to mental health colleagues and to teachers has given me evidence of this difficulty. While hearing about
school-leaving for the non-academic adolescent, the professional group members usually respond with memories of difficulties around their own "school-leaving"—and have great difficulty acknowledging the difference between their experience of moving on to colleges of education or university and that of the non-academic school-leaver going out to work. In meetings in which we presented this work, calling this oversight to attention graphically illustrated the distance between professional and working class adolescents.

It is important, therefore, to note two aspects of the failure of identification. It is commonly assumed that the reward of work is associated with the para-work aspects of working class jobs—such as peer friendships and fringe benefits. This is the assumption made by the Post Office in designing their advertising for recruitment.
On picking up such a leaflet, with a front picture showing a rosy reproduction of the Post Office Tower and an inside picture of five happy youths with arms around each other, I was greeted first with an insertion about new, higher pay scales. Next, the holiday schedule fell into my hand. Finally, I saw offered such inducements as working for "one of the biggest and most modern corporations anywhere". The tone of the leaflet is captured by the statement, "The best thing about the Post Office is that it offers something for everyone." Buried in the descriptions of the young workers' life and vacations is a line about job specifications. For example: "His main responsibility—'I enter details of everybody's sick leave, to keep the records straight.'" Peer and co-worker camaraderie and the quality of life surrounding the work are scrutinised in much more detail than the actual work involved.
The unstated message in the promotional material is the assumption, common to managers, teachers, and career advisers that the work itself is boring, repetitious and without intrinsic interest. In groups, away from the adolescent, they agree that the adolescent's fears about work are justified, and express their own frustration about changing the situation. Mr Zoskin, a teacher who had begun an innovative programme for non-academic students, noted: "we used some CRAC material\(^7\) to get across the point that when the group of kids began to realise that they would face an average working life of 49 years, knowing that the jobs would not be very interesting, their faces began to drop. They talked about choosing jobs with money as the sole criterion of choice. They also said their friends had left school to take one or other interesting job—say as an auto-mechanic—but had found themselves sweeping up after
mechanics "because the governor said you had to."
In the previous chapter I quoted a careers officer who said, "These children are just up against the hard problem of earning a living within very constrained circumstances. The best hope is that they'll stick at something. They're not vocation people; they're job people. Realising their potential is not for them."

**Some Meanings of Working Class Jobs**

All work has, nevertheless, inner repercussions at several levels, not necessarily related to the level of training or the exercise of discretion and responsibility. For two boys playing with the idea of entering the catering trade at Thomaston School, the work marked a cherished continued identification with a care-giving, nourishing father who gave a good deal of 'mothering care' as well. They had enrolled in a pre-catering course at the
age of 14. In contrast, the work which stood for the threat of death and abandonment for them, was the army, as depicted in the role-playing session detailed in Chapter 3. For them, at that moment, a dramatised fantasy about joining the army develops which signifies (1) cleavage from family; (2) seduction into a dishonest and sadistic world; (3) death—starvation in nourishment terms—brought about through greed, ingratitude to parents, a dishonest, murderous "mother" country, and their personal infidelity to family.⁸

Against this, compare Mike's delight in describing to us the meal he cooked for his exam, telling the girls how easy it was, how the inspector enjoyed sampling it, and his pride in his own father's occupation and status as chef. Making and processing food has the status for him of giving and renewing life, identifying with family in the generative process, cleansing away poison,
producing a creative work of art and giving birth to it. The process of producing a socially and personally acceptable 'feminine' creation which yet has masculine sanction, can be admired both by family and the outside world, allows a feminine or material identification to join with a masculine model in a way that is acceptable to Mike and his friends.

This theme could be followed with speculations about a range of occupations. For the boys aiming for jobs as garage-mechanics 'making cars go' can be thought of as repairing machines which are extensions of their working bodies, and as exercising male mastery to restore function to people via their cars. Speeding communications, or 'carrying the mail', as a postman, supplies physical links between people which are crucial to the maintenance of relationships.
Jobs which can be thought of as having reparative functions thus have a similar role to that played by psychological defence mechanisms. The method of guarding against a feeling of vulnerability demonstrates to us the adolescent's need at the same moment it safeguards him from feeling the inadequacy. Let me illustrate this with an example of two adolescents in the Thomaston group. The two boys who were interested in "telecommunications" jobs in the Post Office were rather inarticulate, slow of speech, and had difficulty communicating generally. Their work of repairing or installing telephone equipment, or maintaining part of a communications network, could be seen as an externalisation of their own blocked ‘communications system', perhaps with reparative aspects referable to difficulties in communication within their own families. They can be seen as feeling vulnerable around difficulty
communicating with others: the point of vulnerability is that each feels "cut off" from others. The work (installing telephones, repairing telephone lines) symbolically repairs the vulnerable feeling—the worker is continually re-connecting people who are cut off from each other. In doing so, he is continually restoring his own internal connections to his family, to those he wishes to be loved by, and to parts of himself he feels out of touch with. Thus the work does three things. It is symptomatic of the vulnerable feeling (being cut off); it also expresses the wish to be re-connected; and it provides the skills to re-establish connection symbolically and thus to overcome the ‘cut off’ feeling.

If such an adolescent progresses in his job, the possibility is there for him to accomplish the same thing in a more parental role; he can teach others to connect communications lines, or even become
a supervisor of a group of people who restore connections. This, in turn, would give a larger measure of internal reassurance to him in reaffirming, on a magnified scale, his ability to contribute to human communication and connectedness.

When we look at jobs for girls, the same speculations seem to fit. The favourite fantasy jobs for many young working class girls are often hairdressing and nursery nursing. Many of the girls we met listed these as earlier ambitions, and some had, of course, maintained the ambition. Hairdressing, the process of beautifying others and becoming skilful at beautifying herself, echoes the process of a girl's growing wish for bodily beautification as an outward sign of her development into womanhood, her capacity to attract men, including her own father, and her identification with a loved mother. But it may also
constitute reparation for an inner feeling of ugliness or sense of having caused damage to her mother. Taking care of young children as a nursery nurse has the same "care taking" motivation as that of the more sophisticated professional care-givers: externalising the desire to care for the needy child in oneself, giving the care one either treasured or felt was missing, identifying either with the child to continue receiving love, or as a compensation for a mother who withheld it. Annette (Chapters 4 & 9) hoping to be a commercial artist, may have had the same kind of wish to heal damaged internal figures which characterised creative artists, as her family was clearly torn by strife. Thus the difference between commercial and creative artists may be social class, intelligence, the ability to tolerate anxiety, or it may be only educational opportunity, but the motivation may be much the same.
Aspects of motivation underlying job choice can also be seen in the series of sessions from Lake School, in which Susan compensates for her continued infantile failings, which threaten to keep her from becoming a responsible adult, by becoming the "gatekeeper" and caregiver to a large "home" for people enjoying themselves—rich and important people—who can stay at the Dorchester Hotel and who stand for the important people in her life. In this she is helped by a good peer-mother-figure (Sally), who allows a positive process of identification and growth, supports Susan, and aids her in fending off the hostility of the outside world during growth and learning. Into this hotel-home, Susan (with another friend's help) puts her most cherished ego-ideal mate, David Cassidy, and guards him with her life. In previous sessions, she had spent time demonstrating the dangers of other kinds of work.
Like Mike and Steven above, Susan's examination of the world of work included the "good work" and "bad work"—that work which will satisfy her inner needs and that work which will either fail to do so and will provoke her aggression and therefore society's retaliation, or that which will simply be unavailable to her.

These examples could be extended to cover many occupations—the waitress serving food to others, the dustman keeping the city clean of its waste, and the gardener making things grow.\(^9\)

The illustrations demonstrate the creative/reparative aspects of jobs for adolescents. This is not to denigrate the work of these occupations as merely compensatory. According to psychoanalytic thought, the capacity to work grows out of sublimation of drives and the ego modifications of these brought to bear in the
outside world as part of establishing an identity. Life is a struggle between the creative, loving aspects and the aggressive or destructive aspects of one's personality. The juxtaposition of the creative job ambitions and the feared, destructive 'bad work" for these adolescents make very clear the role of chosen work for them: it lets them feel productive, loveable, and worthwhile. It also makes clear the differences in their way of thinking about different kinds of work. The kind of thought process is identical to that of children heading for professional occupations, with no difference in the way fantasy is welded with reality from that of the boy heading for medicine as a career. In this sense, career does have a meaning for working class adolescents, at least before work is begun. What may be different once working life has begun is that systematically mechanised, routinised work may kill off this
aspect of the reward of working life. The fact that this happens so often should not keep us from acknowledging the possibility of rewards within the work situation. In order to understand the overall, situation better, I will next turn to the question of personal relationships during work.

**The Importance of Personal Relationships**

The importance of the relationships to other people provided both by the *outcome of the work* and *during the work itself*, links the concept of job satisfaction to the relationships to the central people in one's life.11

A large part of the reward of a job is felt to stem from relationships with the other people one works and creates with. These people in the outer world stand for particular figures who live in one's inner world and constitute one's inner environment. Hill describes a young man whose
mother and stepmother had died. At naval training school he described the wish to travel, to visit relatives and meet people. He added wistfully, "Maybe somebody will adopt me".12

**The Role of the Product**

Two other aspects matter, too. The first is the product or process of work. This reverberates with the 'ties-which-bind' oneself to crucial internal figures—the material products or physical processes which mediate between loving and aggressive forces in oneself must be ones which have meaning for the individual. An example is provided in the telecommunications jobs discussed a moment ago. The work must feel like the continual forging of a link between people and, at a level of symbolic displacement, between oneself and the people one loves but feels separated from. If it does not do that for the
telecommunications worker, it will feel like dead work.

An examination of the role of attitudes towards the 'product' and its relationship to the consumers of that product, is used ingeniously by Kenn Rogers in *Managers—Personality & Performance*, 1963. In a series of firms in the household products field, those doing well were the ones in which executives respected their women consumers at both conscious and unconscious levels, and felt that their product had something beneficial to offer women. In contrast, the executives of unsuccessful companies tended to have denigrating opinions of both the women who might use their products, and of the product itself as being unworthy of their own attentions. In general salesmen carried attitudes into the field which reflected the executives they worked for. This organisational example of the same process I
am describing for the individual also provides an example of the way in which the same job may provide satisfaction in one situation and not in another.

In this meaning of work, the product or process becomes the medium of communication across several "gaps"—the gap between one person and another, and the gap between the fear of dissipation of effort and the feeling of productivity, or, in Erikson's terms, between a sense of industry and a sense of inferiority. For the individual, work can act as an internal mediator between the destructive and constructive aspects of love and aggression. If the work is felt to be productive it tempers his sense of aggression and holding the other person at a distance or harming him. It provides reassurance that he can be constructive. Similarly, it demonstrates that the loved person will not be
overwhelmed but will be given something demonstrable. But I have described the person who is the focus of these efforts as one in the outside world who represents and resonates with the adolescent's important internal figures. There—it follows that the work itself mediates not only between outside figures but also between varying aspects of internalised figures. Productivity provides a link to the good internal figures, stagnation a link to the bad, destructive internal figures.

In the process of mediation between internal figures work acquires the quality of a "transitional object" (in Winnicott's terms). It provides an intermediate, independent object which forms a crucial link with the primary figures in one's life. If it is felt to be a satisfying, good link, it enables the individual to feel loved by and in touch with his internal figures. If it is felt to be a boring,
deadening or otherwise 'bad' link, it connects to the destructive, feared figures or provides a "disconnection" and is threatening to the adolescent.

An example of the "good" link versus 'bad' link is given graphically in Paolo's dream in Chapter 8. In his dream, successful exam work leads to and connects with a house and car. These seemed related to his ability to feel productive, take care of his future family and to be worthy of them. Failed exam work seemed to lead to disconnection, to a black cloud of empty despair, with no people in his life. His long evening's bus trip without making connection with his girlfriend further elaborated this theme.

The interplay within the gap between good and bad was shown in the dream. His own figure lies between success and failure as his mind plays with the alternatives, making and creating out of the
sense of loss. And, in a creative way, he is able to use the gap within himself to make something highly original and productive from the dream, since he uses it as the material for his exam. In that moment, he turned the sense and threat of loss into a piece of creative work. This relates to the ability to "play in the gap" which will be discussed in a moment.

**The Role of Responsibility**

The second aspect of meaning in work is the amount of responsibility and discretion which is exercised. Elliott Jaques has\textsuperscript{15} demonstrated that employer and employee agree almost exactly on the proper salary paid, and that what determines the measurable value of work, both to oneself and to the outside world, is the risk involved if, in the exercise of the discretion inherent in a job, a mistake is made. A skilled machinist may be
observed to do his job effortlessly and quickly. But he feels worth a good deal more if, were he to make a mistake, it would delay production for several days or ruin an expensive piece of equipment, than if he is operating with little risk to the process in which he works.16

The notion of responsibility reverberates with the amount of work going on internally during the sublimated or externalised process of working. Responsibility to others, to other people who stand in for important figures in one's own life and are carried as internal figures, binds the internal aspects of work and its external representations and actualities.

A Frame for the Meaning of Work

The above speculations give four corners in a frame of reference for the "meaning of work". The externalisation of internal mediation between life-
giving (or loving) forces and aggression, mechanisation, the cutting oneself off from life and nurture; the relationship to primary people in one's life, displaced to their representatives in the outside world; the product of the work standing for the process of relating to them, repairing for one's potential damage to them and the life renewal process; and the shouldering of responsibility as the adult sign of working for the crucial people.

That these processes can be stripped of life by mechanisation, depersonalisation, and the lack of opportunity for the exercise of responsible discretion, is a threat to the vitality in the life of an individual. There is a powerful comparison to be made between the laments of the mass-production worker in an automobile factory or the clerk doing some form of rote work, and the vanishing, poorly-paid farm worker, talking of the pride in ploughing
furrows. First the ancient farm hand:

"The ploughmen talked softly to their teams all day long and you could see the horses listening .... Each man ploughed in his own fashion and with his own mark. It looked all the same if you didn't know about ploughing, but a farmer could walk on a field ploughed by ten different teams and tell which bit was ploughed by which. Sometimes he would pay a penny an acre extra for perfect ploughing ... The men worked perfectly to get this, but they also worked perfectly because it was their work. It belonged to them. It was theirs."[17]

Contrast this to the girl quoted by Hill who speaks of the depersonalisation and fragmentation of experience which mechanisation represents to her:

"When they put money in you take their card out of a tray, put the amount on the card by machine—a stupid looking machine—and then you stuff it back in the bleeding tray. That's all you do all day, every day, the same boring thing every day, every day ... you take
all the accounts and you add them up and you send the amount to the Government and they see how much they gain in the end—the big blooming profit ... That's my job—some people have been there 50 years."\(^{18}\)

The meaning of the mechanisation and dehumanisation of work now becomes clearer. For it is precisely the disruption of the internal and inter-personal aspects of reward, the removal of the opportunity for assuming responsibility to meaningful others, that strips work of its life-links.

**Playing**

I cannot end this discussion on the potential meaning of work without some comments on the meaning of play. Winnicott and others have taught us that 'play' is the externalisation of psychological processes which are in the process of being "worked and reworked", aligned and realigned. This notion has been used as the foundation of 'play therapy' in child psychiatry. Once a young
child begins to *play*, his psychological *work* can be seen in operation. A therapist, another child, or an observant adult, can join in this world, share and understand the child’s themes, and enter into a psychologically-relevant dialogue.

"...*psychotherapy is done in the overlap of the two play areas, that of the patient and that of the therapist*. If the therapist cannot play, then he is not suitable for work. If the patient cannot play, then something needs to be done to enable the patient to become able to play, after which psychotherapy may begin. The reason why playing is essential is that it is in playing that the patient is being creative."¹⁹

For adults, work has this status just as often as play—especially if factors in and around the adult do not force a life-defying barrier between the work and the inner world (that is the barrier, described above, of a defence of boredom or detachment erected by the mass production
worker, in an attempt to preserve his internal world from the killing-off by mechanisation done to his external one).

A further aspect of childhood play which has relevance to our discussion is its use as the instrument of projecting internal needs and fantasy into the external world, subjecting them to instrumental manipulation, and then re-internalising remodelled ideas of the relationship of the self to the outside world. This can be most easily seen in the 3 or 4 year old, who plays out his fantasy life over and over, taking often as the 'problem' the impingement of the real world on his more unrestricted fantasies. For example, the recurrent theme of the little boy who plays out "I love mummy, I'll marry her some day. " This fantasy is impinged upon by various aspects of reality including discrepancy in size and status between him and mummy, and the usual presence
of daddy (whom he does not want to lose either). At a certain age the play of most boys represents the active struggle with this reality impingement on a wish for unrestricted gratification of fantasy.

An analogous model applies to adolescents as they cope with the same kind of wish for unfettered fantasy gratification of their needs for nurturant people, material possessions and productivity—impinged upon by a particular reality in terms of available or potential skills and the actual environment. But even the actual environment is usually different from the 'reality' of their limited or distorted knowledge of the environment which can take on a life of its own, thus confronting them with an added task—that of bringing together their perception of what is the case and a new one which is nearer to actuality. The threat of their own anxiety narrows possibilities still further and provides some of the
distortion. In the extreme case of adolescent psychosis, anxiety keeps the fantasy world intact by splitting it entirely from reality.20

The kind of play we have been discussing above—that is, the stuff of school 'work'—must, to be effective, encompass the work which must be done in relation to these discrepancies. Teaching "geography" needs to be more the process of incorporating the life of the world than a recitation of a collection of facts—it can be "the lives of others" made available to a child. At South End School our group pondered the relevance of geography to them. "was it a knowledge of soil or of people? And what is the relationship of different soils and crops to the kind of lives people live? And what is its relevance to 'me' beyond passing an 'O' level?"

The kind of work/play we are discussing
bridges the gap between fantasy and reality in exploring possibilities for a satisfying work life. Once this kind of "playing in the gap" is begun, it becomes available for application to the process of bridging the gap between the worlds of school and work in an imaginative way; life plans and hopes can be "played" off against inner fears and the growing knowledge of reality. Fears can be tested out, and it will become increasingly apparent at which point it is appropriate to discover and investigate more about reality—for instance about what an actual job is like to work in from day to day, or what kind of housing is actually available. Attempts to 'realise' fantasies and hopes can be made within the context of the same kind of 'externalisation' as occurs in a young child's play. Thus they are tested and melded with reality, then taken back inside by internalisation and experience of the result. Susan (Chapter 7) spent
our sessions playing out a problem imagining herself finally at work, and finally enjoying it after a long struggle with both her anxiety and a peer-given picture of a "reality". Playing back and forth across several gaps, she created a solution. Unable to find herself a career in acting, she takes care of an actor who is her teen idol (David Cassidy) in compensation.

Growth can occur around the gap between the sheltered world of home or school and the increasingly "real" world of work. By the process of playing, the adolescent begins to build a realistic, imaginative bridge to the next world. It is the early development of the process of "playing with the next or 'real' world" which I have been describing, examining and advocating as a matter of concern for schools. It is an alternative model of education directed towards an internal bridge-building, and it requires for its success a shared
"overlap of the two play areas" between teacher and student.

A consideration of the relationship between work and play affords a new view of the adolescent peer group; it is a refuge for childhood play, and precisely because of this playfulness, allows the work of coming to terms with reality to go on. At its most playful the peer group can be hard at work, and the teacher who is in touch with his own area of playfulness can be a most useful consultant to this work.

In adolescents, who define themselves as between childhood and adulthood, the processes of play and work can be seen in overlap. In the material presented from the school groups, we see adolescents playing with and playing at the world of work and their place in it. That is, when they concentrate or are involved in it, they are doing
psychological work about the world of work and the world around them. Adults can play in this way, but do so less often. Psychotherapy can be defined as a kind of 'playing' with the internal world, losing the knotted strands of life, and allowing them free play. Play is the process of allowing and testing new alignments of the strands of personality, to facilitate internal growth and learning. Play and work, in that sense, are united. It is their disruption and separation that is the oppression complained of by many in working class jobs. An exaggerated split in work function can be described symbolically with reference to the body. A displacement of the cerebral (thought and feeling) aspects 'upward' in the bodily sense, to the head or management of an organisation occurs. At the same time, disparaged, mechanised processes are displaced downwards to the symbolic automatic functions and parts of the
body. For instance, mass production work is automated so that the worker exercises no discretion or responsibility, in the same way that the body automatically produces faeces and urine without any thought. The result of these displacements is an organisation which divides functions unnecessarily completely and denies an integrated work reality to both work force and management. The liability to management is a growing feeling of unreality, of disconnectedness from 'real work' and actual productivity, (that is to say from the work force), while the liability to the low level job-holder is the mechanisation of his sense of productivity.22

Let us turn finally to the problem of facilitating growth through encouraging imaginative play about the gaps between school and work. Here, the process of 'sorting' non-academic school leavers into appropriate slots can be seen as a sign
of the school's inability to 'play with them' around making work meaningful. Whether the sources of this inability stem from urgent pressure on the school from parents or society, lack of understanding of adolescent development, or the teachers' anxiety and hopelessness about the school-leaver—the effect on the adolescent is the same. He feels already a part of the process of social depersonalisation and constriction that he fears will be part of his work life from that moment on.

For the school to create a space for overlapping play of student and teacher means building a structure to contain the anxiety about the difficult passage. The work of helping the adolescent make contact with split-off parts of his own personality, in order to incorporate them in a mature solution to the problems of the transition, requires a free inter-play of internal and external factors for both
student and teacher. Facilitating this process allows both of them to gain internal satisfaction, and increases the rewards of work for teacher as well as student.

For those working with adolescents to be more attuned to personal development means looking less at superficial aspects of jobs and more at the meaning of work. To be helpful to him in his new capacity will require that someone investigate these processes with him over a prolonged period—perhaps at a minimum during the last two years of school as a substitute for the half hour careers interview. Not only does such a suggestion imply a major reallocation of personnel, it also requires training teachers, pastoral staff and careers staff for a new focus and a new kind of teaching.

NOTES

1 In making an introductory statement about the devaluation of work for the non-academic adolescent, I draw heavily

2 Friedenberg, 1967

3 It is important to stress that this has not been our general experience of Careers Officers in the study reported in this section. It was much more mixed. We did hear from many adolescents that there is a dearth of advice, information, and counselling which takes their own needs to heart. In one school, the absence of a careers teacher left such a large void that the Careers Officer herself felt her advice went into an empty space. But from the adolescents in that school, we heard that they found the brief interview with her extremely helpful because only she gave them any clear information, or attempted to integrate knowledge of jobs with their own felt needs. Thus, many found even their brief encounter with the Careers Officer to be a positive one.

4 Personal Communication, 1974

5 Segal, 1952

6 "Getting Ahead with the Post Office. A clerical career in London—what it has to offer you", with up-dated leaflets April and July 1972.

7 op.cit.

8 Several occupations are noted for the fact that choices to go into them tend to be made at a very early age—before, say, the age of 10. These include farmers, sailors and chefs. Perhaps when a child has "always wanted to be something " certain aspects of the adolescent process
become easier, and he is less subject to the anxiety of choice. See also the note no. 7, Chapter 4.

9 One particularly clear example was recently provided by a building porter. In showing me around a block of flats, he said, "If it weren't for all the work we do here, this building would fall down. But we take good care of this place and it's a nice place to live. It's not just me—it's the electrician, the painter, the mason. Together we keep it going and quite liveable."

10 Erikson, 1968, op.cit. pp. 115-135

11 The stripping of personal relationships from work may echo a devaluing of relationships in work in an industrial and automated society in which labour is needed but devalued. Maizels (1970, op.cit.) supports the notion that work is devalued. That it is the relationships which are particularly devalued is my own speculation.

12 Hill, 1972, p. 46

13 Erikson, 1968, op.cit. pp. 91-141

14 Winnicott, 1953

15 Jaques, 1956

16 For an executive, the time span of risk will be months or years. A choice or decision also involves letting go of other possibilities; therefore each of these must be given up and "mourned". Although the necessity for being able to tolerate the loss and mourning of possibilities which must be given up. To a scaled down extent, this is still true at lesser levels of responsibility. The capacity to
carry responsibility to others requires the capacity to tolerate risk, loss and mourning.

17 Blythe, 1969, p. 61

18 Hill, *The Child's Changing Perception of Work from the Age of Seven*, para. 191

19 Winnicott, 1971, p. 54

20 Raymond King (Chapter 9) provides an example of anxious obliteration of the processes of play. His own and his family's anxiety about his illness turned every activity of play and work into a dangerous venture. As he grew less free to "play" with the world, he became *more* anxious, however.

21 The idea of "playing in the gap" and its application emerged in discussions of the concept with Jill Savege.

22 Language exists which helps us think about work in relation to body parts. On a farm, workers are commonly called 'hands' while many in organisations the charge person is the 'head'.

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CHAPTER 14

Reflections on the School as an Organisation

In previous chapters we have discussed the need of the adolescent and the teacher for an environment which facilitates growth, through considering the developmental issues of the non-academic adolescent. In this chapter I want to consider aspects of the school as an organisation which facilitate or impede growth by tolerating or deflecting the anxiety which comes from both the adolescent and the staff. I want to address the question, "In what ways does the school's management of anxiety enable the adolescent to carry on with his growth, or even to use the experience of that anxiety to his increased
benefit?" These thoughts are tentative, based on a small sample of preliminary observations. Nevertheless, they have broad implications for the beginnings of change within schools in response to the needs outlined. In thinking about the overall effect of the school as an institution upon staff and students I will leave aside the differences among individual schools and concentrate on structural and organisational similarities.

The first part of this chapter gives a conceptual framework for understanding a crucial source of adolescent needs and the response of schools, as organisations, to this. This will allow us to give several examples of the school's organisational response to those needs, and finally to make recommendations for organisational change.

**Student Dissatisfaction and Social Defences**

Maizels, Carter and others\(^1\) have documented
the failure of various parts of the educational system to satisfy the acute needs of adolescents in school, during the transition from school to work, and in employment. Maizels' sociological approach documents in detail many aspects of student dissatisfaction; teachers' difficulties in explaining concepts clearly; the irrelevance of curriculum content; the inability of the Careers Service to provide meaningful help; the inability of employers to respond to adolescent needs—and, beyond these, the sterile and depersonalised quality of much manual labour as it is currently structured.

One source of unhappiness is the students' feeling that "teachers just don't understand us", and one explanation of this gulf between teacher and student is suggested by Bernstein's hypothesis of an essential difference in culture and language between working class and middle class.
Therefore, the gap between working class children and essentially middle class teachers can be viewed as based in those differences in culture and language which make communication between them extremely difficult. When the teacher does try to overcome the differences his attempts to reach out are often felt by the child to be irritants.

This chapter attempts to document the case for a different explanation of the barrier between the adolescent and the adults who are supposed to facilitate his growth before, during and after the transition from school to work—that of "social defences". Social defences and defensive responses in the school keep teachers, family, and the larger society from experiencing and sharing the overwhelming anxiety and pain felt by the adolescent himself.
As the time for school-leaving approaches, the adolescent's anxiety is high. We have previously examined some social and psychological sources of anxiety, and shown how it stems partly from a testing out of the developing autonomy and identity, and partly from the threat of leaving a parenting institution to which he has had a close, if ambivalent, attachment. That these issues are particularly painful for the adults who are trying to help a struggling adolescent is described by Anna Freud, who details the difficulty for those who would conduct psychoanalysis with adolescents, and by all those whose own adolescent struggles are not yet dormant. In the chapter on the teacher and the adolescent, I have attempted to document this personal struggle for teachers working with the school-leaving adolescent.

It is therefore not surprising that the school
should have evolved an organisation which reflects adult difficulty in facing and accompanying their charges through their ordeal, and which tries to shield those adults from the most painful aspects of the struggle. Where the school as an organisation is unable to support the teachers' efforts to contain his own anxiety, it magnifies his original intolerance of the adolescent. The adolescent's anxiety is then shunned like a contagious disease, and the teacher's growing distance isolates him with his festering anxiety as though without hope of cure. If the school reinforces personal withdrawal with "social defences", the teacher's original human weakness becomes institutionally justified and supported. The withdrawal is now reinforced by custom and rule.

Elliott Jaques developed the notion of "social defences" from work with industry to describe the
institutional side of this kind of phenomenon. We can apply the concept in order to examine the way in which the school helps the teacher to avoid the student. The structure of "the school", which presumably had its origins in an attempt to carry out truly educational tasks efficiently, comes largely to be a way of evading anxiety. For instance, a rigid hierarchical structure which keeps any single person from having real final responsibility, will spare all individuals the personal anxiety of having to take that responsibility. If all decision-making is seen to rest with a headmaster, no-one below him will have to feel the anxiety attendant upon the taking of responsibility and the risks inherent in its exercise. Instead, a dependent culture of reliance on the headmaster or the structure itself will develop, which simultaneously denies the personal satisfactions to those who would take
responsibility, while sparing them the anxiety. If, in addition, the headmaster sees himself in a similar position in regard to the larger organisation surrounding all schools (i.e. the system of school administration) and therefore feels that even he also does not exercise real authority, or if he colludes in believing all decisions rest with him, the system of deflecting anxiety is complete. Since no-one has to make meaningful decisions, no-one has to be anxious. It is impossible for any one person to make knowledgeable, detailed decisions in a large organisation, so the insistence that the headmaster alone does so must represent a fiction. It can indicate that the staff assigns all anxiety to him, but the decisions about most matters must either be made by them, or be unmade and therefore be left to default. The fiction of this kind of hierarchical decisionmaking is one of the most
common social defences.

The social institution of examinations is a case in point of one part of institutional 'machinery' which can be understood in terms of the kind of personal anxiety it enables individuals to avoid. A detailed investigation of examinations will aid in exploring the fate of the adolescent need for "attachment" to teachers during school leaving. Following the presentation of this argument, I will present more briefly several other school 'institutions' which follow a similar pattern, including school staffing pattern, the pastoral system, the yearly school calendar, and the relationship of the school to families and employers.

Examinations

The examination system is an elaborate sophisticated measurement system, ostensibly
designed to:

1. measure achieved learning and skills
2. screen applicants for further education or employment
3. provide recognition for achievement
4. serve the role of assuring minimum curriculum standards and comparability, which need not, per se, compromise or devitalise course work.

To say this means that:

1. exams and passing them is not a fundamental goal of a student's learning and work, or of a teacher's teaching;
2. exams should fit the work done and the learning thought to be best;
3. exam taking itself should, presumably, be secondary to the other, primary, functions and goals of education.

A brief description of the current situation contrasts markedly with this.

1. Exams form the major landmarks of the year.
2. The standardisation of course syllabi is
usually justified by educators in terms of the need to prepare for exams.

3. The development of new syllabi and exams by individual schools requires far more effort than merely the introduction of a new course or experience.

4. The perception of the goal of a year's work for 5th and 6th formers is usually voiced by students and staff alike around the 'need to prepare for the exams' in a particular course or series of courses, with occupational plans often held in abeyance until results are known.

5. Exams are felt by many students and teachers —across all ability groups—to devitalise education.

6. In summary, passing exams often functions as the primary aim of the educational process.

Likewise, jobs are defined in a large part by the exams and paper qualifications required, and never, in our year's experience, in terms of the skills or the kind of personal characteristics required. This fits well with the industrial side of
events. Industry often fails to describe the kind of work contained in a job when advertising: there is a tendency, instead, to describe the kind of man who can do the job, the pay, holidays, and the side benefits—but what the work is like often remains unspecified. This may be the same phenomenon the schools play out when they delegate the measurement of skills and achievement to a depersonalised examination—and go so far in fact as to make sure that the teachers who know the students have little to say about their evaluation, since outside examiners do the grading of examinations. While this can be readily understood in terms of the desire for rigorous equality in judging results, there are other terms in which it seems totally unacceptable; the student's whole year's efforts often count for nil. Those prolonged efforts which might be precisely the kind of diligent persistence desired for a job,
are often neutralised or wiped out by momentary anxiety which has no relationship to the student's ability to continue to learn and grow—or to perform most jobs.

In the process of focusing on the 'benchmark' of an exam as the measure of achievement, the teacher may have a tendency to discount the aspects of learning which have their origin and reward in the interplay between him and his pupil. These can be discounted or demeaned as the frivolous and merely personal accompaniments of the real work—which is then seen to be the taking in of information divorced from these relationships. The efforts at learning, study, or performance of a task which can be some of the most rewarding experiences for student and teacher are not counted towards the kind of recognised qualifications of examination results. Further, in an exam, there is little opportunity for
the teacher to help in allaying the student's excess anxiety in the service of learning or performing.

As the student looks forward to the world of work, it is the process of working on a task that looms ahead. As we have noted, the work itself is often seen to be of little meaning to his inner world—and is rather seen as an exploitation of his body with the attendant atrophy of mind he most fears. It reflects on the emptiness of purpose in the world of work to come if the efforts aimed at pleasing a teacher in a relationship are neutralised and dismissed as without value to the assessment of the student's achievement.

If only the product of the work is valued (the car produced, the telephone required, the hair rid of dirt) there is no way of relating it to himself, and his own inner needs and ways of getting them met. To do that, means to be able to identify with the
man enjoying the car as he drives, to enjoy the use of a potent mechanical skill in restoring communication to the woman who telephones her neighbour, to help a woman feel that clean hair helps her look beautiful, and in all of these to feel he, the worker, will have a personal contribution to make in meeting another's personal needs.

The stripping of work of its personal identifications and therefore of inner meaning is precisely what is echoed in the depersonalising of learning and its social recognition by exclusive reliance on an impersonal system of examination. The personal gains of the student are made irrelevant both to him and to his teacher. There is little reverberation for the student between the process of learning and personal reward. Reward to the teacher comes from contributing to personal growth in another, and by satisfying the child parts of himself which identify with the
needs of his student. The depersonalising and 'objectifying' of results and recognition have a cost: it strips the personal relationships of their use as a vehicle for personal reward, as a means of reinforcing the pupils' wish to learn for the sake of receiving love. It closely parallels the social process of stripping the world of work of its interpersonal aspects and rewards. It is, in many respects, good preparation for the coldness of the real world of work. It suggests an ominous answer to the question posed by many adolescents: "Is there life after school?"

Thus, the over-objectification of exam results has a destructive effect on the relationship between the teacher and the non-academic child. The non-academic child or adolescent is one who either will not do particularly well in examinations, or will be taking examinations of such low social status that they will not count for
much in terms of the teachers' self-esteem. As long as exam results are judged on such a large-scale focus (rather than on the basis of the student's performance in relation to his own growth and gains) they become a collection of statistical results, the sum of which tell the teacher by a kind of computer-like read out, whether he has performed well in his job.

This is a particular liability in the teaching of adolescents who are not academically gifted. The exams designed for these adolescents are often described by the teachers as "giving them something to show for their efforts", but with a sense of emptiness. It was as if the students had nothing meaningful to show except the piece of paper—certainly nothing the student himself recognised as a gain in skills or personal growth. The CSE's and even 'O' levels, are often felt by the adolescent himself to be very second rate.
The effect of examinations, as they are currently administered, then, is largely to serve the functions of social defences—to shield the staff from feeling the brunt of adolescent anxiety. They do this by saving the staff from the personal responsibility of judging the progress of the individual student, by allowing the staff to withdraw at the moment of both judgment of the student and mourning for him, (since exams usually coincide with the moment of school-leaving), and by relieving the teacher and the school from being answerable for the relevance of the material learned to the life the adolescent will assume. Failure in any of these areas can be assigned by the teacher and school to a failure either on the part of the student during the exam, or by the larger system (the school system or society) to provide a context of relevance, and therefore a personal feeling of failure can be
largely avoided.

But implicit in the examination process are two larger aspects of institutional defence that go beyond the context of the examination itself. First, there is the denigration of the kind of learning and growth available to the working class adolescent, as a defence against the teacher's own depressive anxiety—the feeling that his work may be made worthless by his own inadequacies. And second, there is the way in which the impersonalisation of the exam system not only allows, but encourages the separation of teacher from adolescent at the very moment of school-leaving. The implications of this extension of the school's use of the examination process to defend against the process of grieving also requires elaboration.

**The Devaluation of Non-Academic Learning**

It is hard to find evidence that society values
small gains for the non-gifted. The evidence is, rather, that society does not feel it gets much back for its investment in such children. Programmes seem less than ambitious for the non-academic, working class child, while nothing changes about the quality of working life and work itself. Educators often speak of a burden of unmet obligation to these children. And there are no institutions for them to give the kind of educational planning and help routinely offered academically successful students. In each of the schools we entered, we picked up an atmosphere of futility about these adolescents. Even in the most optimistic and innovative of the schools, there was some despairing sense of agreement with one headmaster, who said, "What can you really expect to do for these kids in that extra year of school anyhow?"

Thus, denigration of the exam results is added
to the social denigration of work with this kind of student, leaving little for the teacher to invest in. He must actively combat these forces, which go on around him in order to identify with students who are, in many ways little like him. It is hard enough to gain pleasure and satisfaction from the small gains by students of generally low achievement. If in addition, one sees the same students as "not like the parts of myself that I like", their gains will tend to go unrecognised or to be denigrated. The teacher has had some definite academic success, by definition, in order to become a teacher. Either he has come from a middle class background, or he has shed working class origins to reach his position. In this case, if the teacher denigrates a working class life and occupation as part of the motivation for or reaction to his own movement away from it, he may tend to dismiss genuine growth towards a satisfactory or rewarding
working class life or skill as basically unimportant or unimportant compared to other "greater" possibilities. These greater possibilities, however, may not be available to many or most of these children. The result is the additional devaluing by the teacher of the student's small gains, although they may be precisely the same ones so intensely valued for that student's academically-gifted peers.

Thus we heard the most active group of teachers, at Bradford School, sunk in depression about the gains possible for their students. They were convinced that if the students made gains which enabled them to appreciate what was being done to them (to "crap detect"), they would be faced with the futility of life. These teachers were caught between revolutionary zeal and despair. Their position seemed nevertheless, to be one that most teachers defensively avoid facing. In
contrast, the fierce determination of a teacher who indicated with confidence that non-academic students had plenty to learn and simply needed to be taught, was rare. More frequently, teachers expressed the feeling that teaching non-academic children the kind of things they were teaching them was simply carrying out a social function of low priority and questionable value.

Now adding to all this the effects of the huge size of the schools we were investigating, we can see the completed picture of the devaluation of individual personal gain. These schools had staffs of 80 to 100, and student bodies of 1,200 to 1,500. The administration viewed planning and results in terms of sub-groups of staff, and whole classes of students. A teacher viewed his work in terms of the overall results of a class of 30 pupils. The Examining Board compared and judged results on the basis of the overall performance of whole
schools. People and results were dealt with in terms of trends, kinds of results, and policy implications. The gains of the individual student pale in significance. Unless there is something which draws personal attention to the student, he is easily lost.7

The non-academic student often has little to make his own relatively small gains seem important, when his social worth will ultimately be measured in statistical ways in a large school. What begins as the struggle of a well-intentioned teacher to understand someone "not like himself" suffers the fate of personal, organisational and social decimation. The reflection of this occurs in the adolescent's self-denigration. As he sees himself, "reflected in the teacher's eyes", he sees himself as small and statistically insignificant. There is almost no way a small "statistical gain" can be worth as much personal pain as the process
of learning and growing involves. Only personal recognition can be worth the pain. The poor student who struggles to do a bit better, and does so with a small increment in tangible exam results, is often unidentifiable by his teachers or by the teacher’s Departmental Head—he is certainly unidentifiable by an "Objective outside evaluator". Students largely judge their own gains by criteria outside themselves, subordinating their own opinion to exam results and teacher's assessment. In the vastness of the reflecting pool I have been describing, the adolescent's gains become unrecognisable, even to himself.

**Detachment, Anxious Attachment, and the Need for an Accompanying Figure**

Personal relationships contribute much to learning and performance—as well as to the personal motivation and goals of a student. In the development of the individual, the presence of
supporting parental figures is a pre-requisite for the growth of ego skills and the sequential and progressive growth of personal autonomy. John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth and others have documented the interactive patterns between mother and toddler, and the disastrous effects for the development of infant autonomy of prolonged or repeated separation from mother at an early age. During premature separation behaviour emerges which looks like, and often passes for, autonomy. But the infant is actually employing a kind of 'detachment' from the mother, with a decreased ability to use and relate to her, or alternatively a pattern of increased clinging, producing the familiar picture of the spoiled and whining child, whose trust in the support of crucial people has been undermined.9

I know of no research into the adolescent analogues of this behavior—but an extension of
the hypothesis concerning detachment behaviour leads to troublesome speculations about the effects of enforced and premature separation of children or adolescents from the people on whom they rely for support. \(^{10}\) The condition for self-reliance at any age is the presence of a supporting figure or figures in an available way—whether the person is internalised and available in the form of a good, internal person by mental recall, or is actually present.

The adolescent struggle for autonomy is often described as being one between child needs for dependency and adult ones of autonomy and independence. But the above discussion puts forth the theoretical position that adults do not struggle for complete independence from all others—except defensively in the sense of the "detachment" reaction which avoids dependency as more dangerous than independence. That kind
of detached, isolated independence can therefore be thought of as reactive and 'defensive' against a longed-for trustworthy dependence.

What the adolescent struggles between is not the child-like dependency versus absolute independence (like the imagined adult) though it may seem so to him. He struggles towards a stage of "mature dependence", to internalise the parenting figures on whom he depends, so as not to be dependent on their actual presence, but rather on his experience of them as modified by his wishes for how they would be and how they want him to be.\footnote{11} In psychological language, the adolescent struggles to depend more on good internal objects, freed from the shackles of the child's experience of depending exclusively on other adults for daily, physical needs. The conditions for self-reliance include the ability to work autonomously, but also to trust in and
depend on others in a mutual relationship.

Putting the struggle for autonomy as "the struggle to internalise many of the figures on whom one depends", facilitates an outline of the pitfalls on either side of the path of the progress towards mature autonomy. On the one side is the excessive continued dependency on adults or peers with a constriction of personal growth, inability to face personal anxiety, and the surrender of the imagined state of adulthood. The exaggeration of the dangers of 'independence' pose it as a threatening state where one is severed from supporting people. This pitfall maybe seen in adolescents as 'regression' to child-like behaviour or interests in job or other areas. The clinging, childish behaviour closely resembles Bowlby's description of "anxious attachment" behaviour after a repeated or prolonged separation in young children.
On the other side of the road to autonomy is the "pseudo-independence" of many adolescents who make a virtue of having little to do with adults, and may even be isolated from peers. They wish to be completely self-sufficient and to avoid dangerous others. The state of feeling dependent on smother person is felt to be dangerous and threatening to the self. Therefore autonomy is maintained at all costs. This closely resembles Bowlby's description of detached infants who resist connecting with a mother on her return from a prolonged or oft-repeated separation.

That there are reactions which seem in opposition on first inspection (e.g. over-dependence or clinging, versus detachment 'underdependence' or 'pseudo-independence') makes the difficulty look polarized—as if too much parental or teacher attention spoiled the child who then looked for still more. But "anxious
attachment" is the behaviour resulting from moderate parental separation or neglect, while detachment is the more extreme behaviour as a reaction to more extreme, longer, or more crucially-timed neglect. A very powerful kind of "separation" from a parent is the rejecting spoken or behavioural messages which a parent who is physically present can give to a child, so that actual physical separation is not required for the behaviours previously attributed as reactions to separation. For instance, a mother who threatens, "If you do that again, I'll kill you", or "If you're not good to me I'll leave home" is triggering the same separation anxiety as one who actually leaves, and may in fact trigger a more guilt-ridden anxiety. Such threats are far from rare.

The point of this discussion, applied now to adolescence, is that the adolescent does need figures to accompany him in his path towards
autonomy—people who will escort him but will also allow him enough freedom of movement to turn increasingly to his strong but untested internal figures for guidance. The facilitating adult, therefore, would have to be available when sought, without using the adolescent's seeking him out as an excuse for taking over and rendering internal resources ineffective or damaging them. It is to be expected that these fragile, but hopefully growing, internal 'people' will be felt to be failing, especially as their increased effectiveness may be felt by the adolescent to rob him of the actual parents or teachers he has been depending on. There are many, and complicated reasons why the internal figures, as they grow, may need modification and strengthening——and it is this role that the escorting adult can and must play. But the twin pitfalls of abandoning the adolescent on the one hand, or of allowing the internal figures
too little room by 'taking over' for him and them, on the other, will both contribute substantially to the permanent crippling of internal strength.

The exam system militates against providing an escort for the adolescent during the transition from school to work. It focuses the major anxieties of the year, and just at that moment, deprives the adolescent of the teacher as a companion or guide. The teacher thereby avoids sharing the anxieties of the transition—the fear, uncertainty and grief. The school sanctions this escape by the teacher by a formal and binding institution—that of the examination, thus alleviating the need for personal guilt on the part of the teacher. But it does so at the cost of not allowing the teacher to function effectively with the adolescent at the moment of greatest need. The teacher often knows this is so. What he does not usually recognise is the part played by the exam as an agent in the school's use
of social defence mechanisms.

I will now move on to examine more briefly other aspects of the school, looking first at aspects of school size, staff turnover patterns, and the tutorial or pastoral care system. These relate only indirectly to issues of the transition from school to work, but directly to problems of anxious attachment and detachment which have direct consequences for the transition. Following that I will examine the directly relevant areas of curriculum, the cycle of anxiety, and the relationship of the school to family, peer group and the world of work. Then I will consider how schools might begin to combat the effects of these defences by enabling teachers to be more personally available to their students.

**School Organisation, Size and Staff**

Each school was in a working class
neighbourhood, and could accommodate approximately 1200 children. The administration consisted of a Headmaster, a woman Deputy, and two other deputies. Each school had (1) some form of division into year groupings (1st year–6th year); (2) a committee of Heads of House with or without a senior house master who administered the system of pastoral care; (3) a committee of Heads of Department; each head then ran his own department or house with time allotted for administrative tasks. There were also assorted ancillary speciality services: careers teachers or advisers, remedial department, counsellors and others.

**School Size**

Until recently it was the policy of the ILEA and many other local authorities to pursue the merger of moderate or small schools to achieve a size at
which a broad offering of speciality courses and options could be offered. According to this policy, comprehensive schools were to contain more than 1,000 children, and smaller schools would have been closed or merged. Although this policy has been rescinded, there remain a large number of schools with more than 1000 children each. Since all of the schools we saw were in this range, it was an important factor in their overall organisation.

There is no coherent notion of the emotional effects on children of such large schools as now exist. Work in industry suggests that management problems become characteristically different and management itself in some ways more remote once a certain size has been passed. This size, sometimes approximately 600, represents that point at which all members of an organisation occupying the same geographical location can recognise each other. It has also been suggested
that this is the same size as that of a primitive village where there is no written language and personal leadership can be exercised.

In the schools in which we worked we had a vivid sense of being in large, complicated factories for the instilling of knowledge. A teacher or administrator would certainly know the adolescents for whom he was responsible, but there would be whole groups within the school whom he did not know personally. Pupils frequently voiced feelings of not being cared for by teaching staff. The group at South End School felt their curriculum needs were sacrificed to the needs of the school as a machine, while the group at Thomaston saw themselves as hapless victims of distant administrators who did not know them personally.

The possibility needs to be explored that
personal relationships cannot be adequately handled, managed, or explored in a school above a certain size, no matter how many administrative or pastoral personnel are added. There may be something about the sense of existing in a factory that countervails and defeats all efforts at increased personal attention. One can conceive of alternate possibilities available for diversifying courses offered by pooling the resources of several schools instead of merging schools; it may be advantageous to consider the possibility of a policy of creating more small schools.

**Staffing**

School administrators uniformly complained about problems of staff turnover. In some schools one third of the staff could be expected to be new each year. Headmasters recognised the relationship of this problem to wider social and
educational issues such as low pay and high housing costs which make it essentially impossible for teachers with families to stay in London. The social denigration of teaching and the movement of teachers into other careers were also cited. Teachers themselves complained of the forces which tended to act on them to increase job changing. And students felt that the processes of getting to be known by teachers and getting to know them were severely impeded by high staff turnover.

All personnel in the schools felt powerless to do anything about it. By their report, higher school and ministerial level educators also feel this issue to be beyond control. Its effect on the student and potential school-leaver is clear: few staff are available with whom long-term relationships can be established. The result again is a depersonalising of relationships and of teaching,
with an increasing emphasis by both the school and the student on the purely cognitive, regularised aspects of learning, which might be transferable from teacher to teacher or from classroom to exam, rather than from classroom to life.

I want to highlight the relationship between life crises and stages of life in process and the movements of teachers from school to school, as a footnote to the chapter on the teacher's dilemma and as an early word on the relationship of the school to the wider society. It is generally acknowledged that the previously mentioned problems in housing, poor pay, and the pressures of the city are responsible for the very high rate of teacher movement. But these may be tolerated as pressures until a major change in the teacher's life—marriage, the birth or growth of children, the increasing need for promotion or advancement
which may relate to the shift from a young adult phase of life to a mid-life phase. The teacher is often himself part of a family and has life issues which are related to those of the adolescent and his family. His decision to stay or leave a given school at a given time will relate partly to conditions inside that school, but largely to factors within and around him. He is also growing or failing to grow while he stays at school, and some of this growth or its failure will culminate in actual moves to or from a school—or indeed, out of, or into, teaching itself. Some of his inner needs may be met —or fail to be met— because of the adolescents he deals with.

It scarcely needs to be pointed out that when a teacher leaves, the pupil is deprived of the natural course of a relationship to a care-giving and teaching adult. The result of this loss will have reverberations on the adolescent and his
development. For instance, it may force an attempt a premature or pseudo-autonomy which we have described as being like a young child's detachment behaviour when left and abandoned very early. Albeit for defensive reasons, such as "not being hurt by another loss", such detachment would certainly make an adolescent less available to the next teacher—who will feel excluded and ineffective, and tend to leave that adolescent, class, and school more quickly. The fact of rapid staff turnover, and the adolescent's and teacher's each acting to defend himself from yet more pain or loss, sets up a vicious circle aimed at the prevention of meaningful relationships because they cost too much. The cost of this kind of defensive autonomy at school leaving time is particularly severe. The shifting of teachers is often a major, and costly, crisis for a child or adolescent.
The Pastoral Care System

The low priority of tutorial or pastoral work in the schools is illustrated by the fact that the teaching staff rarely had primary assignments anywhere except in their subject department. Their first affiliation and primary task was teaching a particular subject. Since many were also tutors, this was so, regardless of their interest, and commitment to tutelage was not required. In fact, according to Deputy Heads in two of the schools, there was no assumption of commitment to the tutorial task at all. One Deputy Head said, "For many teachers, there is no further advancement possible in schools. The House system offers a promotion to people with no training, nor even necessarily any sustained interest, in tutorial work with children."

He pointed out that there was no set training for becoming a Head of House, and no defined task
for the House system. These positions were frequently used to promote worthy teachers who had previously had no great interest in counselling or in pastoral aspects of teaching. Added to our own experience that tutors were untrained and functioned unevenly, I see a general pattern of a lack of commitment to the priorities of tutorial functioning.\textsuperscript{17} Since this is just the teacher who should be in the best position to escort the adolescent out of school and on his way into work, the lack of personal and institutional commitment to this activity has serious consequences.

**Curriculum**

A general discussion of curriculum is not in order here, since there are many extensive projects studying curriculum design and its relevance. But some comments will place it in line with other topics discussed.
In several schools administrative staff, teachers, and students separately voiced serious doubts about the relevance of curriculum to the experience, ability, or future of many of the students. Deputy Heads commented on the monolithic subject focus of many teachers, who omitted concern for the rest of the 'whole' student they faced. Yet everyone questioned even the relevance of the subject matter itself. One student said, "What's the point in studying geography if all you know is about different kinds of soil? What you want to know is how that soil affects the people's lives and what it means to them." Another student said, "I can't switch from old style maths to computer maths all of a sudden and pass my 'O' levels", and others said they would like courses, not just typing or clerical work, which taught them things about their world. A young teacher said, "The curriculum has got to change. The way it is
now, society moulds children to do what it wants."

A careers teacher commented, "Between us, the curriculum has little or nothing to do with the jobs or lives these lads will have. I've thought for a number of years their courses should be drastically revised, but you know how things are around here."

Many senior teachers are in general agreement that the overall design of the school's curriculum is based on the grammar school model, with the use of certain traditional subjects as the basis of courses offered. The emphasis on subject matter over the process of making that subject relevant to the needs of particular students and the general exclusion of studies of the students' environment was felt to isolate the working class student especially.

The staff of all schools we worked in verbally
supported revising curriculum towards increasing relevance. Nevertheless, the concepts of redesign or rethinking remain, as far as we could see, secondary to a core of subjects derived from the grammar school model. Attempts to design programmes which would bring the adolescent into contact with the world or work or the community in which they lived were piecemeal, experimental, and unmeasured. The staff of these programmes often doubted whether the programmes did anything measurable.

One head of an innovative programme reported, "I struggle with these kids, but no one in the school understands what I am doing or really supports it. A few kids get this—and I don't know if it's any good or not. The rest get the same old, traditional programme."

The school and its department heads often feel
constrained from revising curriculum. An array of standardised examination syllabi outline courses preparing for certain kinds of examinations. Departments are, in these cases, responding not to the direction set by a head or by the school, but to an outside body. Whatever merits this may have in terms of standardisation of material and objectivity in judging results, one consequence is an overall constraint about thinking of the responses of curriculum to needs of students. The effort required to obtain certification of an innovative course operates as a general restraint to the development of many of them by any one school.

In some schools, the question of curriculum relevance was actively studied. In others, it was seen only in terms of shifting examination syllabi to respond to society's employment needs for different kinds of skills—the change of traditional
maths to computer maths was seen in this light. That is not to say that a change in the type of examination offered might not represent a whole new way of teaching a radically new subject or a new kind of response to students. Nor is it to denigrate the wish of staff to give official and "marketable" recognition to students, even for work whose innovative content was its own principal reward. But the staff who discussed curriculum primarily with "exam-relevance" as a criterion, seemed not to be able to begin with the student, his social situation, and the need for a fit between the two. They seemed to be working primarily from within the system of constraints, as though the constraints (here exams) were the primary shapers of need, policy, and planning. Beginning from the constraints means that a system originally intended to be a means becomes its own end.
The net result was that the standardised, traditional part of a school's curriculum had a clearer goal and higher status than innovative programmes for both student and teacher, despite an agreement that more socially relevant programmes were needed. The lack of experience, measureability, and immediate social payoff (compared to the payoff of jobs based on particular examinations in standard courses) kept the attempts to develop these programmes at a generally inferior and de-emphasised level.

The problem for the young school leaver is magnified when he feels his courses have not been relevant to his needs. He leaves with unconsolidated growth and the experience of a curriculum designed to prepare students more for further education than for work. At the same time, the old curriculum allows the staff to teach material with which it is familiar, rather than face
the anxiety of not knowing the value of innovative material previously referred to. Treading on unfamiliar ground, the conscientious innovative teacher is in a lonely, anxious position. The school as a whole must also tolerate its share of the encompassing anxiety about unknown approaches. Most have opted for a more secure, well-travelled route.

**Anxiety and the Yearly Calendar**

There are certain times during the academic year when anxiety is particularly high. Because the school calendar is set up in a regular way, this is a yearly occurrence, and therefore predictable. Yearly events form the skeleton for certain "rhythms" upon which are super-imposed those events and issues which are not predictable. The anxiety of staff and students will be modified by the regularised events and rhythms in a roughly
predictable way. Students (or staff) having certain kinds of difficulty will tend to have them at the times of year when the relevant kind of anxiety is high. For instance Susan troubles the staff at Lake School with more disruptive behaviour just before the separation from school at the end of the year. We saw, in the psycho-drama centering around her, that her fear about school leaving was acute. At Thomaston School, Mr Paul, the Headmaster, described high anxiety as a regular feature of the year's end, and elaborated his methods for dealing with it. He also made it clear that the staff also exhibits an anxious demandingness at the end of the year which is directed at him. (See Chapter 4).

If a school is aware of the regular orchestration of anxiety, an opportunity is available to use it to intervene helpfully for the student. So far, there is little awareness of the role of anxiety, and withdrawal of staff and student from each other
reaches its height just as anxiety rises to its maximum level.

The anxiety we investigated centred around exams and school leaving. These two events regularly coincided in the school year. Mock or practice exams usually occurred just after the Christmas holidays. Students used the holidays to retreat from school and the attendant anxiety surrounding exams. It is important to emphasise the school's role in scheduling exams at a time when the teachers are away from students until immediately prior to the 'mock' exams and therefore escape the anxiety surrounding this exam time too. These events coincide again in the summer, at the end of the year. As previously described, teachers become almost entirely unavailable immediately before, during and after the examinations, and this period coincides with school leaving and the long summer holiday when
schools are closed and teachers unavailable, but when the school-leavers may be starting work for the first time.

It is the overlap of the cycles of anxiety, teacher unavailability and school leaving which puts the 16 year old school-leaver/student in a peculiarly stressed position. No caring, trusted adults are available to him, while his most relevant future concerns are 'pushed under the carpet' during exams. After the exams no more "advance work" can be done on his concerns because he suddenly finds himself out of school. Thus, at two points during the year, the student faces this triad of events: in a rehearsal in December/January, and again at the real event in June/July. He simultaneously faces exams about which he is worried, faces school-leaving with its loss of the caring or mothering institution, and he is "abandoned" by the teachers. Furthermore, his
anxieties about school-leaving are covered over at both times by the approaching exams. The "rehearsing" of this cycle seems useful, for the second time the exams are crucial. However, at Christmas the holiday festivities may cover exam anxiety just as June exams mask anxiety about leaving school. The abandonment at a time of stress does not seem useful. It sets up the situation of the separation of adolescent from caring adults at a time of stress, which leaves a tendency either for clinging or for detachment. Instead of having caring external resource people to reinforce internal resources, the external resource people are not present, stressing the tenuous hold on internal 'people' and resources—often beyond their staying power. The results are often very damaging for growth. A narrowing and confusion about occupational choices often occurs in an effort to resurrect some previous identity which is
felt to be more secure. The desperate wavering of Mike (Chapter 11) is an example of this.

If we look at the unavailability of teachers at the end of the year, within the framework of the mourning process discussed in Chapter 11, we have the completed picture. The school fails to recognise the single event each year which requires the greatest teacher effort and availability—the termination of the school year and the transition from school to work. In several ways, it heightens and then covers this basic anxiety—and never faces the adolescent again. The school, as an institution, impedes the process of mourning by withdrawing the supporting, guiding figure of the teacher at the time of greatest stress, and the adolescent is left to sink or swim.

Experience in psychotherapy indicates that a direct, active intervention gives the best chance
for a person to profit from the experience of loss and to grow during the mourning process. This work requires that a therapist remain available for anticipatory mourning before the actual termination, so that the patient has a model and a chance to rehearse experience before the actual loss. The school has an opportunity in the earlier period of rehearsal to do this, but does not take this opportunity. The school deflects the adolescent's anxiety by a well-established system of social defences protecting both staff and student from facing the transition openly.

**The School's Relationship to the Outside World: an enclave in an anxious world**

From the perspective of an interested outsider, the school looks like a closed institution. Family and employer are both cut off from the school. Its boundaries are relatively impermeable to
influence or exchange with families of its students, the world of work, and many aspects of the broader society. In terms of organisational theory, it is necessary for an institution to have recognisable boundaries in order to define the system for accomplishing its task.\textsuperscript{21} There is a loss of responsiveness to needed feedback if the boundaries are too rigid.\textsuperscript{22}

Although the schools share with the adolescent's family a major concern with his future, there is no formal overlap which allows for a direct dialogue between family, school and adolescent. There are various functions in the course of which families are invited into the school, but it is the repeated assertion by schools that it is the able families, who are doing a pretty good job with their children who come. The parents of non-academic, poorly adjusted children are rarely seen at these events. There is no
regularised attempt by teachers concerned with the child's development to talk with family, because functionally there is usually no teacher who has that aspect of the child as his daily concern.

This splitting off of cognitive development as the school's responsibility, and emotional development as the family's, means that, all too often, no one thinks about the integration of the two. The interference of emotional development with cognitive, or of school with home, is no one's direct responsibility. Yet the family shares with the school the responsibility for the development of the adolescent. Not only can the two institutions of family and school be seen as partners in the task of facilitating growth, but the two are often subjected to similar pressures and respond with similar defences. For instance, I have suggested that both teachers and parents tend to withdraw
in response to the loss of the adolescent. (Chapters 10 and 11) One might expect that the similarity of issue, and the sharing of responsibility for the adolescent would dictate that family and school co-operate and communicate freely.

Here, I want to speculate that the school's failure to make systematic, concerted efforts to involve working class parents represents, at least partly, a wish not to be forced to share the family's anxiety about the adolescent, and to keep a distance from the other set of people who are "care-givers", for him in order to be able to depersonalise and blame. Many families may well be operating under a similar set of defences. We did not examine that in this study, however.

**Isolation from the World of Work**

As described previously, teachers and schools knew very little about the world of work. (See
Chapters 10 and 12). Until recently none of the schools we studied had established any substantive links with employers beyond co-operation in a careers programme, usually involving a careers convention. The school had maintained its own firm boundary which excluded the wider world and, for the most part, shut out the adolescent once he had entered it. Lake School had links with local employers through its yearly careers convention. Thomaston School was in the process of establishing new links for a 6th form work-experience programme. Both felt these links to be crucial to their programmes. But as previously noted, a group of careers officers had pointed out that teachers as a group did not have any substantive links to the world of work, did not have the time to become familiar with the difficulties for adolescents once they entered it, and could not absorb the kind of information the
careers officers could offer them about it. Our impression was that this lack of familiarity persisted at all three schools.

There are two effects of the insulation of the school from the world of work. The first is the unreality with which teachers perceive the problems awaiting the student when he leaves—a point already made which emerges again here. The second effect is the fragmentation of life experience for the adolescent. No-one except the adolescent himself understands the vicissitudes of the various experiences he faces; no one can verbally or empathetically accompany or escort him. There is no trusted pilot to act as convoy in uncharted, troubled seas.

From the standpoint of the two organisations of school and work the withdrawal from each other and the maintenance of barriers means that
there is no chance to collaborate in order to help the adolescent. Studies of juvenile labour turnover or "wastage" indicate that the high degree of unrest among recent school-leavers if reflected by early and frequent job changing—at an economic cost to industry and employer.\textsuperscript{23} This is currently treated by industry as an isolated phenomenon. In fact, Hill argues that in the case of the Merchant Navy, this is the first of many developmental steps in the continued psychological growth (or inhibition of growth) of the worker.\textsuperscript{24} A parallel description, which can be generalised to life processes of all adults, is spelled out in this volume in the chapter on teachers. Developmental crises continue to present themselves after school "leaving, and influence the place and functioning of the worker in his job. \textit{There is no reason why job changing should not be planned and encouraged as a young worker grows and his needs change—but}
random changing is unlikely to be productive.

Industry and school could interact in a variety of ways to make the boundaries between them more permeable. The social assumption which interferes is that "school has to do with growth, job with productivity". The rigidity with which this idea is maintained increases the difficulty of each institution in dealing with issues assigned to the other sector. The fact is that workers have needs for continued growth, and students for productivity. In the final chapter, I will present some suggestions for ways in which the barriers might be crossed. The need to do so is the need to assist the adolescent integrate his development with his potential for productivity.

The Net Effect:
the organisation of the school as a defence against anxiety

The overall effect of the organisational aspects
described here is to deprive the adolescent in most need of personal contact and care, and of specific caring people to help him through the crises and developmental steps in the process of internal growth towards autonomy. Although each structural aspect of school was originally designed to help the adolescent's growth, something has changed along the way. Instead of being supported on the road to autonomy, the student is often abandoned before he feels ready for independence.

The withdrawal of this help at specifically the time it is most needed fits a particular pattern reported in social research in other fields. Isabel Menzies reports on the organisation of a nursing service as a defence against anxiety using the notion we have discussed of "social defences". In her discussion she illustrates that there are enormous anxieties attendant upon teaching
student nurses to take care of the ill and the weak, and to tolerate the possibility of the death and debilitation of their patients. The anxieties of student nurses who are not yet hardened to the pain of relating to the sick is felt in turn to be intolerable by their teachers. The organisation of the nursing service could be seen to protect everyone from dealing effectively with the overwhelming anxiety, but at the cost of isolating everyone with his own anxiety—and especially of isolating the students, who had the fewest coping mechanisms of all the workers involved. Instead of providing companions for the students as they learned to tolerate anxiety and thus to help them help the patients with their own worries about illness and death, senior nurses in practice encouraged the students to become disengaged from patients—to become detached in the defensive sense. The organisation of the nursing
service thus promoted detachment, in the place of connectedness, growth or understanding.

An analogous process is happening in schools. Teachers, faced with the anxiety of the students who need to face the world, withdraw from them. The school promotes and institutionalises the withdrawal, reinforcing the shared anxiety in firm organisational structures. The large size of schools and consequent complex management structure contributes further to a depersonalisation of school, depriving students of the personal and caring functions which the institution might have provided. Examinations which are rigorously and inescapably impersonal prevent the teacher having to face his own anxiety in determining the progress and needs of his students. A course syllabus based on paper qualifications dictates the knowledge needed by the student, obviating, even ruling against, thinking clearly and immediately
about which kind of learning and teaching would be relevant for that student, although the standard curriculum's relevance is questioned by parties on all sides. The adolescent is left to develop his own skills for coping with the world he is about to face, feeling most often that adults simply don't know what it is he needs to know.

Finally, the timing of exams keeps students and teacher apart at a time when they need to say goodbye to each other—and keeps them from having to work through sadness, fear about leaving and being left, guilt about work undone or efforts not made on both sides. The isolation of the school from family and employer leaves the adolescent further unattended. The student's career takes on a life of its own which militates against personal relationships, and only tolerates them if extraordinary effort is made by both student and teacher. All too often, that effort is
only made for the able, fulfilled and gratifying student—but the non-academic student, for whom the gains are small, not potentially financially rewarding to society and not cast in the teacher's own mould, can avoid the teacher as he leaves school "with his tail between his legs", and the teacher is institutionally "commanded" to avoid the child.

**What Can be Done?**

The difficulty of the work of helping adolescents to grow and to face the world, ambiguous job choices, and threatening independence calls for support for the teacher: the social defences are at once a recognition of the need for helping the teacher and an obstacle to him in the practice of his craft of helping children. A person is needed to help the teacher, who can then help the adolescent. The personal side of the
teacher needs support and a chance to develop in order to be a resource to the student. Both teacher and student need supporting. A modification of the social defences and of the school as an organisation is needed, with recognition and legitimisation of the need for support. An institutional provision must be made for the need for people to help with the difficult tasks involved helping lonely and untrained teachers help lonely and untrained adolescents to make a smoother transition into the wider world.

I am aware that this suggestion alone marks a major alteration for any school which attempts to implement it in a meaningful way. It will require careful planning, the commitment of the head and his deputies, and a staff which is, on balance, interested in, and enthusiastic about, the prospect of examining, planning, and changing organisational structures to lessen the costs of the
social defences, while recognising the legitimate needs implied by their existence. The problems involved in such a venture are not to be underestimated, for the experience of undertaking organisational revision, only to discover two or three years later that nothing fundamental has changed, is a common experience. One way of beginning such a project

is to employ an outside consultant, who has no role in the day-to-day management of the school, and who can act as a neutral party, reflecting with the staff on underlying needs and on the task of managing change. Such an experience is reported by Elizabeth Richardson in her recent book: *The Teacher, The School and the Task of Management* (1973). She documents the long, complex and slow process of interplay of many of the issues similar to those considered in this volume. Although she does not focus on the adolescent's move from
school to work we can be reminded that the questions of the transition from school to work immediately cut into the major issues of the student's relationship to the school, into both his need for tutorial help and for subject education, and into the school's entire relationship to the environment of the adolescent—his family and the wider society. A thorough approach by a school to the adolescent's transition from school to work will also involve an attempt to set such an investigation into the broad context of the school's many tasks and of its overall relationship to the adolescent.

NOTES


3 Jaques, 1955

4 Freud, 1959
Miller and Gwynne (1972) document a similar case to ours in the institutional methods of depersonalisation of "cases" of handicapped children. The inmates of residential institutions are encouraged to remain passive and dependent on accepting the help of the staff. Attempts to disturb the functioning of the institution by self-assertion, as in inmates taking care of themselves, are met with strong resistance by staff. See pp. 86-88.

I use this term in the sense implied in John Bowlby's title "Attachment and Loss" (1969, 1973), namely that of a nurturing relationship.

This is only one aspect of the enlarging size of schools which we found to be depersonalising. Further points about the size of schools are made later in this chapter.

This discussion relies heavily on the work of John Bowlby, (1969, 1970, 1973), and also work by Mary Ainsworth and Silvia Bell (Ainsworth and Bell, 1970, and Blehar, 1973).

Hinde (1973) has demonstrated that infant monkeys will also develop reactions analogous to anxious attachment and disrupted relationships when separated prematurely from their mothers.

Bowlby (1973) cites studies by Grinker, Offer and Peck and Havinghurst showing that self-reliant adolescents with a capacity to rely on others come from supportive families.

The phrase "mature dependence" is well described in this sense by Fairbairn (1952), p. 42

An example has been given in detail concerning Mike. In
the role-playing session in Chapter 3 he demonstrates that his internal authority figures are so sadistic and frightening that he needs help modifying them. The work in that session was mainly done through modifying Steven's "internal father".

Although the teacher may have difficulty fighting this system to be more available to the student, we can also expect that any attempt to change the current system would be met with resistance by the teachers, who might then have to share the adolescent’s anxiety.

It must be stressed that various estimates have been made of this.

One other factor apparently attributable to these issues was mentioned repeatedly by senior teachers— the absence of a "middle" among school staffs. Typically, there are older, experienced teachers and young ones, but few in the middle age range. Staying in London or in teaching seems hardest for this group. Not only does this raise serious questions for future staffing, but it means students miss an opportunity to work with teachers of this group.

I have omitted significant study of the role of the formally appointed counsellor in this study. In none of the schools we examined did the counsellor play a significant organisational role in dealing with the problem of adolescent development during school-leaving. Our impression is that he was used primarily for "trouble-shooting", not for continuing consultation with any particular group.
For a thorough discussion of the uses and methods of a tutorial system, see Michael Marland's *PASTORAL CARE: Organising the care and guidance of the individual pupil in a comprehensive school*, 1974.

Social rhythms are discussed for a psychiatric therapeutic community by Robert Rapoport in *Community as Doctor*, 1959, I am also indebted to Kent Ravenscroft for the concept of inter-related, cyclical social rhythms, in "Multiple Interrelated Group Theory" unpub. MSS. Mass. Mental Health Center, Boston, 1970.

Students are routinely notified of the results of exams in the middle of the summer holiday. Mary (Chapter 9) was absolutely alone when she learned she had failed 2 of 3 'A' levels. Her abandonment was thorough.

See the description of Mary's therapy in Chapter 9.

See Miller and Rice (1967) for a discussion of boundary and task in organisations.

The peer group can be seen as the defensive structure which reflects the mutual withdrawal of adolescent and adult. Its views, therefore, will represent the view of a group both in retreat and in abandonment. I am here drawing a picture of the adolescent alone within several isolated institutions: it is important to note that the anxieties about that isolation will be expressed in peer group reactions—since it is the "institution" for the adolescent which corresponds to the school for his teacher and the industry for his employer

See Introduction, for references and discussion.
24 Hill 1972, *op. cit.*, and personal communication

25 Menzies, 1960
CHAPTER 15

POSTSCRIPT
The Special Dilemma of the Immigrant and Minority Child in the Transition from School to Work

In any social process, members of some subcultures will be subject to more stress than others. While their special difficulties will bear a relationship to the process for the majority, there will be important differences. In the transition from school to work of an adolescent who is an immigrant, the situation will often be marked by cultural and economic factors which will have direct bearing on him. If he is racially marked off from the mainstream of English society, this will
have other effects, whether or not he encounters prejudice. But prejudice does seem to exist, and many of the adolescents have to deal with it. It becomes part of the complex network of issues to be considered during negotiations with the school and with the wider society.¹

My concern with the effects of the issues of race in school grew as the year progressed—not because of any brutality or blatant prejudice against colour. I saw none. But I also saw no concerted effort to help the coloured adolescent come to terms with his own special identity and the unique conditions of his colour, his origins and the constraints of conditions in which he lived. I want here to raise the question whether the schools' failure to pay attention to some of these consequences does not represent a milder, less violent form of prejudice which we condemn in South Africa or the United States, but as a society
fail to notice in its less obvious form here.²

At this point, I want to list my experiences in London schools which drew the problem to my attention. I stress that I found the denial pervasive everywhere, not only in the schools we worked with, where I found universal personal sympathy and wishes to help the coloured adolescent. I found the denial of the issue of race in these schools—but I found it in several other schools, in the wider society, and in newspaper reports, and among colleagues as well. The denial of the issue co-existed with empathy for the individual coloured adolescent.

It must be clear, therefore, that I am here attempting to raise the hypothesis that the issue is silent, almost invisible, and repressed in Britain—and therefore those who attempt to help the minority adolescent move from the relatively
protected world of school into the broader society, will have difficulty in discussing this aspect of the student's experience with him and helping him to deal with it. In the United States, the experience in the 1950s was that blacks themselves had incorporated the silence and the whites' denial of prejudice more thoroughly than many whites.\(^3\)

If there is prejudice which is overlooked, it assumes significance when we look at the large number of coloured children in the non-academic group within comprehensive schools. In the schools we entered, approximately one third of the adolescents we saw were coloured—their ancestry either that of the Indian sub-continent or of the West Indies. This third was the most difficult to reach in settings dominated by white children. We only found them responsive when they constituted a significant proportion of the class, with one exception.\(^4\)
Let me list the experiences we encountered at each of the main schools in which we worked, without attempting to do more, at this juncture, than let the evidence speak for itself.

At Lake School, we hoped to select a random sample of adolescents initially by picking the group who went roller skating during games period. We assumed that would include a mixture of students which was otherwise random. When we entered the room we found 19 West Indian girls, one Nigerian girl and one white girl. No one in the school had realised the skew in distribution. For an hour, the group talked easily, humourously and informatively. They never mentioned racial issues as part of the difficulty around leaving school. We elected not to meet with them regularly because they were such an unrepresentative sample, but several of the same girls appeared in the group with whom we
subsequently met regularly. With this group, chosen now by regular tutorial grouping, they were silent and observant. They never participated actively.

During these regular meetings at Lake School, we found that one third of the group was coloured. Only one minority group boy, whom I have called Andy (see Chapter 7) participated actively in the sessions. He was a very acculturated boy of Pakistani descent.

The other Pakistani and West Indian adolescents were extremely shy, although they seemed interested. These boys often sat at the back and carried on an undercurrent of jocular discussion. On a couple of occasions, when I attempted to involve them directly, I found expressions of their personal inability to help, to respond, or to become conspicuous. This was true
for instance of Martin, an English born coloured boy of West Indian or African extraction, in a session in which I attempted to explore his attitudes about helping another student. (This example is also in the session in Chapter 3). Nevertheless, although Martin was paralysed in this situation, we noticed that the other West Indian adolescents became much more involved when he was drawn in—leaning forward in their chairs and "cheering him on!"

On one morning late in the year, the room we usually used was taken for an art examination. Our group was sent down the hall for a brief session in a room which belonged to the first Negro teacher I had personally seen working at Lake School. I quote from the part of my notes about that morning which concerns my observations of his interaction with the coloured adolescents in our group.
"an important, peripheral observation about the session was that this black teacher related almost exclusively to the black children in the room, in contrast to... their tutor who did not single out the coloured children and therefore allowed most of them to be silent and reticent. This teacher, a middle-aged distinguished looking man, was a firm authoritarian in relating to the black kids, and tended to ignore the white ones while I was there. He gave a book to Martin which he had apparently obtained especially for him, pointing out something on a specific page, and calling Martin's attention to it. He had several brief conversations with the other black kids in the room. He had some Nigerian posters on the wall along with ones on general world history and economics. When I saw this teacher later in the hall, he was dealing with some black kids in what looked like a friendly but strict way. He called to mind the American caricature of the black school master conveying a benign but strict image in order that his black students learn their place. But he also gave them a sense of importance by paying special attention to them, when I feel they have so little to model themselves on in a white
school. It was the first time I saw it for the kids in this school or any other in England—and in fact he is one of the first black teachers I've seen. He looked old-fashioned and traditional, and he related warmly to these kids."

I have used our experience at Lake School to introduce my perception of the dilemma of the coloured adolescent within the school. The general absence of appropriate models for identification which was called to my attention by seeing this teacher tends to leave the coloured child with a feeling of exclusion, with a penchant for forming a "negative identity".\(^6\) Such a tendency to negative identity formation, already a problem for the white non-academic adolescent, is exacerbated by the feeling common to many school personnel that West Indian children really cannot benefit from school experience in any of the usual ways. My brief glimpses of the negro teacher helping negro adolescents while expecting and requiring more
performance of them was unlike any other experience I had with coloured children in schools. It seemed much closer to what we think is required to foster positive identity formation.  

The presence of this teacher pointed up the fact that something is usually lacking for these children. There is no focus for their identity—no one whom they can grow up like. I have already described the difficulty for the ordinary non-academic adolescent who cannot grow up to be like the teacher—and who must therefore search for a way in which he can be like the teacher in order to identify with him. But the immigrant and minority group children are unlike most teachers in even the more obvious ways of skin colour and of culture. They lack a proper father or mother figure in the school. They never meet the kind of person who was like them when he was their age—in terms of interests or culture. The black or
other minority group teacher has a crucial potential contribution for these children. For them to grow up with a positive sense of themselves, they need figures to identify with. Without these figures, it will appear that they can never make it within the system no matter how hard they try.

In Thomaston School, a deputy head noted that children from minority groups tended to group together. While he wondered what it meant, he repeated that children had no trouble mixing—they just preferred their own groupings during interludes and "breaktime". He had thought, in fact, of taking part of a social studies course to teach groups about various cultural origins—but nothing had been done about this yet. 

At Thomaston, we had three negro adolescents assigned randomly to our group, all of whom elected to drop out. Finally a fourth asked to be
included and participated actively, she never mentioned racial issues.

In work done with a group of remedial adolescents at Thomaston in the year following, Jill Savege reported a session in which racial conflict within the group focussed on one individual's ambivalence about his own racial identity. In this session, the last of the year for that group, the overt racial conflict was used to avoid the group mourning. This student, with both black and white parents, stood for the black and white feelings about the group experience as well as about the impending leaving of school. Thus, conflict about race—a real conflict in itself, was here used as a defence against more immediately pressing issues.9

It was commonly said among careers specialists we spoke with that certain ethnic
groups could be expected to follow certain behaviours in employment as well as education. West Indians were said to seek more education, to stay in school longer than was useful to them. They seemed to invest in education as a disembodied good, but with no idea of how to make it personally useful. They would usually "seek" unskilled work despite the previous interest in education. Asians were felt to be interested and studious, seeking employment in small shops and skilled crafts after specific education.

At South End School, our 6th form group began as a group of 13 with half white–half coloured composition. We were surprised when those who requested continuation were predominantly of Asian extraction. The group that remained with us included 4 Asians, 1 West Indian girl who was well acculturated, one boy whose parents had
emigrated from Italy, and two white English boys. We speculated on the reasons for this with Mr Madling, the deputy who helped arrange the group. Since it took place during a community studies activity, he speculated that they might experience more stress and potential prejudice when they ventured outside the school than inside it where they seemed to feel accepted and protected.

"Their position is different here from Negroes in the United States. I have always maintained that there are differences. We are integrated, but integration can be a misleading word. I think these children feel protected here, we tend not to look at the racial issue, but I think it does have an effect. I think coloured children are more disappointed with what is available to them after school. Many of them might have problems coping with the outside world— so even here they take a back seat and look very unmotivated. When you come along from the outside and talk to them, it is a very salutary
experience for them—often just the fact that you have been interested."

If this speculation is pursued, it can be seen to have profound implications for the transition from school to work for such adolescents. It is consistent with the vulnerable West Indian prolonging his schooling to avoid the threatening wider world of work (especially if he feels destitute of skills). The South End group seemed most aware of feeling cut off from their parents by their own wishes to grow. They had an acute sense of failing their parents by growing and changing, of failure to contain the adults' fantasy hopes as they grow towards adulthood. In the Authority Relations Test response to the card of the group in a park, Bhunu was the only coloured adolescent who noticed the absence of coloured people in any of the cards. What is her reaction to a society, then, which de-emphasises the growth of identification
for non-whites. It suggests to me that Britain may in some ways feel like South Africa for her and perhaps for other adolescents. Not only is a full range of opportunity unavailable as a rule to this group, but the expression of feelings about the experience of being coloured in Britain is not encouraged or facilitated in the school or elsewhere, since there seems to be little general awareness of the stress encountered by the minority child.

The concept of "white racism" has been elaborated by work in the United States. "White Racism" is practised unknowingly by members of the predominant white ethnic groups in ignoring their own psychological role in the oppression of blacks and minority groups. Both whites and non-whites suffer when groups cannot examine and discuss their attitudes towards each other. The unconscious guilt about "profiting at the expense
of another group" remains, but is held out of consciousness for the white, while the black assumes a position of increasingly acting out the role of incompetence and self-denigration which is the projection he accepts onto himself from the predominant group.11

If Bhunu and her friends feel the need to seek protection in school, and if West Indian children stay in school hoping to shore up defences against a hostile and difficult world while they feel destitute of skills and without self-esteem, the transition from school to work will be a bleak and threatening prospect for them. It will seem, even more than for the usual working class adolescent, to be the beginning of a nightmare. There are some indications in our material that there is little in their experience which will help them cope with this aspect of leaving school.
What to do about this matter in Britain is not clear. The situation is not the same as in the United States, but I do believe more attention needs to be paid to it in school and in industry. A beginning would be made by opening discussions of the issues with staff, with an eye to increasing their own awareness of it, and beginning to design programmes which speak to the added difficulties of the coloured adolescent. An active, direct examination of these issues will suggest further action in due course.

NOTES

1 As a white American entering British society, I am partly in the position of the minority and immigrant adolescents I am discussing. My experience with these issues in the United States has made me more alert to them here.

2 Mr Paul of Thomaston School informs me that there is a small pilot programme in his borough beginning to address these issues.

3 See The Autobiography of Malcolm X (1968) or Ralph Ellison's The Invisible Man (1952)
The group of minority students at South End School were able to speak up when there were many white adolescents present, but were even more articulate when they constituted the majority of those present. In any event, I cannot draw any conclusion from this small group.

This function is sociologically thought to have been important for survival in the post-slave era from 1865 to 1950.

For an extensive discussion of this issue for black American adolescents, see Erikson (1968) "Identity: Youth and Crisis" Chapter 8.

Stuart Hauser's study (1971) Black and White Identity Formation documents some of the differences in an American minority that can lead to premature identity closure and the formation of a "negative identity", (op.cit.)

This suggestion ran along the lines of the American initiatives to teach Black History wherever there are significant numbers of blacks in schools, as a method of promoting positive aspects of self-image and identity formation for blacks, and to promote racial understanding and tolerance to both white and black. As noted previously, a small beginning has now been made in this direction.


See Chapter 2 for a description of this test.

The dynamics of this aspect of racial and personal self-
denigration and mutual suspiciousness which is fostered by each sub-group are complex. They have been explored in depth in the United States. See particularly, Charles Pinderhughes' 1911 paper, "Racism: a Paranoia with Contrived Reality and Processed Violence", and Joel Kovel’s "White Racism: a Psycho-History". 1970.
CHAPTER 16

Findings and Recommendations

"Adolescence implies growth, and this growth takes time. And while growing is in process, responsibility must be taken by parent-figures. If parent-figures abdicate, then the adolescents must make a jump to a false maturity, and lose their greatest asset: freedom to have ideas and to act on impulse ... the adolescent striving that makes itself felt over the whole world today needs to be met, needs to be given reality by an act of confrontation. Confrontation must be personal. Adults are needed if adolescents are to have life and liveliness. Confrontation belongs to containment that is non-retaliatory, without vindictiveness, but having its own strength ... where there is the challenge of the growing boy or girl, there let an adult meet the challenge. And it will not necessarily be nice.
In the unconscious fantasy these are matters of life and death."


**I. The Findings**

The overall effect of our experience is to document that the adolescent who cannot buy time, because of his academic limitations or because his interests and future development lie outside school, faces the transition from school to work too often alone. There is a resonance between his tasks of personal development and the gap he experiences within himself between the child and the adult, and the institutions in which he finds himself—family, school, employment and the wider society. He is confronted with the inability of society to undertake integration of the individual's need for personal growth with society's needs for certain kinds of productivity. At this juncture, he is often unaided in attempting to
contain more anxiety than he has ever experienced before or may ever experience again.

In this final chapter, we will begin by reviewing the complex of events impinging on the adolescent as he faces school-leaving and proceed from there to review the intentions and effects of our intervention during this study. In the last part of the chapter we discuss recommendations emerging from our experience and describe the project, now in early stages of implementation, which attempts to effect those recommendations in a form allowing further study.

The Adolescent

The adolescent has been described as experiencing one of the most difficult psychosocial transitions in human development. He is in transition in relationship to his family, his school, himself and his peers. Because of his withdrawal
from adults, as a compromise position between his childhood dependence on them and his future adult independence, he may be isolated from supporting figures in a way unique to mid-adolescence. We have seen that adults may simultaneously withdraw from him as he becomes incapable of containing their long-standing idealisations and projections, as his own unrealised mourning for childhood and idealised parents increases his angry rejection of them, and as their own stifled mourning for the adolescent and their own re-lived adolescence draws them away. While peer support can be a valuable substitute during this overdetermined isolation, it can also be a support system which reinforces self-destructive patterns. Particularly, as Winnicott has pointed out, the adolescent's bodily and emotional growth confront him simultaneously with the murderousness of his own aggressive potential
and ageing confronts him with the concern for death, his own and those around him. His curiosity and energy, in play, in sexual concerns, and in mastery, become for the first time, a double-edged sword—able to win the fruits of adulthood, or to destroy the possibility of a productive future.

Thus the adolescent faces a seemingly insurmountable gap in his own development. His anxiety mounts, and he mourns the fantasied ease of childhood, even as he is driven toward the wished-for and dreaded adult status.

**Family, School and Employers**

Those around the adolescent are far from immune to the anxieties of the transitional period. The family is mourning a lost child, and coping with an energetic new force, felt often to be on the verge of destructiveness. At the same time, the hopes previously embodied by the "golden-haired
child” are meeting an early death. Angry rejection, unrecognised sadness, and hopelessness about social and economic prospects may be echoing in the family, rejected by one member only to lodge in another. While the movement from the family is enhanced by attention to the legitimate aspects of adolescent dependency, allowing the adolescent to let go while at the same time providing him with a firm foundation, those very efforts will often be under attack.

The school is in a similarly ambiguous position. The greatest calls are made on it to support the adolescent just at the moment it must let him go, provide for his future growth without crippling him with excessive support. The very process calls for compromise at every step. We have seen some of the ways in which the anxiety of the teacher and of the school as a social system are currently handled by defensive compromise arrangements
which limit the support which can be offered to the anxious adolescent. It is a triumph for the adolescent to attain maturity, but in interpersonal relationships one person's triumph is often felt to be at the expense of another. If the school is to sustain multiple such adolescent "attacks" its structure must help the staff in containing a great deal of anxiety. Small wonder that some of its effort stifles the very facilitation of autonomy it seeks to foster.

The school often defends itself by helping teachers to contain their own anxiety by constriction rather than by managing to find in that anxiety clues to further personal growth. It thereby fails to help the adolescent to contain his anxiety by using it as a spur to his own further growth and mastering it. The need for understanding the process of growing as an answer to anxiety, and anxiety as a necessary
accompaniment to growth, emerges in the chapters juxtaposing the school as a social system with the experiences of the teacher and student. If the slow, painful attainment of maturity is not fostered—that is the integration of uncertainty by progressive steps of mastery—then the push of the school will lead to a false mastery, an empty maturity which masquerades as adulthood, but thrives on an encapsulated, isolated eternal childhood sense of emptiness.

Within the schools, the process of facilitating the transition of making school-leaving more than a loss, is a fragmented task. No one person embodies the unification of this task. The careers officer, the careers teacher, and the teacher himself all have fragmentary relationships with the adolescent, and none of them follows him through the whole process. At the moment of crisis, no one crosses the gap with him, and he
must leave school alone. The current emphasis on "job placement" of the non-academic pupil, overlooks all the concepts of growth of the whole child, although often enough a good fit is made by the intuition of a dedicated teacher.

None of these teachers is available later if the adolescent demonstrates maladjustment at work. The exploration of the "psychological meaning of work" has led to the hypothesis that the work itself, to be meaningful to the individual, must correspond to earlier and current internal needs, and must help the individual worker feel related to his internal 'good objects' or primary figures, while giving him a continually renewed sense of interpersonal satisfaction.

If this is so, there is no evidence of recognition of it in any systematic ways by which the society supports the adolescent if he has difficulty in his
new job. To be sure, there are individual employers and shop stewards who intuitively attend to the needs of their young workers. But there is no organisation, no socially or independently supported institution to help the young worker. And as I have argued, he is apt to appear to be a blocked and angry malcontent, or to appear to be listless and detached. The apparently apathetic or rebellious youth is in reality an adolescent suffering from the effects of abandonment at a crucial moment. This has continued to be so despite the proposals for more than ten years that there is a vast need for an institution to facilitate growth during a benign transition from school to work.¹

The employer then, has nowhere to turn and is forced to handle matters as best he can. The continuing figures of high turnover in young workers suggests that this issue is still alive. But it
is not only the employer and the adolescent who suffer from this social problem. There is also the argument that we all suffer the effects; for there is a continuing argument that juvenile delinquency is also related to the issues I have been describing. Downes\textsuperscript{2} holds that "dissociation—not alienation—is the normative response of working-class male adolescents to semi and unskilled work (and to no work at all), and that this is the primary source of much of the delinquency peculiar to male adolescents." Wilensky\textsuperscript{3} notes that it is the increasing centralisation of work which makes work itself increasingly less meaningful; as discipline is increased, freedom on the job reduced, and decision-making is removed from the process of the work itself.

With a loss of meaningful relationships, and therefore of an avenue to personal meaning, the adolescent is confronted with a life in which it is
difficult to divine personal reward. But we must also ask why the problem of juvenile delinquency precedes the meeting of this kind of work. A Home Office report on juvenile offenders notes: "It is also a disturbing fact that the peak year for juvenile delinquency coincides with the last year of compulsory school attendance."\(^4\) Something must have preceded the work situation, as stripped of human values as it is, which also represents a push to detachment from social values, and which allows the adolescent to opt for a delinquent solution. I maintain that the losses of important people, and of the school itself, is a significant spur to detachment by the adolescent. The approach of this loss before it actually materialises, even though the school may not ostensibly be valued, can represent such a stimulus. Social detachment and delinquency are one set of reactions to loss and incomplete mourning.\(^5\)
One footnote which must be added is the one concerning the relevance of racial issues to the transition from school to work. From the significant minority of adolescents who are coloured, whether of recent immigration, or of immigrant extraction, there will be a complex of social issues peculiar to their situation. While I have made only a brief attempt to discuss their special situation in Chapter 15, we saw evidence that their problem is generally unappreciated, and is greater than is generally assumed. It is my belief that the study of this sub-group would yield information linking their difficulties to a variety of issues more generally discussed in the United States, but modified by the relatively quiet tone of prejudice in Britain, and by the size and differing experiences of the various minority groups. Prejudice and racism are one aspect of the problem in the transition out of the relatively
protected school, where adolescents of these groups may huddle for protection, into a society which can produce harsh experiences for many of them.

To summarise, we found that the concept of "choice" for the non-academic adolescent is a narrow one, and one more honoured in the breach. For most, there is no concept of "career" and for many choices are made in a setting of isolation, constriction and fragmentation. These impediments to thinking about "choice" can be imposed on the adolescent both by his own personal development and people and institutions in contact with him as he leaves school.

**Our Intervention**

We intervened, and simultaneously studied, in three major ways: with the students themselves, with the staff surrounding them, and, in a tentative
and exploratory way, with the school system at large.

The Students

The details of the intervention constitute the bulk of the material in this volume. But we can describe the process as encouraging the adolescent to "play in the gap". There are a number of such gaps of inner and outer worlds: between fantasy and reality in the individual; between personal satisfaction and dissatisfaction? between self and others; adults and peers; and between school and work.

Because much of the time with our groups either closely resembled play, or took the form of dramatic play, the analogy is even more apt. But the concept of play and interplay is one which remains useful and crucial in adult life—where work, to be fulfilling and successful as an
occupation, must be a productive kind of play. To this end, preparatory, anticipatory play, testing of reality and the future while in a setting where the freedom to throw off constrictions is less threatening than usual can be seen as a useful dry run.

The Schools and Teaching Staff

Our intervention with teachers and staff involved sharing our increasing understanding, eliciting their views of the issues involved, and exploring further together. Both sides in this dialogue found this a rewarding process, a mutual exploration which was supportive to both. Not only did this process yield some of the information used here, but it also began the process of self-examination and change within the schools involved which is an analogue to the process we hoped to catalyse in the adolescent. While the long
term fate of these early efforts towards change with the schools involved is uncertain, the effects within the staff during our joint work already involved the kind of self-examination and exploration of an expanded number of alternatives that seem to be necessary in order to lend additional support to the adolescent's own efforts to deal with his dilemma. What we learned from the staffs about their own needs has been presented: the mutuality of the mourning process, the stress of coping with growing adolescents, the shared times of hopelessness, and in spite of all this the undaunted efforts of most teachers.

**The Larger Institutions**

We met with the Careers Advisory Service, officials of the local authority itself, and sectors of government interested in education, both as we initiated our project, and again, with early results
in hand, as we attempted to begin a larger project implementing changes based on the lessons learned so far. Specific recommendations will be given in the last part of this chapter, but here I want to comment on the aspect of the larger institutions.

It is not clear who looks after the interests of the young school-leaver. The Careers Advisory Service sees a gap in its own service. At the level of national institutions, there is insufficient overlap between those concerned with education and those responsible for industry. Even at the level of governmental policy, the overlap must be manipulated by responsive individuals interested in the fate of the adolescent who is crossing the gap. At the level of governmental organisation, interest in the "student" does not overlap with the interest in the "labourer". The adolescent, even at policy level, crosses the gap between school and
work alone.

II. Recommendations

This book has been concerned with one psycho-social transition that all of us experience in the course of human development and which is represented for some individuals by a coincidence of the adolescent crisis and the need for the individual to leave school and enter work. We have considered the nature of this both in terms of human psychology at this stage in life, and the interaction of the adolescent with his environment. While many of the problems are deeply involved in the individual personality, the extent to which the individual himself can negotiate the transition depends in part on whether his environment facilitates or impedes his growth. I have suggested that an important element in getting through the leaving of school
has to do with mourning and being able to give up the school as a protective environment. I have suggested that in some ways the school may impede rather than facilitate this process. We will now go on to consider some of its implications.

Thus within school it is suggested that useful modifications could be achieved both in teacher training and curriculum redesign in order that the school itself should become better attuned to the needs of adolescents at this time and better able to prepare them for their leaving and their entry into the world of work. However, it seems likely that no matter how much preparation the school gives, the school leaver will experience a major and disruptive discontinuity in the disparity between the two worlds of school and work. In further research we hope to focus on how employers might better modify their selection and induction procedures so as to make them more receptive to
the problems experienced by their entrants, but it seems likely that some kind of bridging procedures or possibly a bridging institution will still be necessary. It also seems likely that recognition will have to be given to the adolescent need for a moratorium by providing some form of institutional continuity while the adolescent passes from one world to the other. One of the kinds of institutions that do often effectively bridge the gap is the family, but we have already noted some of the discontinuities and strains which confront the families of those adolescents who most need support.

The Concept of the Bridging Institution

What we are suggesting is that from the age of about 14 the child needs to feel himself a part of a new institution which, even though it may have some of the characteristics of a school,
nevertheless takes on a different relationship with him. To be able to exercise a form of guidance, the adults (teachers, tutors, etc.) with whom he comes into contact now need to be demonstrably wise about the ways of the world and the issues the adolescent is faced with, while being sensitive to the turbulence and the nature of the adolescent psycho-social transition. Moreover since the turbulence in the individual is now great, the need for continuity, stability and availability of figures in his environment becomes the greater. At the moment the school's influence tends to cease abruptly as the child leaves it, whereas the kind of institution which the adolescent now needs to become a part of needs to extend its range to be in touch with the world of school and the world of work, while remaining as a transitional community independent of both.

I would suggest, therefore, the establishment of
a bridging institution, whose task is to take responsibility for the transition from school to work, and to take this responsibility through certain defined staff who see this as their task. Whether this institution should be carved out anew, or from existing institutions (i.e. either the Careers Advisory Service or from school-based teachers) is a matter for conjecture, but it seems to me to be no longer speculative that there is a need for someone and some institution to take responsibility for the adolescent in transition. That this work should be a regular, highly valued function of the educational system requires that it be a priority of a person and an institution within the system. At this time, no one accepts this responsibility, and the adolescent leaves school alone.

Such a bridging or transitional institution should have the properties of consistency and
integration, although its exact form is still far from clear. In fact, it is still unclear whether we are only talking about a new bridging process, a new person, or a new formal institution. What currently needs to be defined about the bridging institution that is proposed is the needs of the adolescent which it would meet and its essential set of functions. I will hereafter refer to these functions jointly as if they constituted a bridging institution, recognising for the moment that we may be talking about a process or redeployment of existing personnel, or a new formal institution. In connecting with and supporting the adolescent within the world of school and in the world of work it would cross the present boundary between those worlds and have legitimate functions in facilitating adolescent development. Its function, however, is not wholly contained in either world for it would assume responsibility for
the adolescent in transition in the way the family and school were able to do for the younger child, but can no longer do for the adolescent.

To accomplish its task of the facilitation of growth for the adolescent in transition, its workers would need to possess a variety of personal characteristics and skills: sensitivity to the issues both of adolescent development and social realities; a knowledge of the facts of school and employment; the quality of persistence and consistency which would allow for the containment of stress and anxiety in the adolescent and those closest to him; and most importantly, the ability to provide flexible but firm support to the adolescent during this period.

A Tentative Outline of the Properties of the Bridging Institution

A transitional bureau, officer, or institution should probably begin its work with the
adolescent as early as the age of 14. This would allow sufficient time to begin to prepare for the actual transition of two years later, but this is not to suggest that work with the adolescent on the issues of the transition itself should not begin earlier.

Beginning at 14, and continuing over the next 4 or 5 years through at least the first year of employment, the transitional officer should get to know and have regularly scheduled meetings with the group of adolescents within his charge, familiarising himself with their developmental stage, skills and credentials and impediments to continued growth, and working closely with school personnel responsible for the pastoral care of the adolescent. He would also begin to consider the meaning of jobs psychologically with them, and have enough knowledge about available employment to help the adolescent match his
development to it.

For some of these adolescents, it would be appropriate to leave school in a partial way at approximately the age of 14. If everyone remained fully within the educational system until the age of 14, the bridging institution might at that point offer a kind of "Transitional College" which could offer the adolescent a mixture of well-supervised strategies containing the essence of the bridging function within them. For instance, the adolescent could leave school to enter work for a year, returning thereafter to further schooling. Alternatively a mixture of half-day work, half-day school could be offered over a two or three-year period which might even extend the effective minimum schooling beyond the time required by current policy. Since there is a need for adolescents within purely educational programmes to have more exchange with slightly
older peers who have entered the work force, some of the young workers might be brought back to school and, as part of their own education, do some supervised teaching of those still within the school.

Any such changes would require extensive modifications of current laws and social institutions. For we are clearly proposing an extension of the responsibilities of the state to care for and exercise responsibility for adolescents in a more complex way than has been previously considered.

One difficult question involves the financing of such a new function or institution. While much thinking would need to be done about the economics, both in terms of direct programmatic costs and other repercussions, one suggestion would be that the Bridging Institution be financed
out of the employer's compensation for the adolescent's work. I am suggesting that the adolescent who has not to date been admitted into the work force (age 14 to 16) and the young working adolescent (16 to 18) who has been employed at a low wage, be employed largely as a matter of their own education and growth. It therefore would follow that part of their wages go directly from the employer to fund the transitional institution which is responsible for supervising them. This might be done in such a way that the young employee is reasonably compensated for his status as a worker-in-training, while the employer receives the benefit of a better supervised job entrant, and less loss of experience in the corps of new employees by dint of job changing. Hopefully, both worker and employer would benefit.7

Where should a Bridging Institution come from?
It is not yet clear whether such a process or institution should be formed anew from principles to be carved out in future research and programme development, or whether it could be formed by modifications of current school and employment institutions. The schools and the Careers Advisory Service have mandates which include many of the functions we have been discussing, but without the ability to implement them for large numbers of needy adolescents. The same objection applies to Herford's suggestion that the factory doctor be such a person.  

The modifications in structure and mandate for existing institutions would have to be major ones, requiring the transfer of real responsibility to one of the existing groups of professionals and offering the training requisite to the assumption of a broadened role. While this remains one important possibility, I would like now to describe
a pilot project we have begun at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations which is intended to embody in a general way the functions of a Bridging Institution. Following that, I will propose some interim recommendations for teacher training and supervision, curriculum revision and programme development in schools and industry.

**A Pilot Programme: Towards a Bridging Institution**

Since it is not possible to "wish into existence" an institution of the kind I have been describing, we are attempting to establish each of the functions suggested above as a pilot programme. As a research endeavour, we would thereby embody a continuum of all the bridging processes of adolescent development involved in facilitating the transition from school to work. In outline form, these include:

1. Work with adolescents in small groups from ages 13 through 17 in schools and at work. As
in the project described in this volume a range of techniques will be applied depending on the needs of particular groups.

2. Supervision of teachers doing group work with adolescents aimed at helping them facilitate the transition from school to work, as well as gain increased understanding of the broader issues of adolescent development.

3. Consultation to schools for the development of new curricula and programmes (e.g. work-experience programmes, programmes for truants, community education courses). Each school has a unique situation, unique population, and unique skills among its faculty. The consultation offers to provide the help of knowledge about organisational change to make more use of the skills and knowledge already present within the school.

4. Liaison with Careers Advisory Service to discuss and consider increased contact between school and work institutions, and to improvise methods for the CAS better to perform bridging functions.

5. Consultation, training and supervision in industry and with other employers of young school-leavers, along the same lines as listed
for schools, and with the same goals.

We also plan to follow more rigorous scientific guidelines in this research (which is just now getting under way) by looking statistically at the fate of the population of young school-leavers who come from schools which have made interventions of the kind I describe above, and comparing this population with controls. The intention is to launch an action research programme which embodies the facilitating institution within the research project, and which allows us to experience and contain ourselves the anxieties which would beset such an institution if it were established.

**Immediate Recommendations**

In the meantime, a number of changes could make the current school a better resource to staff and adolescents during the transition from school
to work. All of these changes would assist in the processes of helping the adolescent to "build a bridge" from school to work.

1. Make school boundaries more flexible

For some students, effective learning in school stops before the age of 16, for others learning about the world of work would be spurred by a work experience carried on alongside a school experience. Although there are legal and practical constraints, there is no logical reason why school-leaving could not be modified to fit the needs of a given student, often going on over a period of two or three years, with an experience built of half-school, half-work. The two experiences could then enrich and capitalise on each other, while industry and school would have to co-operate to build a viable programme, a valuable side benefit would be the collaborative relationship of the two
institutions and the sharing of perspectives on adolescent needs. I believe more of these programmes could be launched, even within the constraints of current law.

Increased flexibility around leaving school, a chance to return and test the process of choice would be a valuable modification of the current "one-way ticket" which leaving school often means. Such programmes could also modify the anxiety which the adolescent who elects to stay in school has to contain since he is now constrained by the fact that gradations of choice are not available to him.

2. Curriculum redesign for the development of more relevant skills and experiences.

While some of the needed curriculum changes are related to course content, I think the experience is growing that new processes of thinking and choosing are required, in addition to
new material. It does seem that some of the information about how one gets along in the city, how to negotiate the welfare systems, how to interview for a job—all are important.

But there is a need for more experiential learning—about what it feels like to work, about the process of work, about the feeling of what it is about work that is rewarding, and what it is about it that is stifling. Courses which promote thoughtful growth, mastery of work, preparation for adult roles in the modern society can take the form either of the "subjectless lesson" or of lessons with these themes as subject.\(^9\) I am not suggesting students be taught only what interests them. I am suggesting that a more relevant, more thoughtful curriculum can be imagined. The design of such a curriculum would need to be developed with the needs and potential interests of each group or sub-group of students in mind,
probably best by the faculty who knows them and can explore the modifications of existing approaches which are required.

This recommendation would also mean that the local authorities would have to provide support to individual schools in vigorously revising existing programmes for special sub-groups of students. More energy would be required than will suffice for administering a standardised yearly schedule of courses.

3. Intensive consultation to schools

The preceding recommendation would require, at an institutional level, that there be more regular, intensive consultation to schools and to teachers to review varying needs for different adolescents. This could be the beginning of a redevelopment process in schools, and would need the support of school heads and of local
authorities. School administrations would need to reflect the process of school flexibility, to examine both changing and unchanging needs, and to monitor the relationship between the organisational structure and the education needed.

4. Modifications of the pastoral care system

The support of the inner world of the adolescent, and the provision of a supportive person during the transition from school to work, would require major revision in the schools' personal support systems. It would require that greater priority and more training be given to the teachers engaged in pastoral work, that teachers follow adolescents preferably more than one year, and that a subgroup of teachers specialise more in the job of shepherding adolescents into the wider world than in the content teaching of specific
subjects. It is not necessary that all teachers become primarily tutors. There is a need in schools for differentiation of function by ability, interest and task.\textsuperscript{10}

But it is also true that if there is only one counsellor and one careers teacher per large secondary school then the work of both will be aimed at the superficial, crisis elements of the adolescent in transition. If there were a cadre of such staff, who combined this priority with other work (such as subject teaching or general pastoral care) they could reach further. And they could pass their training onto other staff members as they worked. What I am describing is a teacher, not a counselor, who sees his teaching task as revolving around the teaching of the adolescent to understand and master experience, his own anxiety, and the relevant external situations. To manage this task requires more knowledge of
adolescent developmental principles and of the external world (of work and non-work activities) than is widely available in current teacher training.

5. Teacher training

My recommendations for teacher training follow from the preceding description. A teacher can be taught more information about adolescence and about the difficulties in dealing with personal anxiety as the adolescent faces not only school-leaving, but a host of developmental tasks. It is even more important, however, to give student teachers and inexperienced teachers supervision in the handling of the processes described in this book in general areas of personal development and in the use of class groupings to facilitate adolescent growth. For instance, the experience of being a student teacher (i.e. both a teacher and a
student at the same time) lends itself well to learning at first hand how to use the concept of change and loss to encourage growth, and therefore applies directly to the facilitation of growth during the transition from school to work.11

Such training can take as themes the ability to think about jobs as internal symbols, the uses of play in the school curriculum, the relationship of internal figures to a job situation, and the balance between an adolescent's anxiety tolerance and his ways of defending himself against anxiety. What needs to be stressed is that these topics, while they can be taught as part of a "psychology of education" course, also rely heavily on the experience of the teacher and can exploit his own experience of life transitions and stresses to furnish the material to be understood.
Such training aims to provide a teacher with the understanding and personal freedom to help the adolescent during the transition, to remain available to him when there are pressures to withdraw, and to embody as a person, the inner satisfactions gained from a mastery of the outside world.

The Needs at Work

Since this study has not examined the actual adolescent experience at work, it follows that recommendations in this arena will be broad and untested. Until we have had time to test them ourselves we can only expand themes which emerge from work with the adolescent in school.

The school-leaver who has not developed the notion of a "career" with its aspects of the continuing growth in a work setting may fear work as boring, repetitious, and murderous of his
human capacities. At times this may correspond to the actual nature of work, but even where this is so it may well be that exploration conducted jointly by young employee and employer can modify the work itself. The adolescent often feels that the employer is an ogre who has no anxiety to tolerate himself—an unsympathetic, unmoveable figure as depicted by Mike in his caricature of a sergeant in Chapter 3. As we have seen, this derives in large part from the unmodified nature of the adolescent's own aggression. Modification of this and of his distortion of his view of authority figures needs to continue for the adolescent at work. And at the same time, we can speculate that attempts by industry to understand adolescent processes may lead to changes in its organisation which reduce some of the economic costs of high adolescent anxiety attested to by the enormous figures of juvenile labour turnover. I would
recommend, therefore, that industry undertake a programme of work around its young employee aimed at uncovering the issues of his continued development, facilitating his growth, and responding to his needs.

**What Can We do Now?**

In the meantime, the question remains as to what the interested teacher, careers master, parent and employer can do. We have been discussing ways of multiplying the number of people who support the adolescent, and, in turn, of lending them support. But the reliance on concerned individual parents, teachers, employers and others will remain essential. Facilitating the transition from school to work is a task that can be shared by all the concerned adults who surround the adolescent as he makes the transition.

Adolescence itself is a bridge from childhood to
adulthood, but without the supports of childhood and without the structures and constraints of adulthood. It is a process of growth, change and integration of identity, a testing ground for whether the adolescent will be able to achieve a mutuality with his world, or will enter a psychological world of kill or be killed. His inabilities and his impediments affect us, for if we, in fearing for his failure, or his destructiveness, do not offer a supportive hand, he may withdraw and falter. If we fail to help him develop productivity and a sense of life, we are all the losers. For each adolescent, for each group of adolescents, and for each school, different methods will be required. In each case, a teacher, a counsellor, a head, must work through the needs. To begin to do so is to begin the process we wish to teach the adolescent.

NOTES

1 Herford, 1964 and 1969
2 Downes, 1966

3 Wilensky, 1967

4 Home Office Report, 1962

5 John Bowlby cites the high percentage of personal loss in the histories of delinquent patients. See Bowiby, 1973

6 M.E.M. Herford (ref, op.cit.) has suggested the factory doctor and the medical system around industry might provide the kind of support system to help the worker settle in, but even here this kind of system would only come into play after job acceptance, when the processes I have described are well under way, and have already cost many adolescents dearly. And that is not to mention, that many young school leavers are in small establishments without resources for any institutionalised intervention, Herford also cites Owen Whitrey’s earlier suggestions that there be a "transitional officer" to perform these functions.

7 I am indebted to John Hill for this idea which begins to address the crucial notion of the financing of such a large-scale suggestion.

8 Herford, 1964, op.cit.

9 See also Michael Marland’s book. The Experience of Work. 1973, which provides material for learning about work as part of an English Literature curriculum.

10 Michael Marland (1974) describes the principles of organizing such a Pastoral Care system within a secondary school.
My experience in such a group, taken with Dr. Mildred Marshak at the University of London Institute of Education, at the same time this research was in progress, has confirmed, for me, the usefulness of such a training scheme.
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