

CONTEMPORARY ADOLESCENCE

This essay is intended to deepen our understanding of the fundamental causes of the characteristic features of contemporary adolescence, and of their significance. Since the reader will not be unfamiliar with the phenomena, his personal experience may be relied on to supplement a description which would otherwise be too concise. The description is based on data, research and summary accounts drawn from the literature of various countries, which is suggestive because of its uniformity. It suggests five conclusions which bring into focus the general condition and position of contemporary adolescence:

1. While the development of the adolescent used to take place during the few years traditionally called "adolescence" (ages 15 to 18), it has steadily expanded during the last century, and recently with an ever-increasing speed. Nowadays, it reaches up to age 25, and in many cases and in many areas beyond this, and includes in the opposite direction the majority of the 13-to-14-year-olds without, however, having ceased to exert its

Translated by H. Kaal.

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attraction on what was traditionally called "childhood." An enormous extension of adolescence has thus taken place, and this is already reflected to a large extent in the development of legal notions. Modern man spends a considerable portion of his life as an adolescent.¹

2. Instability, impulsiveness and insecurity have traditionally been counted as criteria of adolescence. But where they formerly remained mere flaws in a more comprehensive and more stable behavioral structure, they now govern adolescent behavior. This does *not* follow from the frequent news of juvenile crime, vandalism, drug-addiction or rioting. It is true that these have a high symptomatic value, when compared with the manifestations typical of adolescents of former times. But they lack any representative significance, and in any case, the turn to the extreme of the manifestations must not be allowed to draw our attention away from the general turn to the extreme of the adolescent phase. Fluidity and formlessness have become criteria of normal juvenile behavior. This is clearly shown by the current forms of music, dance, language and social intercourse. This loss of form is accompanied by a quest for experience which comes out just as clearly in the means and the content of conversation, leisure and social intercourse. Here, too, there is an unmistakable turn to the extreme. The thirst for stirring experiences, which had gripped part of European youth already around the turn of the century, has turned into the dream of passing one's life in a mere succession of experiences. Any seriousness and concentration which one meets on occasion, prove to be a beginning or an exception, and frequently, a practical compromise with the circumstances which has by no means ceased to be subservient to that orientation towards experience. The foreground is taken up by greater vital needs. The individual and social development of the person, which is the proper task of the adolescent phase, encounters difficulties and delays, especially in the emotional and moral spheres, and frequently succeeds only with qualifications or not at all.

¹ On the other hand, the ratio of adolescents in contemporary society is relatively minor, because of the low birth-rate and the high life-expectancy.

3. When a society includes a group which differs both actually and consciously from the others, a sociologist may speak of a "subculture." Such a group must be independent on either economic, religious, political or other grounds, and must either actively strive for its independence as a distinction, or passively accept it as an alienation forced upon it. Again, such a group is not to be separated from the society of which it forms a part, even though it retains a large measure of self-sufficiency and self-control in relation to the society as a whole. An individual identifies himself with the latter only indirectly and conditionally, namely via his own group, and it is to this that he is primarily obligated. This is also why members of such a group feel at home where their social organization prescribes an exchange with the rest of society. Contemporary adolescents have, in this sense, their own subculture. The forms and norms of their lives have reached a degree of uniqueness and autonomy which they lacked formerly even where revolt against the adult world was adopted as a conscious program. The decisive reason is not that the dividing lines have become more numerous and more sharply drawn, but that adolescents nowadays are less oriented towards the adult world. Far from being forced to conceal their way of life, or at least to measure it in terms of the values of society as a whole and, if need be, justify it before them, they make free use of the resources of the whole culture for their own purposes. In view of this independence, it is not surprising that the adolescent subculture should be almost sovereign over all areas of life. Adolescents have not only their own unmistakable forms of conduct, sport, amusement, but also their own fashions, morals, literature and language.

4. It may also be observed that adult culture is becoming puerile. This is not even a very novel phenomenon, and J. Huizinga, in the 1930's, was not the first one to deplore it. In the meantime, the prestige that attaches to everything juvenile has risen enormously. Adult conduct, amusement, reading, leisure, morals, language and manners show increasingly juvenile traits. Here, too, the preference for picture, sound and rhythm, and the reign of both monotony and diversion, announce the promotion of a discontinuous succession of experiences to a phi-

losophy of life and happiness, and the demotion of continuous personal accomplishments. In the world of business, the ways and means of temptation are aimed almost invariably at typically juvenile wishes, symbols and realities. The psychology of everyday and professional life looks with ever-increasing steadiness to the model of the juvenile needs of security and adaptation. At the same time, leisure and sport, election campaigns and political propaganda, the methods of teaching and other basic orientations towards life, self, and world show increasingly a puerile playfulness. In the arts, children's pictures and works of adolescent authors put forth claims to serious consideration, and the choice of subjects and manner of execution betray an affinity with the juvenile world. The absence of older people from literature corresponds to their exclusion from society into homes for the aged or onto old-age pensions. The adult no longer finds his bearings in his own age group, and already lacks the feeling that there are specific tasks for his phase of life. His normal efforts are directed to understanding youth, keeping up with it and adapting to it. Since age differences are levelled, authority inside the family and outside of it is only felt to be authoritarian, and replaced by companionship or community of interests. Ideals of conduct that are differentiated according to age, come to be displaced by a uniform ideal which shows clearly juvenile traits. Contemporary adolescents have not only their own subculture, but in some respects the dominant subculture.

5. What has been said will gain in theoretical profile if we observe that contemporary adolescents are markedly similar in all industrially developed countries. This is not just true of the extreme phenomena, as witnessed by the similarities between the French *blousons noirs*, the American *juvenile delinquents*, the Italian *teddy-boys*, the Australian *bodgies*, the Taiwanese *tai-paos*, the South-African *duck-tails*, and the Polish and Russian *hooligans*; it is true even of normal behavior. The youth of all industrialized countries tends to converge. The reason is not to be sought in the identity of culture, made possible by the interweaving through export of both material and immaterial products. This explains at most why the same hit record, the same singer, the same new fashion, the same dime novel and

the same amusement should arouse the same enthusiasm in Rome, London, New York, Warsaw, Stockholm, Tokyo, Johannesburg and Cairo. We can only understand this almost unlimited import of cultural products if we assume an identity of underlying attitudes. The identity of the conditions of life in an industrial society generates forces which increasingly eliminate national and other differences. The same type of adolescent is being formed everywhere.

This should be sufficient justification for raising the problem stated at the beginning. We are concerned not with a specific country, but with industrial society. There remain, of course, important differences. These are partly explained by differences in the degree or form of industrialization, whether of the material or of the ideological kind; partly by historical circumstances, and partly by national peculiarities. Looked at in this way, the industrial society and contemporary adolescence do not exist anywhere in a pure form. But we are concerned with what is known in the social sciences as an "ideal type." The conditions in industrially developed countries approximate to this ideal type. This is also why contemporary adolescence is not an ephemeral phenomenon, which could be explained by the threat of global war, the influence of American culture or other historical circumstances, but brings into view an essential trait of contemporary society. The question about the causes and the significance requires first a brief account of a few fundamental sociological concepts and a few historical facts.

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

By "adolescence" is meant in everyday speech a certain age, characterized by biological and psychological properties, and consequently, all persons of that age. Among these properties, those connected with puberty are so much in the foreground that all other properties which are counted as typically adolescent are regarded as mere accompanying phenomena and in any case as a natural expression of the individual's biological age.

Sociologists have shown this to be at least partially correct, by showing the so-called "ages of man" to be primarily social

classifications: Different cultures and times adopt different principles of division. Each society makes use of a classification into age groups which appears "natural" to it and assigns to each age group a certain conduct and certain ideals and properties, or in sociological language, attributes a "role" to it. There are age roles, as there are, say, professional roles, family roles and social roles. Normally, a role expresses not only what the environment expects of the bearer of the role, but also what he expects of himself. Even though, subjectively, the experience of conflict may predominate in the individual's experience, objectively, society rests precisely on the fact that, translated into simple and rational terms, everyone does after all will what he shall.² Sociologists usually refer to this fact when they observe that roles are normally internalized.

This is not to belittle the importance of presocial facts. The physical immaturity of the child, the puberty of the adolescent and the debility of the aged are constants which a social classification into age groups cannot overlook. Just as little can the natural order of psychological development be reversed by social fiat. An adolescent cannot be assigned attributes which presuppose personal experience. But even though biological facts and the irreversibility of the experience of the world impose limits on the division into social types, they constitute no more than general tendencies which can be realized in a variety of concrete phenomena and can, moreover, be fitted into different contexts of sense and function. Thus the use made by a society of these tendencies in laying down the age roles, constitutes the cultural achievement proper.

But social facts themselves impose limits on the variability of age groups. Every society must continually bequeath its cultural heritage to future generations. Thus the early phases of life serve everywhere to accustom the child to culture and society. This process, known as "socialization," is extremely

² This is the basis of the dream of the golden age, whose classical formulation is Ovid's *vindice nullo, sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat*. As to the question whether the element of constraint is less pronounced in less complex societies, which anthropologists have been debating in a sceptical frame of mind, it should be noted that it is not the constraint itself, but the manner in which it is felt, which counts.

subtle, complicated and fundamental. For it is not just a matter of knowledge, abilities and ways of acting, but of norms, ideas, values, feelings and aspirations, as expected of the child in different spheres of life and in his intercourse with bearers of different roles. What the child learns must, moreover, be internalized and become habitual. He must not so much identify himself with it, as be identified with it. It is therefore with his birth that the formation of his behavior begins, through encouragement or discouragement of his reactions. An inner structure is thus gradually raised, which we call "person." For the new-born *is* not, but becomes, a person. And a person is not the result of an automatic process of maturation, but of lengthy and complicated social learning. Even the material substrate of this process is extremely complicated, consisting as it were of the realization, spread over many years, of a neurological program, that of the laying, bundling and switching of nerve fibers in thousands of ways, so that the feelings, ideas, motor abilities and aspirations will be differentiated, combined, frustrated and integrated, taking into account the natural and social environment. Only thus can the undirected, formless and disconnected actions and reactions of the infant be converted into the structure of a person. And since a person is a product of social learning, every man acquires the type of personality peculiar to his culture, which is not only in content but even in structure a peculiar combination of feelings, aspirations and ideas.³

Thus age roles are elements of a system. This is why they can only be properly understood in the context of the entire classification into age groups. For every age role presupposes an understanding of the remaining and complementary age roles within that classification. And since everyone must run through all age groups, each earlier age role must prepare him for the later ones, so as to assure an unhindered transition from the earlier to the later. This systematic connection obviously sets a limit to the proper development of each single age role.

It is also very important to keep in mind a circumstance

³ This notion is not to be confused with the more concrete, but also more dubious, notion of a national character, which is attuned to constitutive elements rather than to structural constitution.

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that is often neglected, namely, that children and adolescents are potential deviants to the extent that their socialization is not yet completed. Their impulses and expectations are not fully integrated either with one another or in relation to the culture. Thus, children and adolescents are open to anything new, as witnessed by their fondness for innovations, their part in revolutions, and their readiness in cases of contact with a foreign culture. They contain, by nature, the potential of a society for mutation. Successful socialization thus demands constant influence, and thus, certain forms of dependence.⁴

Finally, the nature of socialization lays down an ideal tendency for the earlier phases. The innocence of the child rests partly on his exclusion from the adult world, and partly on the weight that must be placed early in his life on ideal requirements. This trait becomes even more pronounced in the adolescent, because he must now learn, no longer only the ideal requirements for individual action, but the ideal self-knowledge of his culture. Social learning, too, develops in a natural order. The particular precedes the general. It is only in the later phase of socialization that the entire culture justifies its existence by implanting in the adolescent its fundamental principles and its ideals; and it does this in a compact way, in the form, as it were (and as is done quite literally in certain cultures untutored in the art of writing), of a summing up prior to the declaration of social maturity. This normal tendency can in certain circumstances appear in the guise of idealism, which has so frequently been observed in adolescents, and which is largely the reflection of the expectations heaped by society on the adolescent in the course of his socialization.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Every society has always made some provisions for the special conditions of youth, insofar as this was necessary and possible. And an adolescent role with some special rights and duties

⁴ Nothing can in general be said about the nature of this dependence, for the mode of dependency may be authoritarian as well as democratic.

constitutes no exception. In most cases, this role is simply a modification of the adult role, and the conception of a separate age group, independent of the adult, and with its own essential tasks and characteristics, is completely missing. A child is normally admitted to the adult group when he attains sexual maturity, and may encounter finer but internal differences within that group. Adolescence is thus really a novel phenomenon.⁵

There is a view common among laymen, but also frequently accepted by sociologists and sometimes even built by them into a system, which incidentally was a commonplace even among the philosophers of the eighteenth century. According to this view, adolescence is to be looked upon as the result of a delayed assumption of adult roles. It is true that whereas formerly a child was usually able to absorb the culture of his society by the time he had reached complete physical maturity, and was then ready for his adult role, the division of labor began as early as the beginning of the modern era to delay the process of socialization beyond sexual maturity. It is thus an analytical truism that adolescence does not appear without a delay in socialization. But by no means does it follow from this that

⁵ Compare this, as well as the general introduction, with H. Plessner, "Het Problem der Generaties," in Groenman, Heere and Vercruijsse (eds.), *Het Sociale Leven in al zijn Facetten*, part I, Assen, 1958.

In addition, this essay is based implicitly on the following systematic presuppositions: Adolescence as a social phenomenon appears wherever the structural growth of society exceeds considerably the confines of the family and of the group related by blood or marriage, and calls thus for special institutions of socialization, which make inevitable the formation of homogeneous age groups. This is to be distinguished from the case in which special historical reasons lead to the assignment of definite functions to the adolescent group. Here, the division into groups does not follow necessarily from the structural complexity of society. This case is illustrated by warrior states like Sparta and by certain African tribes. A third form of adolescence is to be found where the internal structure of the family blocks the way to the succession of the generations. Since the division into groups is not inevitable in this case, this is not a proper form. Mixed forms are, of course, perfectly normal.

This essay deals only with the first form, of which contemporary adolescence is a clear case. The origin of this adolescence is, incidentally, sketched here against the background of European history. This is justified by the fact that contemporary adolescence is the result of an incessant structural growth of society, and that this growth is shown in its most consequential and paradigmatic form in the rise of the industrial society, with its division of labor, in Europe.

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the behavior and condition of adolescents is to be explained as a consequence of this delay, and thus of the divergence between physical and social maturity. The weakness of this theory is shown by the fact that it is a generalization from the individual adolescent whose "natural" desire for a family and gainful employment finds no quick satisfaction. The underlying psychology of wish-fulfilment reveals the ideological imprisonment of the theory. The sociologically decisive fact that adolescence is a social group, or rather exists in the form of many and various overlapping groups, is sacrificed in the attempt to derive the phenomena to be explained from conscious desires, found in the individual adolescent.⁶

Such groups arising from situations common to many individuals, are of course sociologically far from irrelevant. The discovery of childhood, which preceded historically the crystallization of adolescence and was closely connected with it, provides an instructive example of age patterning from identical situations. Indeed, childhood has by no means always or everywhere been regarded as a separate phase of life with its own moral and emotional values. It may seem that observation of the obvious distinguishing features of the child must lead to the current positive view of childhood. How little it must, is shown by the European middle ages which lacked any feeling for a separate world of childhood. A child was conceived of as an adult whose immaturity still kept him from acting in an adult manner. This is even shown in paintings where a child is represented as an adult in miniature. The aim of education was an early imitation of adult behavior, and children shared without restriction the adult world of work and amusement. It was only in the beginning of the modern era that a child was granted special tasks, feelings, abilities and dreams, and thus isolated, either wholly or in part, from the adult world. This positive conception of childhood is essentially the result of social forces.

The urban family of the late Middle Ages was becoming

⁶ The thesis of delayed socialization has many adherents in America. This is partly explained by the myth of early economic independence, which was created in America's agricultural past where it could come true under conditions of unlimited supply of virgin land, and carried over successfully to the industrial present where it was even strengthened.

relatively small, having left the larger group related by blood or marriage to which the rural family still belonged. The marriage roles were now no longer overwhelmingly defined from the outside, by the continuous expectations of the community in which the partners lived or worked, but had to be stabilized from the inside, by the personal relations between the partners. This is expressed historically in the emphasis of the middle-class family on feelings. More important, the children were relieved of the burden of concrete realities. In an agrarian society, a child has an immediate value as a bread-winner, which he loses under urban conditions. Instead of being claimed primarily by things, he is claimed by persons. The importance of this fact should not be underestimated, especially not since the child becomes at the same time free for a continuous and exclusive contact with his parent, which makes it possible to establish dominant personal and emotional ties. Only in such a relationship does the child find room to develop his own nature. What we call "child" nowadays is thus the result of an identical situation and its effect upon the consciousness and personality of individuals.

This change remained, however, confined because the unburdening of the child had to give way in the later years of his childhood to the customary apprenticeship, which threw him back into the realities of adult life. The further extension of childhood must therefore be traced back to a different circumstance, and this was the division of children into homogeneous groups when they entered school. Schools divided according to age had been unknown to the middle ages.⁷ This is also one of the roots of adolescence. But the problem shifts here onto different ground, because it is no longer a matter of identical effects upon individuals, but of groups.

As long as the child remains exclusively within the family group, there is no room for adolescence in the proper sense of the word to arise. Only when the social structure makes it possible for young people to form direct ties among themselves, can they develop by themselves a common awareness, and among themselves firmly-rooted common properties. Such relationships become necessary wherever the structure of society considerably

⁷ Cf. Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale*, Paris, 1960.

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exceeds family and blood relationships, so that the process of socialization can no longer be completed within the family. This is the case in labor-dividing societies. The division of labor was already sufficiently pronounced during the middle ages to necessitate a few institutionalized contacts among young people, *e.g.* among students and apprentices, which promptly led to the appearance of some adolescent phenomena. But these remained confined in extent as well as kind, partly because such groups were built immediately into associations of different ages, as apprentices were built into the household and the family of the master, and partly because their members remained of fairly different ages, as was the case with students. Only the school which was divided into homogeneous age groups began at the beginning of the modern era to bring young people of the same age and in sufficient numbers together in continuous and institutionalized contact. This further relief from the claims of the adult world enabled the young to show in their relations with contemporaries tendencies specific to their age, and to cast these tendencies into fixed forms. Such tendencies could not develop earlier, when young people were associated with others of different ages, and when they could not even become aware of the possibility of such tendencies. This gain in social freedom was all the greater because adults now learned to see children and adolescents divided into age groups. This led educators to devise special teaching methods and distribute the material according to age, while adults in general were led to recognize adolescence as a separate phase and specific state. Finally, adolescents had to develop norms and customs to regulate their own relationships. Thus adolescence was created, beyond its earlier beginnings, as a number of small groups with their own awareness, their own views, attitudes, norms and expectations. And adolescents were recognized as a separate group, when certain tasks and characteristics specific to their age were attributed to them by the adults.

This is, nevertheless, only one of the origins of adolescence. In a way, it produced only the negative form of adolescence: The contact between adolescents, institutionalized by society for certain purposes, created a group life with its own nature and specific manners only as an accidental by-product. Insofar and

as long as adolescents as a group were separated from the adults, their group life served only their own purposes and had no function for society as a whole. Since this group life went beyond the purposes of mental, moral and practical education, for which adolescent contacts had been institutionalized, and beyond the recognition of a limited independence implicit in this institutionalization, it was regarded by the adults as improper and concealed from them by the adolescents. But this first form of adolescence came to be covered up and thus even transformed by further social changes. The product of these changes could be called the positive form of adolescence, because adolescent activity and society entered now into a positive union. Historically, this is reflected in the fact that "adolescence" became a topic only in the second half of the eighteenth century.

This other origin of youth is to be found in a change in socialization. In a labor-dividing society, a young man must prepare himself not only for his occupation, but also for a social environment unknown to him at least in its concrete and specific details. Where he could formerly grow into his father's occupation without having to give up his childish or adolescent group life, he must now anticipate in his imagination the group life of his future occupational and personal groups. These differ from any of his previous groups not only in their personal and occupational requirements; they are also distinguished by their professional ethics, class norms, regional peculiarities, religion, social insight, forms of prestige, and morals. To see in the development of formal education nothing but the components of occupational training would be to take a much too narrow view of it. It is suggestive that with the increasing industrialization, the weight of European education began around 1800 to shift to the formation of an "all-round person," whereas the eighteenth century had still been content with practical preparation. This is by no means a romantic paradox of the history of ideas, which could be removed by the convenient formula of "cultural lag," but a necessary social consequence. The growing mobility and heterogeneity of society had rendered the older form of socialization obsolete which had been accomplished by family, community and trade school. In a society whose structures had grown far beyond family and community, social-

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ization was indeed a difficult task. How difficult, can be seen alone from the flood of writings on social ethics, which had been needed even in previous centuries with their still limited mobility, to help bridge the gap between formation by family and community on the one hand, and life in a larger society on the other, whether at court or in other circles.

Two general requirements arise, functionally speaking, under these conditions. First, an ideal self-image is needed which would permit socialization to take place above regional differences and independent of the class structure. Such an image must be general in nature, and thus lie as it were on a more abstract level of integration. As long as the adolescent and the adult phases run off in essentially the same social group, socialization is tailored to recurrent situations, foreseeable in concrete detail, and finds therefore sufficient justification in custom and tradition. But where the future occupations, social positions and places of residence of the young are as different as they are unknown, socialization must aim at general situations. The natural consequence, illustrated in detail by European history, is the replacement of fixed traditions of behavior by general principles and ideals of behavior.⁸

In the second place, such an image must be effectively internalized. Lacking the power of conviction that belongs to a concrete paradigm handed down habitually and directly, it is predominantly ideal and abstract in character. Since it can only be experienced in the imagination, it needs to be internalized

⁸ D. Riesman, in *The Lonely Crowd*, Yale University Press, 1950, has grasped this, but only on the descriptive level. It has not been sufficiently observed to what extent the intellectual movements of the modern era, and especially of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were rooted in the disturbances entailed by the structural growth of society beyond traditional forms of life. The need for a new way of stabilizing life by means of an ideal paradigm, dictated by the functional demands of the social conditions, can be shown by biographical as well as textual evidence to be behind a great many of those intellectual achievements. It is plain that the need for intellectual stabilization must have been especially urgent in Germany, where lack of national and cultural unity did not even allow of such national standardization of behavior as was to be found in England or France. Here is the social clue to an understanding of many facets of German intellectual history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and among others, of such unmistakable phenomena as the *Bildungsroman* and the fondness for historical paradigms.

more deeply. This is all the more necessary as mobility and heterogeneity now also make the social control of behavioral conformity more difficult. A deep internalization of an ideal can only be achieved by means of imaginative penetration and identification. This presupposes that the adolescent be unburdened of the immediate realities of adult life; for their claims would make the process of internalization psychologically impossible, and their demands conflict by their content with any ideal paradigm because they always call for practical attitudes and for compromises. Such unburdening must include a partial freeing of the adolescent, not from general values, but from concrete formation by parents and other agents of socialization. The adolescent must not cling to their particular patterns, but must become free for a general self-image and thus for life in a larger society.

Only at this point does the social function of the new phase of life become visible.⁹ What physiological and psychological tendencies impart to adolescents, what institutional separation into homogeneous age groups lends to them of common and specific properties, what discipline and education according to age add to this, and what delayed assumption of adult roles may contribute; all this does not yet amount to what we are accustomed to calling "adolescence" in the proper sense of the word. Only the new form of socialization that has been hinted at effects the change, comparable to the discovery of childhood, whereby adolescence comes to be recognized as a phase of life with its own tasks. Adolescence is then no longer merely the result of a delayed assumption of adult roles, which is demanded by the economic organization of society in the interest of occupational training, and which produces as an undesired by-product novel forms of social intercourse within the homogeneous age

⁹ For reasons of space, the positive form of youth has only been developed here from the point of view of its function. This method, which is of course historically inadmissible, may be excused because we are still only concerned to prepare the argument. In this connection, a word about S. N. Eisenstadt's brilliant book, *From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and Social Structure*, London, 1956, might not be out of place. This publication, which is indispensable for a serious treatment of the problem, suffers from the central weakness of unmitigated functionalism: It thinks it can derive social and historical facts from social requirements.

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groups. To this delay is added a comprehensive positive task. And a new type of adolescent comes into existence.

The decisive factor is the relief from concrete everyday exigencies. The adolescent must adopt an ideal in such a way that he can make decisions of his own in unforeseeable contingencies and in any social group, and still conform to the social norms. Since he must in the long run live in a sense on his own, he must be shaped more thoroughly. And this requires a longer preparation by means of isolation, partly real and partly imaginative, from the adult world. His unburdening, effected by separation in the schools, acquires thus a higher function. But if the example of his father or other patterns of behavior taken from his own age group are replaced by a general internalized ideal when his socialization is completed, his view of life will change in perspective. Where the individual could formerly concern himself only with the question whether an individual action was right or proper, he comes now to be confronted with the problem of how to unify the conduct of his life while keeping it close to the ideal. The responsibility for building a unified life out of a sum of individual actions falls now to the individual. Life begins to be viewed as a whole and, in this perspective, to be endowed with an identity. It is precisely this imaginative anticipation of life as a whole which forms part of the traditional concept of adolescence. Thus adolescence assumes, in the self-knowledge of the adolescent, the character of a separate phase of life, whose task is to prepare him internally for adulthood. The problem of the generations does not properly appear till this view of life (though not necessarily its translation into fact) becomes habitual with the adolescent. Where it may formerly have been a question of how much freedom adolescents could attain for their own group life, the new form of socialization leaves no doubt that adolescents have the right to a life and to social aspirations of their own.

CAUSES

There is no need to prove that contemporary adolescence is no longer an instance of this type. Its lack of an inner adult ideal shows up only too clearly in its life which is devoted to concrete

things. Contemporary adolescence represents instead a novel type, whose causes are to be sought primarily among the conditions of its existence.

To begin with, the importance of the adolescent group has increased enormously. Since training has been lengthened in all areas, the adolescent is exposed for a longer time to tendencies within his own age group. Since adolescents remain together for a longer period of time, these tendencies have a better chance to harden into fixed forms of group life. Since groups have become larger and more heterogeneous, their members have less of a chance to introduce paternal or adult forms into them. There arises a strong pressure towards social forms that have gained currency in all adolescent groups.

Moreover, these groups have multiplied. Countless formal and informal organizations have been added to the groupings of school-mates or friends: Organizations supported by the state, the community and other public agencies; youth movements and associations; the transitory or permanent groupings created by the activities of amusement or leisure. Altogether this adds up to an enormous amount of time spent with the same age group. Here, too, mobility and heterogeneity exert a pull in the direction of universal forms specific to each age.

What is also new is the growth of secondary structures, that is, of associations organized for practical purposes in government, business, industry and other public sectors. Earlier, the adolescent found himself confined to so-called "primary groups" (family, friends, acquaintances), in which a few people engaged in a personal interchange embracing all areas of life. Even school was experienced as a primary group, though it was in reality a secondary and purposive organization. Schools with numerically limited enrolment, and close contact between parents and teachers, allowed the student to experience school as almost an extension of his home, and the teacher in a small class as a person. Any education beyond primary school remained a personal achievement of the family. Nowadays, teachers and schools are visibly tools of society; it is by means of them that society becomes the devoted and caring guardian of the adolescent. State and society directly enable him to obtain a higher education, if only by imposing an unwritten obligation on his parents. In addition,

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the most diverse organizations of government, parties, unions and other public institutions assume the function of caring for the adolescent, usually through special departments. Economic and cultural activities continue this specialization by also addressing adolescents as a group. Thus the adolescent is continually isolated as a member of a group, both in reality and in his consciousness, by commands and prohibitions, advancement and education, services, programs, goods, care and counseling; and those responsible for his isolation are no longer adults related to the groups to which he belongs, but functionaries of organizations and anonymous services. His consciousness is not moulded by membership in small groups which have a social niche to exist in, though no right to a public place of their own, but by membership in a universal group of adolescents which is recognized as a social partner. Adolescence becomes a community of interests, which is allowed to make use of informal means of assuring its own interests, as well as to form organizations of its own for that purpose, complete with apparatus and functionaries. Adolescence can no longer be experienced as a particular phase of life, where adolescent self-consciousness develops in a context of structural stabilization of its manifold groupings, and of partnership with the secondary systems of society. One becomes aware of being young, not through personal experience of confrontation with an adult, but through membership in a group. Adolescence becomes thus a stationary state which lacks any tasks of its own.

Moreover, the adolescent is set free by the groups whose members vary in age. The contemporary family is not tied to relatives by a common place of residence, and hardly by communication with them. The generation of the grand-parents is missing in this isolation. Since the roles of the parents become even more intimate, the parents lose their status as members of the older generation. The relations between the generations turn into diffuse emotional ties of an individual nature, and all the more so, as the family has at least in part lost its function in important areas (education, leisure, religion, gain). The adolescent is expected to adapt emotionally to the given situation, in a way which shows hardly any traits specific to his age. Levelling of differences between the generations and companionship take the

place of division into age groups. This tendency is facilitated by the decrease in the average age of the parents.¹⁰ Since the parents, too, have been released from the chain of the generations, they themselves show juvenile traits. But even outside the family, the adolescent hardly encounters the adult. Teachers, superiors at work, ministers, remain at the distance of secondary relations, because the social scope of the family is too narrow to include them. It is not even wide enough to enable the parents to supervise the activities of the adolescent, where occupational demands do not make this impossible in the first place. Social intercourse between adolescents has ceased to take place within the tight net of family relationships, and cannot therefore become an object of exchange between the parents. Thus here, too, the adolescent loses the model and the mirror of adult life. This condition is reflected in the fact that the contemporary family socializes children "away from itself" and towards society. Success in social life, and not immersion in the family and its values, defines the horizon of education. The definition of the end, the choice of the means, and the responsibility, are left increasingly to the adolescent. Freedom from groups whose members vary in age, and gains in the structural independence of age groups, complement each other to give modern adolescence a high degree of independence.

Adolescents gain in this way an almost unlimited access to the concrete reality of the adult world. The areas of sex and gain, adult activities of entertainment, amusement and leisure, and most fundamentally, even the use of the material culture, are open to the adolescent. The conditions are created partly by early forms of economic independence, partly by the many forms of care, and partly by his own initiative. This access is widened by the means of communication which help the adolescent to participate, if not in the reality of adult spheres of life, then at least in their semblance. To the extent that social-

¹⁰ It has been predicted that in the United States, the decreasing age of marriage and early birth of children will result by 1980 in the fact that a child will be independent and ready to go out into the world by the time his parents are forty years old. This implies that the child will have practically no contact with persons over 35 years of age. Nevertheless, this development seems to be welcomed without any misgivings whatsoever.

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ization is not yet completed, adolescents are put in a position to use the adult culture selectively for their own purposes. But life cannot be carried on in a social vacuum, without stress on goals, patterns of action, expectations and norms. The natural result is that adolescents assume the task of regulating all areas of reality by fixed norms. They have to develop their own values, attitudes, customs and norms if they are not to perish in the exploration of the adult world and its unlimited potentialities. Adolescence thus rises to the rank of a subculture. It is precisely through their structural independence that adolescents are led to form the potentially uniform group that they constitute nowadays.

The sociological causes are now visible in outline. The decisive factors are structural independence and isolation from the adults, participation in society as a whole and recognition by it, and unlimited access to adult realities instead of relief from their burdens. These causes combine to produce a thorough moulding of the adolescent by his own subculture. Accordingly, the adolescent looks upon himself as a member of a group which has attained an equal and independent status next to the adult. Since adolescence is no longer a wayside station on the road of life, the differences between adolescents and adults shrink to external and accidental features. This is why the adolescent thinks of his elders as enjoying greater independence, as shown especially in their occupational and marital roles. Adolescence must appear to him as a mere delay in social maturity, whose benefits he enjoys anyway in the form of substitutes. However, the integration of adolescents into society has in reality accelerated. Compared with the nineteenth century, economic independence and the age of marriage are attained earlier. But even in comparison with previous centuries, it is at least misleading to speak categorically of delayed integration, in view of the fact that considerable portions of the adult population either never attained the economic independence that makes marriage and a family possible, or won it only as a conditional right to use their parents' resources as long as the parents were still alive. The rise and development of adolescence is explained not by the undeniable divergence between sexual and social maturity, but by the formation of adolescent groups. Only in

this way can we understand why integration into family and occupation no longer means the end of adolescence. The adolescent moulded by his own groups is hardly endowed with dispositions which would allow him to change quickly into the adult state. He retains his ties to his contemporaries, his dependence on their world, and the habits of their subculture, for an exceedingly long time. And he remains all the more isolated at work from his older colleagues as here, too, the utilitarian organization of modern occupational life disguises the adult behind his function.

SOCIALIZATION

What becomes, under these conditions, of the function of socialization? Does the high degree of independence allow the adolescent to be completely integrated in society? It should be noted here, first of all, that the occupational structure has become largely independent of the person of the employee. Occupations may be learned, taught, assigned and performed with little regard to attitudes and views in other spheres of life. The continuation of the occupational structure is assured at least at this level, and the remaining integration of the adolescent irrelevant. But the other roles must, of course, also be learnt if the individual is to function in society, or if society itself is to function. To be a husband, father, guardian, club member, bank customer, citizen, consumer, member of a class or religious community or party, requires widespread knowledge and deep-seated attitudes.

The decisive fact that the essentials of such adult roles are no longer learnt in the family, is the starting-point for a sociology of the family and youth.¹¹ Due to the structural growth of society beyond the family, there is not even an alternative. The family is left with little more to do than socialize the child

¹¹ The best longer discussions of contemporary adolescence are to be found in P. H. Landis, *Adolescence and Youth*, New York, 1952, and H. Schelsky, *Die skeptische Generation*, Düsseldorf, 1957. It should be noted that in each case we are dealing with an analysis of adolescence in a certain country. For a more general treatment, see Parsons and Bales, *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process*, Glencoe, Illinois, 1955. This work also contains some evidence for the thesis that the contemporary family socializes "away from itself."

by teaching him the elementary lesson of how to master his body, language, impulses and wishes. It is true that, beyond this, the child acquires general orientations and motivations, expectations and knowledge, which set the frame for his later life. But on the whole, it must be said that adult roles are no longer learnt in the family. This is at once obvious in the case of roles that presuppose special knowledge (*e.g.* occupational roles) or demand a systematic initiation. It is also clear in the case of roles played in secondary systems: These roles demand objective and impersonal behavior for which the child is not prepared by his intimate and emotional relations in the family. But it is significant that the family can no longer form decisively the child's comprehension of primary roles (*e.g.* marital and friendship roles).

To this negative observation should be added the positive insight that the socialization of the adolescent is accomplished nowadays in adolescent groups and by their subculture. This is clearly the case for special roles which have to be learnt in groups connected with secondary structures. Thus roles in religious communities or political parties are learnt today largely in and through special youth groups organized by these institutions. More important is the fact that the adolescent subculture forms the general comprehension of roles. This is not to overlook that different educational institutions contribute to the socialization of the adolescent, along with personal experience and the information offered by radio, technical books, cinema, television, novels and magazines, on the free market of realities. But all knowledge and attitudes acquired in these ways are subject ultimately to the interpretation and legislation of adolescence as a group and a subculture. This certainly serves a purpose, since without social support and a mirror, the adolescent could not master the boundless reality put within his reach. He needs values, norms, orientations, attitudes and habits to encourage and to justify his behavior in the face of this reality. The usurpation of adult areas of life goes functionally together with the introduction of norms into these areas. Thus access to adult realities goes together with the rise of a subculture. Without morals, customs, habits and values of his own, and without a social background and a mirror, the adolescent would remain helpless in the face of the realities open to him.

There is one item that should be specially emphasized among all the knowledge, information, orientations, motivations, habits, attitudes, expectations, conceptions and connections transmitted to the adolescent either directly or indirectly by his subculture. As indicated, the majority of adult roles are performed in connection with secondary structures. The knowledge of the tasks required for this is acquired through education and experience. But the roles are not exhausted by the tasks assigned to them. In concrete situations, they also include relations between persons. This becomes clear in the case of occupational roles, where the assignment of tasks according to plan is not enough to regulate the relations between the bearers of the roles. There always remain questions of prestige, cooperation, of having one's way. Right here, and not in the tasks to be assigned, lie the fundamental difficulties presented by roles in secondary systems. And it is here that the adolescent group is by its nature in a position to prepare the adolescent. This is done partly through the ramifications of the group into secondary systems. More important perhaps, the inner structure of adolescent groups encourages those very relationships that are typical of secondary systems. The potentially universal nature of the group, its size and mobility, its inevitable lack of a permanent distribution of status, and the equally inevitable fickle and fashion-conscious nature of its subculture, all go against personal relations between friends and promote instead shallow and indiscriminate contacts. Frequent social intercourse with numerous and frequently changing contemporaries leads to an oversocialization, which develops the ability to get along with everybody and to show the right face to each. It instils in this way the general attitudes and opinions that are so typical nowadays in secondary systems.

We will thus have to get used to the idea that the socialization of the adolescent has turned into self-socialization. The home ceases to be a bridge into society and becomes instead a dead end. No longer does the child grow into society through a gradual extension (and, of course, resultant modification) of the ties and relations between him and his parents and relatives, as illustrated by the common "uncle"-relation to outsiders. The narrow social scope of the family makes this impossible. Instead, the adolescent groups serve the child as stepping-stones into

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society. They prepare him for important social structures, convey knowledge, views and attitudes to him, and pave his way to the realities that have become accessible to him. This road into the adult world does not, however, lead to a rupture with the parental generation. Whereas only a short while ago an adolescent had to break away from the confines of his family to gain the knowledge and experience which he needed for his future life, or thought he needed, this appears to be no longer typical for the developed form of the industrial society. Even children are nowadays set partly free by the family, and given immediate access to some areas of social and adult life. It is well known how early children and adolescents "know the facts of life," and even create to that extent the impression of being grown up. The family recognizes this in principle by socializing children "away from itself." It is thus typical of modern society that to the socialization of the child in the family is superimposed at an early stage a socialization from outside which is essentially effected and directed by adolescent groups. While a child will inevitably experience subjective difficulties in the early phase of adolescence, this must not be allowed to obscure the fact that there is a fundamental continuity in his integration into society. If adolescents do not really revolt any longer against their elders, the reason is that this is no longer necessary. The structural independence of adolescence assures them a continuous initiation into society. The extension of the adolescent phase into the later phase of childhood is an expression of this continuity. Even the child, and increasingly the adolescent, find that the ways that lead into society without leading through the family are well paved.

Participation in homogeneous age groups is then at present typical of the early phases of life. These groups are tied up with society in two ways: On the one hand, to the extent that they have free access to real life, partly through the information handed out to them, and partly through their usurpation of adult areas of life; and on the other hand, to the extent that children and adolescents are directly claimed by society through its various institutions and organizations. This claim may in the extreme case assume the form of the state youth, familiar from totalitarian countries. But such a claim is also made in Western countries,

where it goes beyond purely educational institutions and includes the various organizations of the state, parties, business and culture, as well as many other associations which aim especially at the adolescent. Modern society cannot in principle give up this claim. It is by their ties with society that adolescent groups develop the direction and the continuity, which give to their influence on the adolescent the character of socialization into the roles of adult society.

PERSON

To what extent will such a form of socialization have to lead to social changes? This question of the significance of contemporary adolescence for society as a whole is easily obscured by the obvious fact that adolescents have to assume adult roles whether they want to or not. In view of this fact, the difficulties which every new generation creates for itself, for older generations and for society, appear to reduce to recurrent but always temporary crises. Even if it is granted that this form of socialization leads necessarily to changes in some roles, the concept of a role is little suited for grasping changes in many roles in a single direction, or the whole significance of such changes. The concept of a person, though far more difficult, presents itself at this point as a far more suitable means of conceptualization.

We can start here with the simple consideration that many properties show a certain age distribution. Some properties can only be acquired after others are secured. They can therefore only be had at a certain age. Now it is clear that in modern society, the properties specific to the higher age groups are progressively lost. Since adults are excluded from the world of children and adolescents, examples of adult behavior are simply missing. Where they are present, they cannot become fully effective because of the structural independence of youth and the narrow social scope of the primary groups. But it is not only the properties of the higher age groups that are lost in this way. The properties of the lower age groups also lose the depth and strength they had when they were links in a chain of properties characteristic of each age. The exclusion of the later phases of life represents a fundamental breakdown of the system of age

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groups, which can only function as a whole when its component roles and properties are attuned to one another. Social groups are now being formed which show only a minimum of orientation towards one another. Behavior comes to be determined increasingly and of necessity by the earlier age groups. The puerile character of modern society, which was mentioned in the beginning, follows from the social exclusion of the later age groups which leaves the earlier ones free to socialize themselves.

It is not only the properties proper of the age groups that are thus lost. With them disappear the characteristic marks that distinguish different roles in a society divided into age groups. As long as a role is learnt through continuous adaptation to the adults, it reveals its implications for the whole of life and for the entire person. It has a place and a function in the course of the learner's life, and significant ties with other areas of life. Such higher-order functions and formations extending over the entire person are lost when a role is no longer rehearsed in the presence of the adult, but as it were copied from him. Roles are then reduced to their technical requirements, and can no longer go beyond what is immediately given here and now. Not only do they lose their deeper values in this way; they are also isolated from one another. This reduction yields a mechanism of drives which is dependent of the situation, and devoid of a deeper order for the roles to enter in.

If we apply this to the structure of the person, we shall have to speak of a lowering of its level. For a person is not a mere juxtaposition of properties, as little as society is an aggregate of roles, or culture a sum of elements. Everywhere we find texture, coordination, organization, and in short, structure. There are thus different degrees of organization of the personality.¹² Anthropologists have shown in a dramatic way that the

¹² The social sciences have been reluctant to acknowledge this inevitable consequence, for understandable reasons. It is true that its acknowledgement might easily lead to evaluations of which the distinction between "primitive" and "civilized" peoples is still remembered as an unfortunate example. It is also worth noting that the structure of a person has so many dimensions, whose relative importance is not easily evaluated, that it is virtually impossible to apply this concept in a comparison of individual cultures. On the other hand, this concept can very well be used in speaking of single stages of a culture or of

organization of the personality depends on the roles attributed to the child or adolescent in the early phases of his life. The number of these roles, their differentiation, complexity and fixation, all play a part in this process. In the light of these investigations, the reduction of roles to the immediate and the concrete, and their isolation from one another, signify a decrease in the structural complexity of the person. Since different roles do not add up any longer to a comprehensive perspective, for lack of significant ties between the roles, the personality created by socialization loses in structure. This can be seen for example by examining the contents of the personality. Feelings and conceptions cannot be differentiated to a sufficient extent or in a durable manner, because the contacts with contemporaries are relatively fleeting, impersonal and without depth, and relatively uniform, and the contemporaries themselves can show only little differentiation. For the same reasons, the feelings and conceptions cannot be sufficiently integrated. There is no room for more complex contents to arise which would be more clearly differentiated as well as ordered and unified. The same thing can also be seen by examining the substrate of the mechanism of drives, where highly complicated reactions must be relayed and made automatic by being made habitual, so that external actions and inner states, purposes, conceptions and impulses are so effectively stabilized, frustrated, differentiated, modified, superimposed and integrated that they constitute a personal mechanism of action. In either case, it is a matter of erecting an organized structure which would overcome the dependence of the system of action on given situations. But more highly organized structures can only arise where small and stable groups shape and differentiate the relations between adolescents and adults. Only here is the context of action enriched by the meanings and shaped by the values it needs, and only thus can the mechanism of ac-

general types of culture which are suitably formed. For similar views, see A. Gehlen, *Die Seele im technischen Zeitalter*, Hamburg, 1957, especially p. 58 ff. On the connection between socialization and organization of the personality, which is mentioned below, see especially M. Mead, "Age Patterning in Personality Development," in D. G. Haring (eds.), *Personal Character and Cultural Milieu*, Syracuse University Press, 1948, in addition to the specific discussions of this topic.

tion find enough relief from the immediate demands of the situation.¹³ The structural level of the personality will therefore come to be lowered, compared with its former level. Hand in hand with the oversocialization of the adolescent who is subjected at an early age to the varied but undifferentiated, fleeting and shallow influences of homogeneous age groups, and to the demands of real life, equipped only with the minimum of social forms, goes his undersocialization as a person.

Observers from all over the world, whether psychologists, educators, psychiatrists or sociologists, are all agreed on this. For the extreme cases, which are becoming more numerous, they are in the habit of using such terms as "shallow," "empty," "without a backbone" and "driven by impulse." These terms describe the turn to the extreme that adolescent forms of behavior have taken, as a result of a deficient socialization of the person. Similar phenomena are also known for children. Delayed readiness for school, lack of concentration, blind impulsiveness, emotional poverty and moral turpitude are all on the increase. This should be another lesson for the sociologist not to treat youth as a separate phase of life. What is characteristic of youth is on the one hand, its exclusion from the sequence of ages that culminates in adulthood, and on the other, its inclusion in society beginning even with the child. Adolescence begins nowadays even before the first step in socialization has been taken, that is, before the fundamental task of shaping the child's personality is completed. Not even here is there time for imposing the cultural forms which used to provide the framework for any conflict between the adolescent and the world. Independent relations to society begin already in the case of the child to obstruct and set aside the results of his early socialization. Childhood is therefore no longer a phase which is complete in itself. It anticipates the problems of the adolescent, as witnessed already by the acceleration of growth and puberty, which can be looked upon as answers to the challenges held out by real life insofar as it has become accessible. Thus puberty also loses its character as a

¹³ For related views, expressed in connection with the problem of learning a language, see P. Schrecker, "The Family: Conveyance of Tradition," in R. N. Anshen, *The Family: Its Function and Destiny*, New York, 1949.

decisive turning-point, a tendency which is underlined by the growing influence of adolescence on childhood.

We are thus dealing with deep-reaching changes which amount to a loss in differentiation and integration of the structure of the personality. The higher-order forms and connections are being demolished, and the more elementary parts of the system of action are thereby given a greater margin of vacillation and more independence. It is therefore not surprising that investigation has shown these changes to extend as far as the sensory awareness of children and adolescents. Apart from this, the significance of this change for such diverse areas as politics, family and education is easy to overlook in general, and difficult to specify in particular. Suffice it therefore here to turn up briefly another facet of the problem. Let us just observe that a large and probably predominant part of our cultural heritage, insofar as it exceeds mere knowledge or techniques concerning mastery over the environment, is inseparably connected with conceptions, attitudes and feelings which are either in themselves specific to higher age groups or can only be conceived or experienced by reference to these groups; and this is true not just of European culture. The elimination of properties specific to higher age groups is therefore equivalent to a loss of essential parts of our intellectual and human heritage. This is at once obvious in the case of our literary heritage, which meets increasingly with incomprehension and ineffectiveness. These are not to be explained by appealing to lack of interest or by reference to a historical gap. What is wrong is, rather, the absence of those prerequisites which would enable the contents to come to life. To be struck by literature and to take part in it presupposes that those regions of the soul where literature is at home be developed. The subjective limits of the realm of the real are set by what can be experienced as real. For a mechanism of drives, tied to given situations and devoid of more highly organized structures, reality shrinks to the here and now, which is the only reality that can be experienced by it. But it may be said quite generally that most of the more complicated thoughts and feelings, or even all structures and contents which are essentially mental, have very different dimensions, and demand in particular very different spatio-temporal perspectives before they

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can become personal possessions. They can acquire relevance only where they can be projected onto a life surveyed subjectively as a whole, or onto highly personal relations between individuals; and these transcend the immediate existence of the here and now.

CONCLUSION

Every author has the right to cast a final glance into the distance. To exercise this right, let me observe that during the last century a well-intentioned but ill-advised saying made the rounds of the globe. It was that the sciences of man had fallen behind the sciences of nature. The saying was well-meant because it drew attention to human affairs, but ill-advised because it disguised and justified the capital error of modern thought. The sciences concerned with man are expected to remove the evils we suffer from. But this is the way of all sick people who expect the doctor to cure them, but are not prepared to give up their habits. It is to eat the cake and have it, too. Thus the sociology of youth is also expected to give advice. And since there can be no scarcity of manifold connections in social life, every proposal, anywhere from sanitary installations to educational or welfare measures, can be supported by verifiable correlations. Sometimes it is only the symptoms that are cured, and sometimes one has to employ means that destroy the desired end. The latter must often be the case where the child or adolescent is to be effectively assisted by new institutionalized forms of help. By concentrating on the goal, one is bound to overlook that every institution of this kind will help to separate adolescents from adults and to weld adolescents together as a group. The price to be paid is at best a temporary success of such efforts.

We must therefore keep the nearest cause firmly in mind. And this is to be found purely and simply in the growing autonomy of economic activities, which promote in hundreds of ways the independence of children and adolescents, without giving them time to attain the degree of inner independence which would allow them to absorb their culture effectively. It is thus the early economic independence of the adolescent, gained only recently, which may be regarded as the fact that completes

his exclusion from the chain of age groups, since it alters his view of life and fixes it on that part of reality which can be immediately attained or experienced. Tocqueville recognized already in a small sample how important lack of continuity between the generations can be, and the respective importance of the economic order. He saw clearly that the idea of early economic independence which he found expressed in American laws concerning inheritance, would necessarily lead to a situation where, in many areas and especially in intellectual and personal matters, accumulation became difficult, social continuity was endangered, and every generation was forced to make a new beginning. But what was then an isolated idea has now turned into an all-inclusive fact. Lack of continuity between the generations is the fact, and the destruction of the person and the shrinking of the real that can be experienced are its consequences. Essential parts of history and of human achievement are threatened with loss.

Industrialization has irrevocably limited the social scope of the family, called adolescent groups into existence, and in both these ways given adolescence a structural independence. There is nothing to be done about these facts, which are not even in principle new. The problem comes only to a head when we turn to the fact that economic interests, irrespective of all others, and by exploiting the technical possibilities, present adolescents with the challenges and opportunities of the realities or pseudo-realities, and thereby furnish them with the contents of their radically independent subculture, as well as with the means for creating it. These economic interests include, in a broader sense, the psychology of wish-fulfilment, which is related to them by the priority it gives to economic aspects, and which raises the idea of a smooth and early initiation of the adolescent into adult roles to an acknowledged first principle. In this way, it gives a free hand to the various associations and organizations to compete for the adolescent; a competition which under these conditions can only be effectively engaged in if the temptations of real life are used as the weapon.

Where relief from the burdens of real life belongs thus to the past, and is yet essential for the rounding out of the youthful personality, the sciences of man can only try to cure the symptoms. But if they are to remain true to their tradition and their

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task, they must reject the very role that is attributed to them on all sides, that of being arts of curing evil by dispensing patent medicines, without making any demands on society and without receiving any help from men. As sciences of man, they must also show that a given evil cannot simply be taken out of the context of choice, decision and responsibility. To keep awake the awareness of the fundamental conditions of human and social life, and to point out in particular the complexities and difficulties of becoming a human being and the precarious foundations of all mental life, must be among their most sacred duties at a time when they are saddled with the subordinate role of the magician, along with the responsibility for the consequences, not by any means of their own shortcomings, but of the general neglect of human affairs.