Alienation in Modern America: A Sociological Inquiry into the
Impact of Self-Estrangement on the American Character in the
Twentieth Century and Its Specific Effects on Boys of the
Lower Urban Classes

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A Senior Thesis

submitted for Honors

to the

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Washington and Lee University

May, 1967

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Preface

It is my intent in this thesis to present a description
in depth of the term "alienation," showing the reasons I feel it
has become one of the most significant problems in present day
America and pointing out its impact on youth of the lower urban
classes. It will not be an exhaustive treatment, for an undertaking
such as this does not allow time enough to cover the term fully,
which would indeed take volumes. It is my hope in this paper to
arrive at a true understanding of the concept--as both a result of
social phenomena and as an individual psychological state--and to
show how it can lead to deviation from society's values and norms,
especially among those underpriveleged adolescents undergoing an
identity crisis. Although I will occasionally refer to alienation
among other groups, it is the poor youth of the slums and ghettos,
who become delinquent, that I am most concerned with in this thesis.

C. F. A.

February 3, 1967
Washington and Lee University

to Laurie

Acknowledgments

There are several people to whom I owe thanks for their valuable assistance with this thesis: to Dr. Harrison B. Pemberton and Dr. James G. Leyburn for their inspiration in courses related to the topic, which was first conceived in the spring of 1966.

I wish to express my gratitude to a number of others who suggested various works and made constructive comments. In addition to Dr. Leyburn and Dr. Emory Kimbrough who taught me many things that have become part of this thesis, there were William H. Armstrong and George Lenfest, with whom a heated discussion on the topic was conducted in December 1966.

C. F. A.

"Alienation is a fact. There exists a feeling of estrangement in modern man which has considerably increased during the last hundred years. It is connected with certain changes in human society, with the agglomeration of millions of people in great cities cut off from nature, with the Industrial Revolution, and with the collectivizing trend bound up with machine production."

---F. H. Heinemann

"Our society not only fails to ask for or expect any depth of commitment from the individual; in a curious way it even discourages such commitment. Perhaps nothing is more effective in suppressing any spirit of endeavor on the part of the individual than the overpowering size and complexity of the joint enterprise in which we are all supposed to be participants."

---John Gardner
Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare

"Many of the prime symptoms of alienation--distrust, anger, a bleakly existential view of the world, a cult of the present--are undoubtedly most prevalent among those of lower status and most deprived position in our society, for cynicism, feelings of powerlessness, and a low view of human nature are common among the underprivileged."

---Kenneth Keniston

Chapter I

Alienation and Its Modern Applications

"Alienation" is not a new term, but its present-day connotations have become so widely used in daily life that everything is frequently referred to as alienated. The pessimism in our modern state revolves around the attitude toward man as alone, a cosmic speck in this macrocosm, and unable to influence his own destiny. When one examines alienation, the most important problem he faces is differentiation between the alienated individual, with those psychic responses dependent on this inward feeling, and the society from which he is alienated. Society makes demands on its members, which may result in a feeling of estrangement from one's culture, induced by an inadequacy to cope with its demands. An individual withdraws within himself or rejects his society, because he is not able to cope with the life situation confronting him, or he exists and conforms to it with no real feeling of commitment or participation.

Alienation has been applied to many different situations, but today it seems to be the "catch-all" term to denote the psychic stress caused by rapid social change at present. If one does not conform to the system or does something in a peculiar way, he is alienated. Robert Nisbet pointed out the increasing importance of this condition for the theoretical sciences:

> At the present time, in all the social sciences,
> the various synonyms of alienation have a foremost place
> in the study of human relations. Investigations of the
> "unattached," "the marginal," "the obsessive," "the
> normless," and the "isolated" individual all testify to
> the central place occupied by the hypothesis of alienation
> in contemporary science.[1]

The preoccupation with this term is not hard to understand, for as man

has progressed to the point where he has power to annihilate the world

and no longer knows what tomorrow brings, a certain feeling has become

dominant in society. One no longer feels safe, secure, or really knows

where he is going or what his purpose is. Confusion as to one's place

in the world has placed man in the undesirable dilemma of not being able

to escape this alienation. Too many live lives of "quiet desperation"

and die feeling little sense of accomplishment. There appears to be

increased communication, yet man is moving farther away from his fellow

man, "....in the scheme of a world growing each day closer yet more

impersonal, more densely populated yet in face-to-face relations more

dehumanized; a world appealing ever more widely for his concern and

sympathy with unknown masses of men, yet fundamentally alienating him

even from his next neighbor, today western man has become mechanized,

routinized, made comfortable as an object...."[2] Man is alienated from

everything, his work, his fellows, and even himself.

When one examines history, he discovers that man has always

had feelings of loneliness, despair, and longing to be a part of the

community. Indeed, it seems the very essence of human nature to desire

a commitment to others, from whence one derives a feeling of acceptance

and appreciation of his real self. A spontaneous relationship where

each person involved makes a commitment to the other is one of the most meaningful of life's values. With the feudal system, a commitment was enforced through the relationship of a vassal and lord, and although one was superior, this relationship was a binding contract between two individuals. The breakdown of the feudal order caused man to fall back upon himself, and decisions once made by spiritual and worldly hierarchies had to be made by individuals together. With the anxieties created by this new dimension of freedom, there seemed to be almost infinite possibilities.

Alienation has not become a significant social problem until recently (only during the decades following the depression, and increasing after the Second World War), but there have been estranged individuals throughout history. The Old Testament prophets, Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah, were made outcasts by society for their condemnations of the people's unrighteous behavior. In Ancient Greece, the world's finest teacher, Socrates, was not only alienated because of his educational methods, but was put to death. Other Greek scholars, notably the tragedian, Euripides, were also scorned by society. Some of the most creative minds of the past history were personal aliens of society. In our own culture, Henry David Thoreau is perhaps the best example. Unable to accept slavery, he refused to accept the system which supported it and was ostracized by society. There have been other aliens in America, many less famous and most unknown. Some of this country's outstanding literary names have chosen to remain apart from the social order, while others find themselves incompatible with society. F. Scott Fitzgerald

and Hemingway destroyed themselves, and although there is no certainty

attached to their deaths, it appears that Fitzgerald's alcoholism and

Hemingway's suicide were both attempts at solving their estrangement.

Fitzgerald withdrew and drank himself to death, while Hemingway blew

his brains out in a final defiant assertion of his strength. J.D. Salinger

has withdrawn, almost as dramatically as Thoreau, to a small backwoods

community in New Hampshire.

Personal alienation probably became widespread after the dis-

ruption of the feudal system, when men no longer had established

relationships and became largely self-reliant. The estrangement prevailing

in the twentieth century has only recently attracted attention as a social

problem. During the last hundred years, as technology has advanced more

rapidly than ever before, many have moved from the country to large

urban centers, and the whole national character of America has changed,

resulting in a decline of the Puritanical tradition and of deterioration

of the old order. A new order has not yet been established and as the

past has crumbled and not yet been replaced, there arises a feeling of

insecurity, inadequacy and personal detachment.

The modern origins of alienation were created with the coming

of the machine. Although man created something totally subjugated to

his will, he soon became slave to his own creation. "The industrial

revolution and its subsequent transformation of labor into a commodity

are among the major alienating forces in the capitalistic world."[3]

Karl Marx pointed to the division of labor as separating the worker from

means of production, for then the individual profit motive was in conflict

with community interests.

> "....The object which labour produces--labour's
> product--confronts it as something alien, as a
> power independent to the producer. The product
> of labour is labour which has been congealed in
> an object, which has become material: it is the
> objectification of labour. Labour's realization
> by political economy this realization of labour
> appears as loss of reality for the workers;
> objectification as loss of the object-bondage;
> appropriation as estrangement, as alienation.
> (Entausserung)."[4]

In modern times, Erich Fromm[5] has distinguished the alienated by his

"market orientation," that is, he regards the world and even himself

as commodities to which monetary values may be assigned. He sees

himself as something to be employed on the market and tries to sell

himself. His concept of self-identity is derived solely from his socio-

economic role.[6] Man has become a commodity like those produced by his

machines; with the increasing bureaucratization of the business world,

C. Wright Mills[7] sees men as estranged from each other, as each tries to

make an instrument of the other. Lewis Mumford summarized man's present

helplessness as slave to his machine in The Transformations of Man,

> "By the perfection of the automaton man will
> become completely alienated from his world
> and reduced to nullity--the kingdom and the power
> and the glory now belong to the Machine."[8]

The technological revolution has been largely responsible for evolving

conditions that are direct causes of present alienation, for so much

is patterned by machines, and there no longer is any real sense of

accomplishment in life's daily tasks.

Ever since Hegel coined the term, entfremdung (alienation),

to describe what happens to socialized man, there has been a growing

concern with alienation. He felt that man was in harmony with the natural

order until he began to learn, i.e., acquire knowledge, and then he

became alienated. In his Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel devoted an entire

chapter to "Spirit in Self-Estrangement (Selbstentfremdung): Culture."

Marx saw the disruption of personal contact caused by an imposed division

among society's classes. Man was a powerless commodity; the workers

were separated and had their means dictated to them. The tremendous

technological developments of the last hundred years have created a feeling

of powerlessness to cope with society's demands and also an inner fragment-

ation of the self. But alienation is by no means a new concept. Indeed,

Erich Kahler believes, "The history of man could very well be written

as a history of the alienation of man."[9] Man seems to have progressed

so far that self-fragmentation has become almost inevitable, because

the individual has simply not been able to keep pace with the rapid

advances made, and so has lost part of himself, or he feels he has,

in the process.

Alienation cannot be attributed to any one or even series of

causes at present. It is a culmination of the snowballing effect of

social change with all its ramifications. The disruptive changes in the

family have had far-reaching effects, and often one no longer identifies

with his parents, for the life situation between generations is so totally

different. There is reliance on the present, for one feels no part of

the past and as he can never know what tomorrow will bring, no care

for the future. The demands of society, especially in individual "role-

playing," are more strenuous in this twentieth century than ever before,
and there is a yearning for absolutes of which there are few in
such a society of change. The past no longer gives security, yet the
future can be only imagined. Flexibility seems to be the best means
to survive, always acute to new people and behavior, never committing
oneself, endlessly adapting. Man is no longer the center of his world
but on the fringe of many different worlds, all patterned by the machine.
Erich Frommspeaks of this alienated man as one who "does not experience
himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts--
but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he
obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated is out of touch with
himself as he is out of touch with any person."[10] Karl Jaspers suggests
that the mental anxiety, this feeling of powerlessness, may be the price
man must pay for progress. He has created a void--an abyss of meaningless-
ness--for man has always done for himself what no gods have been able
to do. "It is natural enough that in these achievements of his he should
discern the true inwardness of being, until he shrinks back in alarm
from the void he has made for himself."[11] This void may not only be
between the individual and his society but may be an emptiness within.

There can be no all-inclusive definition of alienation, for
there are so many synonyms used in conjunction with it. Words like
meaninglessness, estrangement, isolation, anomie, frustration all connote
a feeling of despair at one's inability to cope with the situation he
finds himself in. Alienation may involve a withdrawal from or rejection

of society, resulting in an apathetic or rebellious and perhaps even innovative deviant, or it may become a personal feeling of inadequacy brought upon oneself, resulting in extreme mental anxiety within. When society is too demanding and its pressures (on its members) are too great, alienation may become a social condition, which can lead to inward frustrations and become a psychological state. One can be estranged from his own self, however, without feeling animosity towards or isolation from the social order. In either case, a feeling of powerlessness or estrangement results, and the individual feels outcast or is unable to reconcile his actual self with his ideal conception. John Clark has defined alienation as "the degree to which man feels powerless to achieve the role he has determined to be rightfully his in specific situations."[12] His estrangement, as in the case of the unforgettable Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, is due to the basic inability to achieve his aspirations. He is unable to reconcile what he feels he can do, be, (always striving to be "liked" and approved--"personality wins the day,") or have, with what in reality he is, a dismal failure and one of most alienated individuals in American fiction.

Melvin Seeman has given one of the best modern workable definitions of alienation, by dividing it into five types, based on the different feelings in each case. Meaninglessness occurs when an individual is not sure what he should believe and cannot make his own decisions. There is never really any certainty in his choice. This alienated person is unable to predict his future behavior, because he is unsure of his relation to the present. There are always decisions and

never any criteria for selection in this man's life. He is never

decisive or certain he has made the right decision, so his life is

largely fragmented, with no real commitments and an ever-present distrust

of himself caused by his basic uncertainty. Keniston alludes to this

type of uninvolvement due to the inability among youths to make any

far-reaching decisions, "....for most youths, indecision, vacillation,

and doubt precede commitment and sometimes replace it. Having to choose,

having to make commitments, is then experienced not as a joyous freedom

but as a heavy burden."[13] Meaninglessness is a socially induced sense

of inadequacy, involving uncertainty in making a choice, shirking from

responsibility, and fear of involvement, which often leads to personal

anxieties and despair. These alienated are the ones Fromm speaks of as

escaping from freedom.

Powerlessness is the feeling that one's behavior cannot determine

its outcomes or in more broader terms, that the individual is powerless

to create his own destiny. This is derivative from Marx's idea of the

worker as a commodity, a mean rather than an end. This man feels controlled

by external events. Powerlessness is directly related to meaninglessness,

for if one feels he has no influence over his destiny, he will fall into

uncertainty and indecision and remain uncommitted. As Seeman defines

this form of alienation, powerlessness is "expectancy or probability

held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence

of the outcomes....he seeks."[14] Much of this feeling is due to the

rapidity with which our society changes, for things are happening so

fast that often the individual feels he is totally insignificant. The

feeling of powerlessness leads to noninvolvement and eventual estrangement, for if one believes his personal actions do not have any influence, he often comes to the conclusion, "what's the use in trying?" The specialization of tasks and collectivization within the industrial world has left the skilled worker by the wayside and made the individual's work in large-scale enterprises so totally finite that all sense of identification with the task has vanished, and powerlessness breeds anxiety. This form of alienation is partially caused by society, but it is more an individual reflection on one's feeling of inadequacy to cope with his situation, as he feels that he is powerless to do anything to bring about his desires. He is swept along by the tides of social change into a social void where he no longer feels apart of society.

The social condition where the individual finds himself with no guidelines or established ways of right thinking and acting is called normlessness. Emile Durkheim saw the individual goals as dependent on norms and values of society. Society's values were apart of individual consciousness, but at the same time, independent. He felt that anomie, which is a synonym for alienation, occurred when one's goals could not be meaningfully integrated with his expectations, institutionalized in society's norms. Malintegration of values causing this feeling of anomie could be social, cultural, or psychological. In our society, there is a tendency to take behavioral cues from the specific roles being performed in situations with others rather than any patterned standards of conduct. The absence of norms or their malintegration in the individual

partially due to the fragmentation of life's tasks and different sub-cultures, which have their own codes of conduct. There are no longer many cultural norms that are held throughout our modern society. Norm-lessness refers to absence of cultural norms, for institutionalized norms still provide enforced ways of proper social behavior (as Robin Williams distinguished the two, "institutional norms differ from other cultural norms primarily in the intensity of social sanctions and in the degree of consensus with which they are supported and applied."[15]) The normlessness of the alienated is due to absence or lack of consensus regarding cultural guidelines, and without these ways of expected behavior the conformity to institutionalized norms becomes only a meaningless obedience.

Isolation is the type of alienation that most of the lower classes and "down-and-outers" suffer from when they assign low reward values to goals normally valued by society; these are the alienated who feel apart from society at large and maintain their own personal values. The two most frequent adaptations to this isolation are innovation or rebellion. The innovator is atypical and seeks to discover a new goal or belief, for society's values are not highly regarded in his value scheme. The rebellious (criminal, juvenile delinquents, beatniks) even go so far as to develop their own culture, based on their personal values, which may often come in conflict with society and be disapproved by in-stitutionalized norms. The intellectuals suffer from this type of alienation and feel they are either superior to the beliefs of society or do not choose to be associated with what others typically hold in high regard. They feel hemmed in by the culture and despise its emotional suppression, as they are creative and desire to express their feelings.

Social constriction through limitation frequently results in a rejection
of the American way of life, and many refuse to be acculturated.

> "Perhaps such unwillingness to accept the
> premises and demands of one's society is a pre-
> requisite for originality: historically many
> of the greatest innovators have been perpetual
> adolescents; forever concerned with the questions
> of identity, self-definition, philosophical
> position, and values which most 'normal adults'
> leave behind in adolescence."[16]

One might be totally integrated within and still suffer isolation,
having rejected his oscial values, and feel alienated from society.

Self-estrangement brings the greatest inward struggle and
mental anguish upon an individual, because he is alienated from him-
self and groping desperately to fill the void and achieve an assimilation
of his fragmented self. Again, Fromm seems to have the most concise
definition: "By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which
the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become....estranged
from himself."[17] It is in this psychological state that one endures
such inward anxiety as almost to drain all purpose from existence.
Often, suicide appears the only escape from such despair. Some find consol-
ation in alcohol or drugs, by which they can momentarily escape reality.
There is a discrepancy between one's actual and ideal self causing a
conflict that appears unresolvable. "The only workable solution for most
Americans is to attempt a unique integration of their own lives, an
idiosyncratic synthesis of their desperate and divided activities,
convictions, and commitments into a pattern that yields a sense of
personal unity."[18] Too many are unable to satisfy this need for a psychic

wholeness short of choosing a deviant role. This problem of personal integration is the fundamental cause of the deepest strains of alienation in America today.

Alienation is not based merely on one's personal fragmentation or his feeling of estrangement from society, but both of these are interrelated; it is possible to suffer anxiety without feeling isolated from society. "Alienation thus has two terms--the alienated individual, and the society from which he is alienated--and is by definition a social as well as psychological problem."[19] When one suffers both from personal inadequacy (due to a psychological splitting of the self within) and a feeling of powerlessness or meaninglessness in his relation with his culture, then he is in danger of undergoing a mental collapse or experiencing possible suicidal tendencies. He is in a state removed from reality and approaching such a deviant condition that society has no alternative than to commit the individual to a correctional or rehabilitative institution. The tragic state of such a deviant is due to his alienated condition, which has lodged him in depths of despair.

WHY YOUTH?

"The growing up years are not easy in America because the choices to be made are so many and the securely prescribed areas of conduct relatively few."[20]

The period of development referred to as "youth" (ages 11-21) affords the most fruitful grounds for the study of alienation. During the transformation from childhood to adulthood, one undergoes a search for personal identity and attempts to assert his individuality over and against family ties and social pressures. He feels separate but not distinct.

In our culture, with its emphasis on infinite possibilities of success,
getting ahead, and "making your million," the traumatic feeling of no
longer having someone to give you what you want is often devastating.
Our aspirations stretch to infinity until we suddenly realize that
Mommy and Daddy are no longer there to give us what we desire. There
seem to be no limits on success, which results in reaching for in-
compatible goals. "The traits stressed are those of packaging your
abilities in the best salesman's fashion, and of a constant quality
of push."[21] When one does not have this drive, but rather a withdrawn
 personality, he is called a deviant and alienated by society. The
demands on American youth are so great that often they cannot adjust as
rapidly as society dictates. The youth culture of today is a stage of
prolonged adolescence and usually an appreciated delay of adulthood,
but it "is considered a place for legitimate 'role-playing,' for testing
alternatives, for provisional commitments followed by a loss of interest,
for overwhelming enthusiasm followed by total apathy."[22] There is
greater alienation among the youth today because not only have the roles
become more complex, but the behavioral codes are so vague that one's
choice is often his own. With the added responsibility of so many
decisions, there is frequently insufficient criteria for determining
the best mode of acting. Many fall into the social void, lacking any
purpose. Society has demanded too much, and they reject it, for their
own private, alienated lives. The sudden change in role expectancy
is more than they can bear. In the process of trying to assert their
uniqueness in a society that demands conformity as a prerequisite for

social approval, one tears himself away from bonds and codes, only to find increased insecurity and isolation. There is a sense of loss, and one yearns to return to primary ties that afforded mental security during the early years. In no other culture in the world is there such an intense need to belong during the growing-up years, nor where the failure to satisfy this longing is as destructive of individual potential.

Feeling of alienation permeates the youth of all classes, not simply those of the lower classes. Many Harvard students are more estranged from society than less fortunate ghetto children (as Keniston points out[23]). For each one, no matter to what degree he feels apart, there is a struggle to find himself and relate to society. Sometimes he reconciles the crisis within, only to become further isolated from his culture. The juvenile delinquent rejects his culture and creates a subculture, with its own norms and values, largely unapproved by society. The drug-taker withdraws within his own world by using a shot in the arm as his escape from a world he cannot accept. There is a more pervasive feeling of detachment among the lower-classes, for here most of the street gangs and drug-taking occur. This study will look closer at the alienation of the problem youths of today rather than those who are among the upper classes. Although alienation occurs at both extremes of the social scale, the major portion of our study will deal with those of the lower urban classes and their means of finding psychological support as aliens from society.

Youth is a time of choosing for life, but it is a more over-powering dilemma for those who are without the means to achieve what society sanctions as good. The alternate choice usually involves deviant

behavior in a socially unaccepted way, which is even more perplexing
in light of the identity crisis that involves all those growing-up. This
problem is most acute in those without the benefits of a close family,
well-knit neighborhood, financial support and long-term goals; these
frustrated youngsters are usually the most alienated. In the later
part of this thesis, we shall endeavor to see what in society causes
this feeling of estrangement and the problems of resolving the identity
crisis within one's psyche.

Footnotes

Chapter I

1 Robert Nisbet, Community and Power, New York, 1962, p. 15.

2 Eric and Mary Josephson, Man Alone, New York, 1962, p. 2.

3 Ibid, p. 22.

4 Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, London, 1959, p. 69.

5 Cf. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, New York, 1955.

6 Cf. Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, New York, 1947.

7 Cf. C. Wright Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Classes, New York, 1951.

8 Lewis Mumford, The Transformations of Man, New York, 1956, p. 151.

9 Erich Kahler, The Tower and the Abyss, New York, 1957, p. 43.

10 Fromm, The Sane Society, p. 111.

11 Eric and Mary Josephson, op. cit., p. 15.

12 John Clark, "Measuring Alienation with a Social System," American Sociological Review, XXIV (1959), p. 849.

13 Kenneth Keniston, The Uncommitted, New York, 1960, p. 264.

14 Melvin Seeman, "On the Meaning of Alienation," American Sociological Review, XXIV (1959), p. 787.

15 Robin Williams, American Society, New York, 1965, p. 31.

16 Keniston, op. cit., p. 196.

17 Fromm, op. cit., p. 196.

18 Keniston, op. cit., p. 269.

19 Ibid, p. 202.

20 Max Lerner, America as a Civilization, II, New York, 1957, p. 582.

21 Ibid, p. 572.

22 Keniston, op. cit., p. 399.

23 Cf. <u>The Uncommitted</u>, pp. 23-54.

Chapter II

Premonitions of Alienation

"And we are as on a darkling plain swept with
confused alarms of struggle and flight, where
ignorant armies clash by night."
                                    ---Matthew Arnold,
                                       "Dover Beach"

As one looks back at the eighteenth century, one becomes
aware that the "old order" is beginning to break up---the political
order in American and French Revolutions, the economic order in the
coming of the Industrial Revolution, the social order in the demands
for rights and the vote and education, and in riots and threats of
mass uprisings, the religious order in Deism, Skepticism, and occas-
ional free-thinking. Yet, not until far into the nineteenth century
did these beginnings of upheaval reach shattering proportions.

Here in the U.S.A., even though the old order was pretty
well shattered by the end of the eighteenth century along the sea-
board, the mere fact that there was a continent to be won, with enormous
wealth to be gained and practically limitless opportunities, few
people realized that something was happening that would shatter
Western Man's security of mind and leave him groping for traditional
verities. As happens, it was the poets and philosophers, the most
creative minds, who perceived the large-scale implications of the
assault on what had seemed in 1700 to be the basic truths. With these

men, the insight generally took the form of _personal_ alienation. Few
were as yet concerned with the _social_ implications; all of them were
shattered by what was happening to their own souls and spirits.

When one thinks of this alienation in the nineteenth century,
four names immediately leap to mind: Kierkegaard, Thoreau, Dostoyevski,
and Nietzsche. It is significant that only one was an American. Their
various writings reflect the ever increasing personal anxiety men
felt (even greater now than during the nineteenth century), as values
and institutions deteriorated. They protested mass conformity and
impersonal realities of the machine age, which threatened to dissolve
the individual in the lonely crowd.

Kierkegaard believed that man's alienation from God had
resulted in his dehumanization, and he tried to formulate a philosophy
that would enable man to eradicate his sin and escape his alienation.
Man was too conscious of conforming and playing a role rather than
being his true self as God had created him. One who would not "be him-
self" was in despair, which was synonymous with sin. As he described
this estrangement from God, "The disrelationship of despair is not
a simple disrelationship but a disrelationship in a relation which
relates itself to its own self and is constituted by another, so that
the disrelationship in that self-relation reflects itself infinitely
in the relation to the power which constituted it."[1] Despair is a
synonym for alienation in Kierkegaard.

Kierkegaard also felt man had lost his individuality because
of a "leveling" process in society, when he was pressed down into the
mass and lost his uniqueness. When one conformed to the mass, he lost

any real potential. "The individual who levels down is himself en-
gulfed in the process and so on, and while he seems to know selfishly
what he is doing one can only say of people en masse that they know
not what to do...."[2] The personal alienation he experienced was due
to a feeling of estrangement from God, and Kierkegaard felt that this
isolation between man and man was a result of the individual's separation
from God. There was also a "leveling" of the individual occurring in
society, which dissolved one's unique potential into the crowd.

Society alienated Thoreau, because his personal views (he did
not feel one man should enslave another) were incompatible with govern-
ment practices. So strongly opposed to the social order was Thoreau
that he deserted it to enjoy nature's simplicity in a small cove of
Walden Pond. He felt man's labor spent in hours of back-breaking
chores as slave to the soil was fruitless. An alien by choice from
the economic order, he rejected the competition for nature's finer
offerings. Alienated from society, yet personally happier than most
men, Thoreau pointed out,

> "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation, what
> is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From
> the desperate city you go into the desperate country,
> and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks
> and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is
> concealed even under what are called the games and
> amusements of mankind."[3]

The anomie and futility prevalent in modern man's feeling of estrange-
ment were not part of Thoreau's alienation for he was content, even
though society's daily toils had no attraction for him. Life, for
him, was but a stream to go a-fishing in, and to live at one's own pace,

without the struggle to get ahead, was his idea of complete existence. Whereas Kierkegaard represented man's estrangement from God, Thoreau personified the isolationism of the individual rejected by the social order.

Dostoyevski and Nietzsche felt deeper pangs of alienation than either Kierkegaard or Thoreau, for these two suffered psychological self-estrangement and were unable to solve personal inner conflicts; their alienation was internal rather than external. Suffering from pathological tendencies and subject to infrequent epileptic fits, Dostoyevski brought out his personality through a multitude of characters trying to assert their individuality in a society that lacked any regard for them. He felt one must explore himself in depth before he could fully enjoy life. His major criticism of society was its emphasis on scientific reason, which had precluded man's freedom of choice ("hadn't we better kick over the whole show and scatter rationalism to the winds, simply to send these logarithms to the devil, and to enable us to live once more at our own sweet foolish will!"[4]). For Dostoyevski, the scientific faith in reason popular during his lifetime did not offer the mental security men needed. His psychological conflicts within caused a strong personal rejection of society and all it stood for.

Nietzsche felt alienated, because he saw what the mass of society did and refused to be part of it. He despised the herd--"everybody wants the same, everybody is the same; whoever feels differently goes voluntarily into a madhouse"[5]--and his philosophy emphasized the

potential power of the individual to rise above the mass to become

an "overman." One needed a goal to strive for; when man lacked a

challenge, he despaired ("human existence is uncanny and still with-

out meaning"[6]). The way to escape the despair Nietzsche believed the

masses suffered was to create one's own freedom by accepting the

challenge of a goal. His personal alienation brought intense

spiritual anxiety, yet he tried to expound a philosophy to enable men

to overcome this alienation and become overmen.

The evidence of alienation became more insistent in the

twentieth century, and while this estrangement was still profoundly

personal, one perceives the wider implications of the poet's insights.

Rainer Maria Rilke expressed what the French called the "mal du siècle,"

and that fact in itself is significant. He felt a stranger in the

cities where he lived and could not overcome his alienation, as he

prophetically expressed,

> "As one who has sailed across an unknown sea,
> among those rooted folk I am alone;
> the full days on their fables are their own,
> to me the distant is reality."[7]

Man was himself a stranger and would remain alone. Self-pity

frequently overcame Rilke as he realized his individual insignificance,

> "I am nobody and always will be,
> I'm almost too little to live, right now,
> And even later."[8]

He despised the cities and poetically illustrated the hollow life of

the large urban masses,

> "There men are living lives of cark and care
> in deep rooms, shy in gesture and in word,
> more terror-stricken than a yearling herd;
> and outside wakes the Earth your breath has stirred
> to life of which these now live unaware."[9]

His loneliness was more intense than writers of the nineteenth century,
and his expression of man's alienation has remained to remind one of
the inconquerable feeling of estrangement one finds so often in cities
of today. The "mal du siècle" was strongly felt in Rilke's Germany, but
the malaise had hardly reached the United States.

It was the American poet, T. S. Eliot, transplanted to
England, whose "Waste Land" swept young intellectuals in this country,
and for the first time sounded the theme of alienation whose echoes
have swelled mightily in the decades following 1922. Rilke's loneli-
ness of the cities becomes dire pessimism in Eliot, who feels man's
powerlessness, lack of commitment, and a life devoid of purpose,

> "What shall I do now? What shall
>   I do ?
> I shall rush out as I am, and walk the
>   street
> With my hair down, so, What shall we
>   do tomorrow?
> What shall we ever do?"[10]

Eliot expressed the all-encompassing hopelessness of man in the machine
age, especially toiling in the "Unreal City," resolved to despair and
meaningless monotony. "The Waste Land" has become alienation's con-
temporary theme song, and many today are living lives of "quiet desperation"
that Eliot and these others prophesized.

We must now turn to the social conditions which have brought
about this prevalent alienation.

Footnotes

Chapter II

1 Sören Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling and Sickness Unto Death, translated by Walter Lowrie, Garden City, New York, 1954, p. 147.

2 Sören Kierkegaard, "The Present Age," A Kierkegaard Anthology, New York, 1946, p. 261.

3 Henry David Thoreau, Walden Selections, ed. B. V. Crawford, New York, 1934, p. 61.

4 Fyodor Dostoyevski, "Notes from Underground," in Existentialism from Dostoyevski to Sartre, New York, 1956, p. 48.

5 Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," The Portable Nietzsche, New York, 1954, p. 130.

6 Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., p. 156.

7 Rainer Maria Rilke, Fifty Selected Poems, translated by C. F. MacIntyre, Los Angeles, 1947, p. 31.

8 Rainer Maria Rilke, Ibid., p. 37.

9 Rainer Maria Rilke, Ibid., p. 89.

10 T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," New York, 1922, p. 22.

Chapter III

Alienation As A Result Of Social Phenomena

"Human beings are amorphous objects, parts of a
mass, vaguely perceived, remotely related. The
personal sense of identity, the ego, the self,
grow dimmer and worthless."
                              ---Bloch and Niederhoffer

It is characteristic of social phenomena that they have no

precisely marked beginning. Events occur, conditions develop, sit-

uations begin to attract attention, and slowly the word "problem" makes

its appearance; only then, after an unnoted concatefnation of apparently

unrelated occurrences, does an observer (usually a social scientist,

but often a journalist) give a name to the social condition whose

existence has been on the fringe of people's consciousness. Forthwith

the phenomenon "exists": it has now come to birth.

Alienation, as a recognized social phenomenon, dates only

to the end of the Second World War. Now that it is acknowledged to

exist, and now that it is the subject of scholarly scrutiny, one is

aware of its unperceived presence in the decades before 1945. No one

can say with precision when alienation--the problem, the condition,

the widespread state of mind--was first recognized as a social phenomenon

significant enough to demand research and public concern; but the

dictionaries offer some illumination. In the 10-volume Century

Dictionary of 1902, the term "alienation" is defined generally as

"estrangement," but its four specific meanings relate only to law, diversion of landed property, withdrawal of affections, and "derangement or insanity." The Oxford English Dictionary (1933) shows little change in these meanings. Significantly, in both dictionaries, an "alienist" is one who studies or treats "mental diseases." The implication is clear that the word "alienation," as it referred to a mental condition, was a disease, a "derangement or insanity."

Within two decades after the Oxford English Dictionary the psychiatrists, psychologists, and sociologists had all come to recognize the fact that millions of Americans were finding themselves "estranged," and that the form the estrangement took was estrangement from society and its culture. During these decades this fact came to be called "alienation." It was a personal condition--certainly no longer regarded as "derangement or insanity"--but one resulting from the individual's mental reaction to his society and culture.

Since this is so, much of the literature on alienation has con-cerned itself with an effort to locate the cause of the new and clearly increasing phenomenon. No social scientist suggests that there was any single cause; on the contrary, the causes suggested have been so numerous as to be almost a catalogue of social changes in recent America. There is general consensus among the scholars, however, that World War I is a kind of dividing line. Before that time, although obviously there were instances of alienation, these were comparatively few; alienation was not yet a "social" phenomenon. Since the war, however, increasingly large numbers of people have felt estranged--so many, in fact, that

we have a "problem" of alienation.

The present chapter is a survey of the principal historical and social developments in this country that caused constantly more and more individuals to feel alienated.

There have been many cases of alienation throughout history but it has not really been exploited as dependent on social phenomena until the present century. The Gesellschaft[1] of today is more standardized, impersonal, and more routine, yet without the behavioral guidelines and mental security prevalent in the earlier decades before the Second World War. Although there are still primary relations, the emphasis has shifted from personal groups to associations of impersonal relationships, with every member an instrumental functionary in the accomplishment of an end. There is not as much mental security due to the rapidity of social change in the last half century, and more choices are having to be made with few criteria for judgment, especially among those growing-up. The social demands weigh heaviest on those trying to resolve their identity crisis and establish a responsible place in society ("...American society makes extraordinary demands on its members--that they adapt to chronic social change, that they achieve a sense of personal wholeness in a complex and grafmented society, that they resolve major discontinuities between fragmented society, that they resolve major discontinuities between childhood and adult-hood, and that they locate positive values..."[2]).

In the early years of the twentieth century, America was still a predominantly rural nation of nuclear families, who lived on farms or in or near urban communities. Cities had been growing rapidly

since the Civil War, and this increase reached its culmination on the eve of the First World War. Small towns afforded places to live, where one could be a meaningful part of a community. There was an integrated feeling of participation in rural conglomerations, and the major effect of the automobiles would not appear for another decade, so people tended to remain where they settled. Americans often never moved away from their hometowns. The closely-knit families lent much stability to one growing-up, and most of the young entered occupations similar to their father's. As cities increased in number, size, and density, America appeared to be moving toward an over-all integration of trends, while the dualism of urban and suburban poles supplanted the early dichotomies of native and immigrant, rural and urban. The national urban population increased to 35,000,000 from 1860 to 1910, as urban totals almost trebled between 1880 and 1890. "A major portion of the urban growth in these decades represented the overflow of a fecund countryside, and another major portion came from Europe."[3] Heterogeneity of cities created many problems, some of which are still unsolved. By 1920, the census showed that 51% of the population were urban inhabitants. (See Census Figures: pp. 35-37)

There was a notable increase in the first decades of the twentieth century of population in towns. Many times, old crossroads became new urban centers when industrial promoters chose them as new sites for factories. Some expanding companies selected fresh tracts near transport lines on which to build model communities. Usually, it was an enterprising subdivider who began the residential suburb around the city plant. These new communities grew up around urban centers

TABLE 34.—URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION: 1790 TO 1950

[Numbers in thousands]

Year	Total population	Urban		Rural population	Percent of increase over preceding census			Percent of total	
		Number of places	Population		Total	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1790.....................	3,929	24	202	3,728	...	...	...	5.1	94.9
1800.....................	5,308	33	322	4,986	35.1	59.9	33.8	6.1	93.9
1810.....................	7,240	46	525	6,714	36.4	63.0	34.7	7.3	92.7
1820.....................	9,638	61	693	8,945	33.1	31.9	33.2	7.2	92.8
1830.....................	12,866	90	1,127	11,739	33.5	62.6	31.2	8.8	91.2
1840.....................	17,069	131	1,845	15,224	32.7	63.7	29.7	10.8	89.2
1850.....................	23,192	236	3,544	19,648	35.9	92.1	29.2	15.3	84.7
1860.....................	31,443	392	6,217	25,227	35.6	75.4	28.4	19.8	80.2
1870.....................	38,558	663	9,902	28,656	22.6	59.3	13.6	25.7	74.3
1880.....................	50,156	939	14,130	36,026	30.1	42.7	25.7	28.2	71.8
1890.....................	62,948	1,348	22,106	40,841	25.5	56.5	13.4	35.1	64.9
1900.....................	75,995	1,737	30,160	45,835	20.7	36.4	12.2	39.7	60.3
1910.....................	91,972	2,262	41,999	49,973	21.0	39.3	9.0	45.7	54.3
1920.....................	105,711	2,722	54,158	51,553	14.9	29.0	3.2	51.2	48.8
1930.....................	122,775	3,165	68,955	53,820	16.1	27.3	4.4	56.2	43.8
1940.....................	131,669	3,464	74,424	57,246	7.2	7.9	6.4	56.5	43.5
1950:									
Old urban definition.....	150,697	4,023	88,927	61,770	14.5	19.5	7.9	59.0	41.0
New urban definition.....	150,697	4,741	96,468	54,230	14.5	...	...	64.0	36.0

Source: *1950 Census of Population*, Vol. II, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 1, U. S. Summary, tables 4 and 5b.

Urban and rural are relative terms, and any dividing line is necessarily arbitrary. The U. S. Census Bureau itself has shifted the dividing line from time to time, presumably reflecting the changing characteristics of the urban places. At the end of the eighteenth century rural and agricultural were largely synonymous—the great majority of the rural population was engaged in agricultural activities. By the end of the nineteenth century this was less true than it had been, and during the first half of the twentieth century the development of newer means of transportation has made it less true still. As industrial and commercial activities expanded, the proportion of the rural population engaged in agriculture decreased.

In an effort to deal with this situation the Census Bureau has used a number of different approaches. Metropolitan districts were defined for cities of 200,000 or more in 1910, and subsequent censuses provided statistics for metropolitan districts, delimited to reflect the settlement pattern at the time of the census. In 1950 similar units were designated as urbanized areas, and their inhabitants were classified as urban population. These areas associate with the central city the area of continuous concentrated settlement around it. Such areas were defined for cities of 50,000 or more, and included the central city or cities as well as the closely built up adjacent suburban and satellite areas. Nearly 8 million persons who were living outside of any incorporated place or in incorporated places of fewer than 2,500 persons were included in the urban population as a result of this approach. They are the major element in the difference in the proportion reported as rural under the definition formerly used and that introduced in 1950; the urban population under the former was 59.0 percent of the total, under the new definition it is given as 64.0 percent.

More than seven tenths of the urban population lives within the 157 urbanized areas which were recognized in 1950. Had urbanized areas been defined for smaller cities as well, no doubt there would have been some further shifting in the classification of population now included as rural, for some of these people live in the closely built-up areas around the smaller cities. In fact, it might be argued that for this purpose the "physical" city rather than the "legal" city would provide the more realistic criterion (table 35).

TABLE 35.—POPULATION IN URBANIZED AREAS AND CITIES, BY SIZE: 1950

Size of place	Urbanized areas			Cities[1]		
	Number of places	Population (thousands)	Percent of total	Number of places	Population (thousands)	Percent of total
1,000,000 or more...............	12	37,817	25.1	5	17,404	11.5
500,000 or more.................	25	46,568	30.9	18	26,591	17.6
250,000 or more.................	49	55,245	36.7	41	34,833	23.1
100,000 or more.................	119	66,133	43.9	106	44,312	29.4
50,000 or more[2]................	157	69,249	46.0	232	53,242	35.3

[1] New urban definition.

[2] Urbanized areas defined only where central city included at least 50,000 persons at its last census prior to 1950. The smallest urbanized area had a population of 56,046. Twenty-one places which had 50,000 or more for the first time in the 1950 Census are not included.

Source: *1950 Census of Population*, Vol. II, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 1, U. S. Summary, tables 5a and 5b.

TABLE . . — PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, BY REGIONS: 1850 TO 1950

Census year and area	United States	Northeast	North Central	South	West
1850:					
Urban............................	15.3	26.5	9.2	8.3	6.4
Rural............................	84.7	73.5	90.8	91.7	93.6
1900:					
Urban............................	39.7	66.1	38.6	18.0	40.6
Rural............................	60.3	33.9	61.4	82.0	59.4
1930:					
Urban............................	56.2	77.6	57.9	34.1	58.8
Rural............................	43.8	22.4	42.1	65.9	41.2
1950:					
Urban[1].........................	64.0	79.5	64.1	48.6	69.8
Rural[1].........................	36.0	20.5	35.9	51.4	30.2
Within urbanized areas...........	46.0	66.4	45.0	28.2	49.6
Urbanized areas of 1,000,000 or more............................	25.1	48.1	23.3	5.2	30.8

[1] New urban-rural definition.

Source: *1950 Census of Population*, Vol. II, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 1, U. S. Summary, tables 13, 15, and 18.

The greatest concentration of urbanized areas is the almost continuous belt from Boston to Washington. Here there are twenty-five urbanized areas, including a total of about 24 million persons, or about one third of all persons living in urbanized areas. Five of the twelve urbanized areas with populations in excess of 1 million are found in this group.

everywhere, and the growth of cities, once merely rural concentrations,
had become an urban spread.[4]

During the rapid growth of urban conglomerations immediately
before World War I, the progressivism era of Roosevelt and Wilson,
few people suspected the complexity developing in cities, although
most communities carried on attacks against social problems. Private
welfare agencies lead the way, as they ceaselessly needled officials
and stirred up public opinion. The liveliness of city crusades was
paralleled by self-awareness in many towns. Civic groups presented many
idealist schemes, which brought much discussion and action. Women,
struggling for the right to vote, cried out for temperance and "civic
righteousness." All these attempts at integration seldom kept pace
with the city needs and failed to anticipate effects of snowballing
social change.

Despite the rapid growth of cities, inasmuch as America was
still primarily a rural nation, its values and ideals were still strong.
The work ethic prevailed, and as Max Weber has pointed out, the thrift,
hardwork, and self-discipline that gave evidence of being one of God's
elected to be saved carried over into the capitalistic struggle for
success. Weber attempted to refute Marx's economic determinism by
showing religion's effect on capitalism. The desire to make something
of oneself through one's personal efforts was a prerequisite for capit-
alism, and as such constituted the Protestant ethic. The two specific
teachings at the basis of the ethic are the doctrines of calling and
predestination. Whatever one was to be in life, he should do his utmost
best in performing his intended role. Weber's work became largely the

ethic of the American working man in the final decades of the nine-
teenth century and early years of the present century. The acquisitiveness
of men in their various occupations made wealth a prime criterion of
status. Ambition, self-reliance, and laissez faire formed the core
of the American social ethics, as men worked hard to get ahead and
show themselves members of the select. There was little time for
dissipation, nor was there much excess money to be spent on drink or
luxuries. America prayed on Sundays and worked on the weekdays--it was
that simple. Indulgence had no place in a rural community, where thrift,
individualism, and acquisitiveness were most highly regarded.

America seemed on the verge of a new era in the early
1900's. The country, despite the increasing metropolitan regionalism,
was feeling a new integration. Values were held up to be subscribed
to by all. Traditionalism prevailed, and the stability of the pop-
ulation resided in the immobile family. There seemed to be "grass
roots" even in the cities, as once people moved in, they seldom moved
out. There was an all-encompassing ambition in the people, who felt
the need to get ahead to prove their individuality and show their
social worth, as a member of the community. A new progressivism
pervaded all areas of life, and the establishment moved rapidly along,
respected as the vanguard of the approaching era. Suddenly, after the
war, America was struggling--challenging what it had always accepted
and unsure where to turn. The 1920's were one of the most restless
periods in history. Times of speakeasies, prohibition, the "can-can",
the birth of jazz, and its wholehearted acceptance (and from the lower
classes too!), indulgence in all phases of life from sex to politics,

end of immigration, torrid speculation on Wall Street, and even radical criticism of religion. Nothing escaped unscathed, as tradition was slowly undermined. In the thirties, the depression shocked Americans into realization that the Old Order had been largely super-seded. It was following the depression that alienation became an increasing problem, and more and more began to feel estranged from work, society, and each other.

Since the Second World War, there has been a disruption in society, caused by diverse social phenomena. Security and community have declined and have been replaced by a psychological despair caused by a harsh, impersonal society. Roles have become so complex that one must look other places to people as judges of his behavior. Men see themselves not as individuals but as interpreted by other people. The bureaucratic specialized routine causes many to feel anxiety or derive no meaning from their lives. Even the family has declined in its importance as the basic social element. Many have dealt with the problem of alienation and its causes, and most have concluded that it is directly related to various social phenomena. Social scientists, historians, critics, and even the man in the street attack society for many things. The suggestions regarding society's role in alienating the individual have been so numerous that no complete catalogue is possible, yet some of the most profound observations, though as yet unproved, have been widely accepted.

The problems of growing-up, asserting one's own uniqueness, while at the same time becoming socially accepted and a responsible

member of the social order, are enhanced in our present day culture by various social phenomena.

When one is confronted with the responsibility of making a choice in relation to his future, without knowing what the future will bring, the strain may be so great he will reject the choice and prolong his adolescence. The professional student (common on Berkeley, Harvard, and other large university campuses) is a living example of one who has not been able to resolve his identity crisis or find his own place in society, so he uses his education as a cover-up and excuse for his personal failing. The task of complying with the numerous social demands, many seemingly quite hypocritical, while trying to mold a concept of one's self and assert one's uniqueness causes personal anxiety. Society's complexity throws those growing up into a dilemma --trying to break away from primary ties to "make it" on one's own as a whole person but yearning all the time for mental security and approval, confirmed on one by our present culture only when he conforms and lives up to society's approved values and ideals. Many sociologists, cultural critics, and even free-lance writers have alluded to the feelings of estrangement in youth caused by the society they inhabit. Adolescence is the most crucial period, for one is learning or trying to learn how to become part of the adult world. The rapid social change, generational discontinuity, absence of absolute morals, decline of religion, routinization, bureaucracy, meaningless work, absence of rites de passage, and even the preponderance of leisure have all been cited as meaningful commitments and purpose in adolescence and turning youth on society. For youth today, growing-up is no longer merely

learning ways to become a responsible adult, it is trying to assert one's identity in a harsh, impersonal Gesellschaft where often one is considered worthwhile only on the basis of visable achievements. Solving one's identity crisis "...is a long, complex, and often confusing task...For the most part boys and girls work at these tasks in a stumbling, groping fashion, blindly reaching for the next step without much or any adult assistance. Many lose their way. It seems probable that our adult failure to give assistance derives as much from ignorance about this developmental process as it does from the extensive taboos on sex which characterize our culture."[5] The problem stems largely from the inability of parents to properly socialize their children, mainly because they no longer can lay down specific ways of acting in conjunction with social roles, for culture dictates adaptability and flexibility rather than commitment as the only way to attain acceptance in the complexity of roles one is called upon to perform.

The changing society has wrought radical change in the most stable element, the family. As the parents still largely determine how a child will walk life's stage, it is essential to imbue the feelings for one's culture and its values at an early age, but this has become increasingly difficult due to accelerating social change. Parents find themselves having to prepare a child for a totally different world than the one which confronted them in their youth. They cannot lay down rigid guidelines in rearing their children, for the diversity of roles today emphasizes adaptability and diversity of behavior in accordance

with specific situations. The parents have a problem in socializing
their children, for if provided with too much early security, when
forced to rely on his own judgments and assert his uniqueness, the
pressure will be too great, and the youth will become alienated from
society. This is a definite problem, for parents, especially mothers,
shower their children with so much affection that it is hard for these
adolescents to break away from primary ties and resolve their own
identity problems. "Momism" has been criticized as one reason so many
regress and dream of the lost past, when Mommy was all in all. The
close attachment to another is also being explored as a symptom of
adult homosexuality. "There is the 'silver cord' relation between
an obsessive mother and a weak son which has blighted the lives of
many young Americans and paved the way for a considerable growth of
homosexuality."[6] The family has the most significant role in socializing
the individual, yet when parents cannot always lay down rigid codes
for them, the child comes to expect specific behavioral guidelines
and when confronted in adolescence with the complex roles and many
changing situations, his success will depend on his adaptability and
not how he performs in respect to specific conduct rules. It is
Riesman's other-directedness as opposed to inner-directedness all over
again.

Children find it increasingly more difficult to identify with
their parents while trying to establish their own identity. "Toward
their parents, who are psychologically the most crucial exemplars of
adulthood, most students show a similar lack of conscious or articulate

involvement."[7] When one cannot relate to his parents in his early

stages, it is most difficult to relate as an individual to the social

system. There is a generational discontinuity.[8] As times have changed

so radically over the past couple of generations, a father cannot prepare

his son to cope with life's problems as he was taught, but rather must

try to instill in his son the ability to take behavioral cues from

specific situations, while at the same time giving him the love and

attention he needs. The father spends most of the day away at work,

so the mother largely shapes the child's personality. In the slums,

both parents may be absent frequently so the child is left alone,

hopelessly lacking any love and with nothing to do but watch the rats

or the crumbling plaster in the grey-walled tenement filth. It is

little wonder that the children of the ghettos, with no identification

with the parents and often only horrible recollections of beatings by

a drunk father or harsh tongue-lashing by a mother, who comes home with

strange men, turn to peer-groups to roam the streets in gangs, where

they can at least be accepted as real persons. The generational dis-

continuity brings as much grief to parents (not of the lower classes)

as the struggling youth. The parents must make the children feel

wanted in an impersonal world, but at the same time must prepare them

for the task of establishing themselves and becoming responsible citizens.

When one is ignored or scorned by his parents while young, wounds are

inflicted which may never be healed. Not feeling accepted by one's

primary ties, how can one ever conceive of fitting into society? So

many turn to their own groups, find the need to belong satisfied in

subcultures (gangs, beatniks, drug-takers), which may alienate them from society, yet give them a psychic satisfaction and gratify their deepest need for acceptance.

Children cannot grow up; they must be brought up. They must be plied and molded so as to fit into society. The child's environment, controlled largely by the parents in the first five years, must be manipulated so he will later take upon himself proper ways of acting in accordance with social norms. "No adult can or will tell them what earlier generations were told: this is God, that is Good, this is Art, that is not Done."[9] The parents must make their children want to be adults, and the tragedy is that many do not want to join the adult world but prefer prolonged adolescence. This is due in large part to their failure to develop a self-identity concept and take on responsibility after breaking from primary ties. The family is failing in its main role and leaving many of the youth in a perplexing situation, alienated from their families, yet unable to assert their uniqueness in the social system.

The gap between generations is largely responsible for this alienation of the present turn of the century, fathers could tell their sons how to behave in accordance with standards they had been taught. Change has been so rapid in the last twenty years that a father cannot tell his son ways of confronting the life situation, for he never knows how many changes will occur before the child must assert his own uniqueness and become a functioning individual in society. "So extreme is this gap between generations in some instances that

parents and their adolescent children literally represent subcultures."[10]
The child is likely to see his parents as out-dated, old-fashioned,
or "square." The decline of paternalism in the American family, due
largely to the inability of the growing child to relate to the past
of his father (as social changes have been so rapid), is one of the
main reasons so many youth feel lost and confused when they must
strike out on their own. The ways one parents did things are no longer
good, or bad, but simply are indifferent to the children, who must
face such different situations.

The absence of any ritual marking one's transition from the
dependent childhood world to mature adulthood has caused much anxiety
among teen-agers. There are no _rites de passage_ or traditional ceremonies
held universally that mark this transition. The Jewish Bar Mitzvah
is an attempt to point the youngster to maturity but occurs too early
to really be termed a _rite de passage_. The "coming-out" of debutantes
is another close approximation. The integrated pattern is broken as
one grows out of adolescence, graduates or drops out of high school,
then tries to get a job or gets married. The process of maturity is largely
personal and highly unstructured. We are treated as children until
we are no longer teen-agers, then suddenly are expected to act like
mature adults.

> "The nearest the culture has approached the
> problem of defining the borders of the no-man's-land
> between the dependency of childhood and the independence
> of adulthood is the law."[11]

Like other cultural aspects, the law is contradictory in defining what

adolescent can or cannot do and expectations of his behavior. Most states do not allow one to vote until he is 21, but at 14 one can enter the economic struggle with employer's approval, and any boy of eighteen is subject to the draft.

Society's attitude toward sex is particularly alarming, for as young boys and girls, we are taught to play with others of our own sex and what not to do with others of the opposite sex. Then, when we are "mature," we are expected to engage in meaningful sexual experiences in marriage. Yet, there is no preparation for these later roles. No wonder, some youngsters, who become disgusted with society's dual standards, engage in sexual relations not only as an escape but even as a defiance against society's hypocricy. When youngsters reach biological maturity before they are ready to become responsible members of society, it is not surprising that there are sexual relations, for our society, encourages adolescents to associate ~~It is not surprising that there are~~ freely, while at the same time, holding premarital chastity as a social mos.

Thus, the strains of growing-up are further enhanced by the absence of any ceremony or ritual marking the transition to adulthood, or even any preparation before one is expected to assume a place. Formal education attempts to prepare one for the kaleidoscope of roles he must play in later life, but when one lacks education, he has little idea of how to relate to society and so resorts to various unapproved attempts at achieving a socially acceptable position or rejects his culture altogether.

Technology and its social ramifications contribute greatly to alienation. In the space age, perhaps nothing has had such an impact

on our concept of the individual as technology. Man has fallen slave

to his own invention. The chronic social change induced by technolog-

ical advancement has left us in the lurch.

> "...chronic social change is a deep source of stress
> to Americans; the concentration on specific changes hides
> the importance of the fact that virtually everything in our
> lives is continually changing..."[12]

Our society is in a constant state of flux--an unstable disequilibrium,

and we inhabit a Gesellshaft, of functional associations joined for a

specific purpose, using members to accomplish certain ends. There is

little feeling of attachment to one's job, for it is so specialized

that he has little importance in the final product. Many managers and

executives are also alienated from their work; there is little feeling

of attachment, for the monotonous routine and specialization destroy

initiative and surpress uniqueness.

> "Work is becoming more repetitive and thoughtless as
> the planners, the micromotionists, and the scientific
> managers further strip the worker of his right to think
> and move freely. Life is being denied; need to control,
> creativeness, curiosity, and independent thought are being
> baulked, and the result, the inevitable result, is flight
> or fight on the part of the worker, apathy or destructiveness,
> psychic regression."[13]

The worker without any feeling for his work, inhabits a five o'clock

world; he leaves his hollow shell when he departs the office or

factory at five and hurries home, where he hopefully will be accepted

as a complete person. In the work world, one is assessed by visible

achievements, but at home he may be accepted for what he is; thus,

the family has become the number one escape valve in America. Our

marketing world no longer treats men as individuals but rather as useful

functionaries, each performing a tiny, insignificant role in the overall operation of the business bureaucracy.

Youth has not been unaffected by advancing technology. Never before have the material advantages been so numerous, yet the choices so difficult. Those growing-up today frequently have few rewards, and other avenues to success afford only socially unapproved means. For those less priviŀeged in cities and from the lower classes, who do not have the family or financial solidarity essential for the basic foundation necessary to become an integrated member of society, for these children, jobs are a means of getting nowhere fast. The work is useless, their labor hopeless, and their attitude careless. There are not many who would look forward to spending the productive years working eight hours a day "doing what is no good." The choice must not be hastily made, yet, then, why choose at all? Many times these youngsters become uninterested in school and drop out. Even the more well-to-do sons of the "successful" (in the social sense), who attend college, have trouble establishing their self-identity against the pressures of the society. It seems easier to be a member of the crowd in college than on the streets. An alternative confronting these lower class youth today leaves them in a most disheartening dilemma.

> "Either society is a benevolently frivolous racket
> in which they'll manage to boondoggle, though less pro-
> fitably than the more privileged; or society is serious
> (and they hope still benevolent enough to support them),
> but they are useless and hopelessly out."[14]

They either feel that they are inadequate to compete in the rat race or will never amount to anything in their strivings.

Technology has replaced man's skills and sense of accomplishment in his work with the machine. There is no challenge in work anymore. As they are largely uneducated, these youngsters cannot get any prestigious jobs. Even those with college educations often scorn the impersonalized bureaucratic cut-throat business world which they are flung into. People like to show their feelings, and with the emphasis of being impersonal has come the suppression of emotions. One is not supposed to get excited or become attached to his daily tasks, for this is not proper. He must function in his minor capacity as only a tiny manipulated being in the chain of capitalistic commodities. Pent-up emotions are often the cause of youth turning against society. They find self-expression in groups where one can exhibit his personal feelings. Society's emphasis on not becoming too involved, the "play it cool" attitude, has resulted in the very lack of commitment underlying the alienated youth's feeling of powerlessness and isolation. "Whether at high levels of management or on the most menial assembly-line tasks, the good worker is highly specialized, is expected to show few feelings, to operate 'by the book', to be consistent, systematic, and precise, to treat all individuals impartially and unemotionally."[15] When one is expected to act as an abstraction, he loses the personal feelings, hopes, and ideals if he conforms, or else becomes estranged from the system, which ignores him.

The impersonalized work roles are a definite hindrance for one trying to assert his uniqueness! Ideally, commitment and self-definition are closely allied, yet today the failure to make commitments disrupts

one's identity, and it is largely due to the predominant feeling of detachment in society. The uncommitted lack the psychic wholeness necessary to live an integrated life. There seem to be two different worlds for most people, the work world and the home. As there is not much meaning in work, the family environment becomes the one hope for solution of the identity crisis. One wishes to be able to leave the office at five and get home, where he will be treated as a living person rather than a number behind a desk. There was a song last year which very aptly described the impersonal monotony of the working world, called "5 O'Clock World,"

> "Up every morning just to keep my job,
> I gotta wind my way through the bustling crowd,
> Sounds of the city pounding in my brain
> As another day goes down the drain."[16]

In this fragmented existence, it is not surprising that man feels lost, for when work has no meaning, and his uniqueness is not recognized or accepted but rather disapproved, there is no alternative but to live apart or not live at all (suicide). "And though men can survive without a sense of inner wholeness or social community--and in our society they often must--a society that requires them to do so may fail to capture their deepest commitments."[17] This strain is even greater on those growing-up, trying to cope with their identity crisis as well as orienting their lives toward socially acceptable standards. Often, the city slum inhabitants have no course but to use deviant means to achieve the socially approved ends, and frequently their condemned groups give them the fundamental security and channels for expression that are lacking elsewhere.

Thwarted in their attempts to find means of self-justification
and identity growing-up, these youths find or invent deviant objects to
occupy them, or those who conform usually become apathetic and disap-
pointed members of the impersonal system, their potential wasted. There
is not enough work to go around, and with overcrowded schools and dull
classes, what other answer than turning to the streets. Young
people desperately in need of help in making critical choices are not
taken seriously by their families. Their problems are pushed aside.
One cannot belong to a system that does not try to understand the
problems of members, yet during the process of adolescence, the in-
dividual is almost totally dependent on his own value judgments to
decide his future. When he finds no other path to success, which is
usually success in terms of socially middle-class approved ideals and
values, he may resort to deviant acts to achieve what society values.
No wonder these youngsters join gangs, for then they can be allied
with others having their same anxieties. How hard it is to gain one's
identity when no one realizes your problems ("...it is hard to grow
up when existing facts are treated as though they do not exist. For
then there is no dialogue, it is impossible to be taken seriously,
to be understood, to make a bridge between oneself and society."[18])
We are certainly growing up _absurd_.

The environment of the individual has a most significant
impact on the concept one develops of himself and his relation to
society. Perhaps too much has been made of the slums and ghettos as
the basic causes of juvenile delinquency, but studies give evidence
that the social outcasts most often come from the lower urban classes

and never break out of their predicament. The environmental impact is
roughest on the youth of the cities. In the rural areas, one has the
personal attention he needs, but in the cities the impersonality and
rapid pace of the success struggle is often too much to face up to,
so these youths find other means to satisfy their needs. They refuse to
make any choices, and seek success in the world of the criminal, with-
out any feeling of integrated wholeness or purpose in their existence.
The cities complicate the growing-up process, for one is made to fend
for himself earlier. The life of the streets acquaints the growing child
with the realities of life much more rapidly than in a rural setting.
In small towns and villages, which are rapidly being swallowed up
by the urban sprawl, there is time to pause and contemplate one's
alternatives. One can feel wanted and a part of a community. In the
city, the constant movement, ceaseless noise, huge concrete structures,
and flashing neons call attention to the rat race that one must
eventually become a part of or revolt against. As George Simmel wrote
in his essay, "The Metropolis And Mental Life,": "The most profound
reason...why the metropolis conduces to the urge for the most individual
personal existence...appears to be the following: the development
of modern culture is characterized by the preponderance of what one may
call the 'objective spirit' over the 'subjective spirit."[19] The slums
and ghettos rub many faces in filth and boredom, and life seems an
unescapable horror. Little wonder that these city youths lack purpose
and feel no identification with the society. "All the streets are
strange, because there is a loss of neighborhood. This is due not only
to bad planning but to the greatly increased mobility of families.

Children are torn from their school chums and this destroys culture."[20]
It is hard to adjust for the key to adjustment is awareness of the
environment.

The loss of community is caused by rapid mobility today. There
no longer seem to be any "grass roots." Families are always moving, and
have moved increasingly toward the large urban concentrations in the
last fifty years, "...out of small towns and urban villages of the
turn of the century to cosmopolitan cities of twenties; out of a stable
and unquestioned family system into the "New Family' where men and women
challenged their assigned 'places' in family and social life; and out of
the complacent and secure philosophies of the Victorian world into the
changing and insecure ideologies of the twentieth century."[21] The urban
dilemma is particularly perplexing. The upper-class families migrate
farther and farther away from the inner-city, and as suburbs spread
over the country side, megalopolis becomes a startling reality. Poor
Negroes move north for greater opportunities and although they may
move into new housing, soon their neighborhood is inhabited by their
own people and degradation soon sets in. Mobility prevents one from
making long-term commitments, for we are moving from place to place
so rapidly that even friendship ties must not become too close, for
too soon they will be broken. With this mobility and loss of community,
it is hard for one to become attached. We live in a large corporation,
communal associations, social clubs and exclusive circles, but none
spontaneous. All are groupings of individuals brought together to
accomplish an end. The communal spirit has disappeared. There is no

longer the sense of everyone getting together and helping a new

neighbor. For a reason, there cannot be any spontaneous union. This

is another manifestation of the impersonalized bureaucracy of advancing

technology and certainly one of the most obvious causes of alienation.

There is no sense of belonging in such a society. Men are treated

as functioning instruments rather than as unique people. How difficult

to grow up when one sees the abstraction he will become and is perplexed

by his inability to make the choice which will allow him to assert

his uniqueness while at the same time being socially accepted! We

have lost the country and technology, family mobility, and the loss

of the traditional neighborhood is left us with no feeling of attach-

ment to the environment.

David Riesman has suggested other-directedness as one

attempt to cope with the psychological estrangement in today's bu/-

reaucratic society. He points to one's basic need to be loved, to

relate to other people, and be socially accepted as the underlying

cause of other/--directedness, and the present day tendency to take

cues from other people. The roles demanded of society's members

are so complex and diverse that one must be able to adapt quickly in

new situations. Sometimes, people feel they have no roles at all;

they are left out--do not belong. The aged are assigned a "roleless"

role in retirement and simply expected to do nothing.[22] The adolescent

frequently cannot perform the worker role for there are not enough

jobs and the available ones seem meaningless. Many workers fear auto-

mation will deprive them of their roles. It seems paradoxical that

while there are many complex roles, there is also a feeling of "role-

lessness" for those who feel no real part of society and become estranged members. Riesman feels that other-directedness is one way people have tried to adapt and adjust to various roles by taking their behavioral cues from others in social situations.

Men are not striving for success as much as in the nineteenth century but more for acceptance. There appears to be a requirement of more "socialized" behavior both for success and for marital and personal adaptation. Man has progressed so fast that he needs to take his behavioral cues from other people, as social norms and mores have weakened and been revolutionized by chronic social change. Tastes and vogues of the group have replaced formal etiquette. One no longer worries so much about exchanging fashions and incoming fads, used as criteria for acceptance in the "in crowd." Due to weakening of strict moral standards and behavioral ideals, a peculiar uncertainty results, reflected in the refusal of many young people to commit themselves to long-term goals. Per groups make youth aware of behavioral expectations at an early age, but no one can be sure of the variety of roles he will be required to play so he must try to develop a character of "friendly elasticity," always adaptable and flexible.[23]

Religion has declined in our society since the waves of immigration during the early decades of this century, and it has become another attempt to gain mental security rather than a deep seated commitment to God. Before the First World War, one of America's great strengths was its religiousness. Such slogans as "The family that prays together, stays together" emphasized the need for communal participation in worship. More recently, the words "...under God"

were added to the pledge allegiance to the flag, one of the last
remaining rituals in childhood. Religion is still considered a
"good thing" but with the present revolution in morality and rapid
change, religion is no longer the unifying force it was in the early
decades of this century. It has become secularized. "No age can
live without an inspiration," and religious inspiration has largely
disappeared from the modern world.[24] Just as youths are forced to
make many choices on their own, so too has religion become largely a
personal matter. One frequently hears the defense for not attending
church, because "I can get my religion out of church--even though I
don't attend, I'm pretty religious." The strength derived from the
participation in the ritual of church worship is dying out, partly due
to the ignorance of the population regarding religious beliefs.
One of the chief tasks for churches today is to find a way to bring
worshippers back into the city churches, and especially those of the
slums and ghettos. Religion no longer gives the security it once did,
for there is little consensus. Will Herberg has aptly described the
present situation.

> Yet it is only too evident that the religious-
> ness characteristic of America today is very often
> a religiousness without religion, a religiousness with
> any kind of content or none, a way of sociability
> or "belonging" rather than a way of reorienting life
> to God.[25]

Religion is part of our ethos, yet it is, like Riesman's other-directedness,
another attempt to be part of a group rather than a serious commitment.
Men need to belong so they join the church, without any real inner

convictions, but hoping to fulfill their need for security found in the group.

The personal development of youth is directly related to religion. Those with strong family backgrounds, who adjust well are most likely to be faithful participants. Most delinquents and slum children do not have the proper household preparation to be responsible members of a religious community. "Juvenile delinquency is universally related to adolescents' and parents' church participation, to the knowledge of religion imputed to parents and to religious rapport and discussion of religion with them."[26] The lack of family solidarity is frequently pointed to as a reason for the failure of religious appeal to you. On the other hand, those who have been oversocialized religiously, been made to attend church every week, read the Bible, and go through the motions of being religious, often revolt and break away from the church in late life. The concept of religion has lost its appeal to one's deepest commitment, but it remains an integral part of our American way of life; Sloan Wilson called church as much a part of our culture as "instant coffee, homogenized milk, TV, and hamburgers."[27] Although more than 120 million have their names on church rolls, the influence of religion has been undermined by rapidly changing values and especially the sexual revolution, and with it has disappeared the mental security and accepted ways of acting once so taken for granted in America.

Martin Marty, has discussed various varieties of unbelief due to the decline of religion and points to anomie as a form of unbelief recognized in young people. As the child develops, physical

dependence on parents leads to psychic dependence, and he usually
inherits the religion or belief system of the parents. When he is
suddenly forced to be a part of the adult world and no longer told how
to act, his value system may be destroyed or rejected due to conflict
in society. "He experiences identity diffusion and does not know who
he is."[28] The anomie results when he becomes "out of joint" with
society. His religion or value system may seem irrelevant. Competition
and conflict overshadow his early ideologies, as the old beliefs
clash with what he finds necessary in the adult world. Thus, the basic
idea Marty expresses is that due to every changing norms and competition
of mass society, often the value systems and ethical standards in-
corporated as a child are tossed aside when he faces conflicts in the
adult world.

The concrete effects of technology on youth can be seen in
birth control measures presently common among those growing up, who
derive satisfaction from sexual experimentation without any consequences.
Contraceptives and pills enable young people to engage in intercourse
frequently without any worries. "The maturation of sexual capacities
several years before society allows young people to marry presents
adolescents with a serious dilemma."[29] When young people growing up
realize that society's double sex standards can be easily violated, they
tend to reject the hypocrisy implicit in our sexual mores. One is
supposed to repress his sexual drives until he joins in a meaningful
sexual partnership with a wife. Small wonder that with the chance
of sexual experimentation the sex drive is often satisfied prior to
marriage. The other alternative is violating the ethical code of

society. Although contraception is becoming common (over 4,000,000 couples, it is estimated, use some means of control each night), as indeed it must be if it is to help solve the world's population problem, Nevertheless, its effect on youth has been detrimental to society, for with increased sexual experimentation, their tendency is to turn on society and reject its double standards. The sexual revolution and changing morality seem largely resultant from the preponderance of contraception among those growing-up. Sometimes, sex may become one means of escape from a feeling of estrangement, for in the sex act, one momentarily feels joined with another and not isolated but united.

The leisure prevalent in our society has also caused a notable increase in boredom. "Never before has so much leisure time been available to so many."[30] The pleasure ethic seems to be replacing the work ethic, and the struggle is to acquire enough so one can spend his hours on the golf course, traveling, or at other enjoyable activities. Leisure can be dangerous, for when man has too much "free time," he becomes bored. Boredom destroys men, for they are not exploiting their capabilities and their potential is being wasted. The specialized monotony of the work world is often exchanged for an escape to a world of luxurious boredom. The routine in our society is alarming. We are all on a tread-mill, plodding slowly till one day we perish. This routine is part of the prevailing abstractionism in our society. Sometimes, one realizes the absolute horror of the boring routine he

experiences day-in and day-out in the downtown office, and he suddenly
feels totally worthless. There are not even any rituals in society
to disrupt the routine. Spectator sports come closest, for then a large
segment of the population can vicariously participate in the struggle
and feel the pangs of victory and defeat, but there are really no all-
encompassing ceremonies. Religion used to give many the feeling of
participation they craved, but it has become so personalized that many
say they are religious even though they never attend services. The
prevalence of leisure and routine of life has removed us from life's
realities, for we cannot experience the struggles, horrors, love, death,
fears when we live in a life of monotonous detachment. When men are
uncommitted, as indeed most are in the specialized routine society, there
can be no real adventure or feeling of accomplishment. They are all
playing roles on the treadmill--not truly alive with emotions, con-
victions, but rather simply a functioning part of the whole social
process, who answer when asked "Who are you?", "I am a teacher,"
or "I am a businessman," or "I am a lawyer."

There is no constructive use of leisure, so we lapse into
boredom, and stagnate when there is time to waste.[31] Fromm feels
even the pleasure we experience is alienated, for we do not participate,
'all is done for us.' We consume our pleasure. As Kodak's most catchy
phrase states so well, "You press the button, we do the rest." When
one cannot feel a part of what he is enjoying, he is not changed.
The Greeks were able to watch the tragedies of Euripèdes and Aeschylus
and feel a true emotional identification with the actors, so the suffer-
ing of life was made real on the stage, and they experienced a real

catharsis. But all is so detached today, that if we enjoy something, it is only because it will be a memory of some pleasant experience-- there is no real participation. Leisure and pleasure become commodities in the consumption market. There is no real means of releasing our emotions, not even through leisure. Toynbee sees the future of one's spiritual freedom dependent on leisure, "In the twentieth century economy, the vindication of spiritual freedom become the living generation's most urgent business; and the area in which the spiritual battle would be lost or won would be a field of leisure that in a fully mechanized world might come to be all but co-existence with the field of life itself."[32]

When one must experience life as routine, keeping his feelings enclosed within, not being able to release or enjoy adventure or a real struggle, he begins to feel the anxiety of not belonging or being a part of anything.

The special routine is not as prevalent among those growing-up for they are forever faced with challenges and decisions, and the turbulence of trying to ready themselves for the adult world, yet boredom is often alarming, especially among the high school dropouts and youth of the streets. These kids have nothing to do but hang around the corner drug store or cause trouble on the block. The effects on youth of idleness and apathy were pointed up clearly in a survey by the American Youth Commission in 1942.

> "All over the country hundreds of boys deserted
> the innumerable active games that cost nothing to
> play and idled down to the town poolrooms to watch
> people play a game that cost money. Girls whose
> grandmothers had rejoiced in needlework and collective
> social enterprises - sat in sorrowful solitude watching
> people who had money pass by in automobiles. Not

> one unemployed youth thought of making so much
> use of this time as to acquire and really master the
> homely, not-to-be-despised art of accurate
> and skillful whistling."[33]

They try to stay away from home, for there is nothing but unhappiness

there. If they go to school, they lead the same monotonous existence

of thousands growing up in cities. There are no jobs for them to hold,

except grocery boy or peddling hot dogs through the streets, and that

soon becomes loathsome. There is no prospect for these kids, for they

have nothing to call their own. Boredom overwhelms their lives and they

search for adventure in gangs. These youths, of the ghettos, even

those from some of the more well-to-do families are alone. "They do

not do their school work, for they are waiting to quit; and it is

hard...for them to get a part-time job. Indeed, the young fellows (not

only delinquents) spend a vast amount of time doing nothing. They

hang around together, but don't talk about anything, nor even if you

watch their faces do they passively take in the scene."[34] There is

nothing to do so they shoot pool, sit on the dirty tenement stoops,

play stickball in the streets, fight rivals, rob local establishments,

or join the armed services as one hope of escape from the existence

that appears hopeless. When they do nothing, they begin to wonder if

they will ever be anyone and ask, "Am I nothing?" There is a desperate

need to prove oneself, and what better way than showing "heart" in

a gang fight. The boredom reflects the tragedy of being unwanted,

and they form their own groups as a way of escaping the boredom of the

streets. The imaginative youths who can create interest in a gang

or generate excitement is the one most often looked up to.

There is often disillusionment over ideals among adolescents, who have had ingrained in them the great values of democracy, equality and truth, only to discover that men do not practice what they preach. This is especially true in the governing institutions where graft and corruption payola, and wire-tapping are common occurrences (witness the Bobby Baker scandal). There is a duality in the ethical standards--certain things are all right when done by some but condemmed when performed by others. It has already been mentioned how youth frequently deplore sexual morality and either disregard the ethical standards or disobey them to satisfy their own pleasures. Hypocrisy abounds, and it is one of the most frustrating ideas confronting those growing up. How can they be expected to follow established norms when others around them constantly show no respect for the values? Honor is abused continually, and large scale cheating scandals in universities have become common place. With respect for our ideals destroyed by violators and hypocrites, the adolescent finds himself unsure of whether to strive to live up to the ideals or reject them. Usually, he will try to find a middle ground and compromise his own identity crisis and try to relate to social values. No wonder one often becomes alienated to such ideals!

With the inability to accept society's ideals, the youth tries to establish his own value code. The lack of any explicit universal standards of right and wrong have been superceded by various ethical codes within a multiplicity of adolescent subcultures (the gangs, Bohemians, surfers, college crowds, motorcyclists, gay set, teeny boppers). Youngsters today are in revolt against the old ways and attempting to establish a New Morality.

"Our suffering comes about not because we no
longer know on which theoretical scheme we should base
the morality we have been practicing, but because
in some of its parts this morality has been shattered
beyond repair and because the morality we require
is only in process of establishment."[35]

Premarital sex is now gaining widespread acceptance, and many youth

feel "trying it" before marriage is the only way to assure sexual

compatibility in a lasting relationship. The big emphasis is on "being

yourself" which encompasses everything from banjo-picking pacifists

to Harvard business grads. Youth is really stirring things up, for

they are freer to experiment and try things than ever before, due

largely to their rejection on society's demands. They are more tolerant

of others and try to understand those who behave differently. Of

course, the youths of the slums and ghettos are largely removed from

this new morality, for life still has its monotony, and they are still

often trapped by their existence. Without guidelines to assist

them in solving their identity crisis, the youth of today are largely

free to try many things, but frequently they turn on society, as their

means of fulfilling their desires to assert their individuality often

are socially unapproved, and they are restrained or punished by the

social order.

Although the rapid changes in society affect all, there is greater

stress put on those growing up, for during their years of trying to assert

themselves and become independent, many decisions must be made and the

criteria are often lacking. The monotony and routine highly valued

middle class standard's disillusionment with society's ideals, lack of

work or simply rejection of work as an unsatisfactory time-consumer,

decline of religion, the new morality and the end of the old order,
generational discontinuity, all combined have placed youth in a dilemma
which is most perplexing to those growing up in the cities and part-
ticularly of the lower classes who are at a disadvantage from the beginning
without family or financial solidarity. With no one to pay attention
to their problems or even consider them as individuals, small wonder
they attempt to find appreciation and excitement among their peers.
Max Lerner has described the growing up process beautifully, and his
statement reflects the alienation of these youths.

> "To strive for popularity, yet to feel alone and
> unwanted; to hunger for use, yet to go unused; to
> carry the sense of comradeship like a burning city
> in your heart, yet to have to extinguish it in
> order to keep your position in the hierarchy; to
> replace the ideal impulse and the brooding in-
> tensity of the attitudes of Faustian power, of
> violence of speed and aggrandisement..."[36]

Society today is intent on molding its youth into the future leaders.
Yet there are no guidelines nor real preparations for adulthood to
follow; they must cope with the situation and adapt as well as they
can, all the time repressing emotions and simply trying to find
some means of adventure. Too many find out that society will not
let them be themselves, and then reject society or experience extreme
personal anxiety.

Footnotes

Chapter III

1 Cf. Ferdinand Toennies, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, translated and edited by C. P. Loomis, East Lansing, Michigan, 1957.

2 Keniston, The Uncommitted, p. 205.

3 Blake McKelway, The Urbanization of America, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1963, p.63.

4 Cf. McKelway, pp. 231-252 for chapter on urban growth in early 1900's.

5 Caroline M. Tryon, "The Adolescent Peer Culture," Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, XLIII, Chicago, 1944, p. 234.

6 Lerner, America as a Civilization, p. 697.

7 Keniston, op. cit., p. 397.

8 Generational Discontinuity is the term Keniston uses to refer to the abyss between parents and children caused by difference in life situations confronted by adolescents and their parents.

9 "The Inheritor," Time, LXXXIX, January 6, 1967, p. 18.

10 Williams, American Society, p. 80.

11 August Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth, New York 1949, p. 150.

12 Keniston, op. cit., p. 211.

13 J. J. Gillespie, Free Expression In Industry, London, 1948, p. 67.

14 Paul Goodman, Growing Up Absurd, New York, 1957, p. 33.

15 Keniston, op. cit., p. 211.

16 The Vogues, "Five O'Clock World," CO and CF Records, 1965.

17 Keniston, op. cit., p. 270.

18 Goodman, op. cit., p. 39.

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26 David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962, p. 362.

27 Sloan Wilson, The Man In the Grey Flannel Suit, New York, 1955, p. 73.

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31 A good treatment of the effects of leisure at present found in Samuel H. Ordway, Prosperity Beyond Tomorrow, New York, 1959.

32 Arnold Toynbee, The Study of History, IX, New York, 1954, p. 614.

33 American Council on Education, Youth and the Future, Washington, D. C., 1942, p. 271.

34 Goodman, Growing Up Absurd, p. 41.

35 Emile Durkheim, Division of Labor in Society, Translated by George Simpson, Glencoe, Illonois, 1947, p. 409.

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Chapter IV

Environmental and Psychological Factors in the Identity Crisis

The psychological phrase, "identity crisis," refers to the inner struggle one experiences in his effort to develop a concept of self, based upon the way his family, his peers, and "society" react to him. This crisis tends to resolve itself if and when the individual becomes aware of his responsibilities, sees himself related to other people and accepted by them, and feels in harmony with the attitudes, beliefs, and ideals of his culture.

The problem of surmounting successfully the identity crisis is a serious one for very many urban youths of the lower economic and social classes; and failure to solve the crisis results in some form of rejection of society, and even of rejection of freedom itself. As has been pointed out earlier, various social factors have combined to produce a pervading sense of estrangement and isolation in youths of this class in recent years. During the past two decades the increasing alienation has become clearly recognized as an American social phenomenon.

It is a commonplace of sociological analysis to note that, in our era of rapid change, the "old order" has given way, without having yet been replaced by a new order. We are therefore in a period of transition, always a difficult time to live through. Cultural guidelines have disintegrated or changed; absolutes and verities have withered; so

much is relative in our culture today that one is repeatedly forced
to rely on personal judgment. Freedom is an actual burden, for one
must take responsibility for his decisions. The result may be, for the
individual, neuroses and psychoses, since the personality is not able
"to find any clearly defined and culture-sanctioned patterns of ideas,
conduct, and feelings, which will express its deepest drives."[1] Anxiety
present in society-at-large is especially intense among underprivileged
youths who lack the benefits of a solid family and who are limited in
their opportunities. In short, these youth have most difficulty in
resolving their identity crisis.

No specific date can be set for the dissolution of the "old
order" and the beginning of the transition in which we now find our-
selves. Many have suggested the Great Depression or the Second World
War as starting points. Whatever moment is selected, alienation was,
in the old order, still largely a personal problem; it had hardly per-
meated the entire culture. When the Depression ended much that had been
considered permanent in American life, and the Second World War destroyed
still more, Americans had, as it were, to grope in the dark to replace
the values that had disintegrated--and in the groping, individuals more
and more were left to choose for themselves, to rely upon personal
decisions. Herein lies the root of anxiety.

Alienation, estrangement, and anxiety are all states of mind;
they must be regarded as psychological problems as well as sociological
ones. Much of the analysis of the backgrounds of the current mood
agreed upon certain socio-psychological developments as especially
significant. In the early decades of this century, the majority of
Americans still lived in rural areas or small towns. Children were

brought up by their parents with comparatively fixed values. Since
fathers were at home and visible for much of the time, the identification
of a boy with his father was general and expected. (The identification
of the girl with her mother was also normal; but our problem chiefly
relates to boys.) Anxieties were consequently few and manageable for
most young people, since values seemed clear-cut, social institutions
stable, and personal relationships with ones family satisfying for the
developing personality.

With increasing urbanization, and with the transformation of
occupations and industries, many social changes affected children's
psychological conditions. Identification with the father became impossible
when the father was away from home for most of the day; attendance at
public school for seven or eight hours a day even more decreased
parent-child contact. By the period after the Depression, the change
from rural (and small-town) to urban living was fully felt, and after
the Second World War it became still more evident.

Riesman is merely one of many who note that the result was a
change in child training. Parents in cities had to train their children
to be adaptable to grow up to "be like Daddy," and the children were
being socialized more and more outside the family by their perr-groups.
Today, the urban child is pushed to grow up rapidly, instead of being
left to grow up at his own pace, as in rural America. The urban child
is expected to adjust quickly to the adult world; but without identification
with his parent, he must rely upon his own resources of personality.
Adolescents of the crowded and poorer sections of cities, especially

in slums and ghettos, have the most difficult time, for they are forced
to make their own way earlier and under more strenuous circumstances
than more fortunate children who know family solidarity and financial
security as they start out on the arduous task of growing up in a
transitional age.

Anthropologists who have developed the concept of National
Character have illuminated the subject of alienation, although not
always intentionally. Margaret Mead, for example, is one of those who
clearly sees a recent shift from the traditional character toward some
new character not yet fully delineated. The American child formerly
modeled himself on the parent of his own sex and incorporated the
standards of that parent into his own personality, so that his conscience
stood him as surrogate for the parent. Without going into Mead's
detail, one sees that the child was fitted into society through
the parent, taking his behavioral cues, attitudes, and values from
the parent, and feeling a sense of security because he had these de-
finite values. (Riesman would call this inner-direction.) "A con-
ception of Deity which sees Him as primarily concerned with moral
behavior, and as backing up the parent in dealing with the potentially
immoral child, completes this classic picture."[2]

Nowadays, says Mead, with the shift away from this Puritanical,
traditional system, "generational discontinuity" replaces parental
identification. The chief result is a radical disruption in the growing-
up process, and a consequent feeling of inadequacy when one has to cope

with the complexities of daily life. Morality itself has been shaken.
What is often called the "new morality" seems to be only the absence of
clear standards to obey. Again the consequent anxiety and alienation
is best observed in urban youth, especially in underprivileged sections
of cities.

George Spindler likewise notes the transformation away from
traditional values to what he calls, with appropriate vagueness, "emergent
values." The Depression and Second World War put an end to the established
way, and new values have been evolving. What has caused so much anomie,
estrangement, and despair is that the emerging values have not been
widely enough accepted to give security that traditional values afforded
before the 1940's. The change, according to Spindler, has been from
Puritan morality, the work ethic, individual achievement, and faith
in the future to moral relativism (each one decides for himself), the
cult of the present, and large-scale conformity. Individuals must be
adaptable and be able to divide their personality to fit the various roles
they perform, so they can make "different responses in different situations
and with respect to different symbols."[3] Youths undergoing the socialization
process are confused, for there are no strict, widely-accepted values but
rather conflicting traditional and emergent ones, from which the adolescent
must choose. These fluctuating values have had most significant
impact on the lower class kids from the ghettos. They are becoming more
violent in their rejection of what society offers. Juvenile delinquency
has increased, and the underpriveleged are discovering the serious
problems involved in growing-up.

The quest for status and role-fulfillment causes psychological
stress during the identity crisis, and the absolute certainty once

afforded by parents has been replaced by peer groups, which have become
almost important in the maturation process as the family. When a
child is rejected by his parents or other significant adults, he turns
to his peers for approval. He may feel society demands too much and
revolts against the adult world by joining a street gang, breaking laws,
or withdrawing inward and taking dope. These reactions are common
in poor city neighborhoods, where the opportunities are severely
limited and their means totally irreconsilable with socially-accepted,
middle-class success-goals, "In alienated youths...the demand to choose
without criteria, to work only for a 'living,' and to integrate one's
life unaided--these demands cannot or will not be met; they help
inspire a rejection of American society and a determination to find
another way of life."[4] Often, the city offers only the gang as an outlet
for one's frustrated aggressions against a despised society. The
alienated youths are products and rebels of our society--products by
their refusal of freedom, lack of commitment, and self-estrangement,
and rebels in rejection of cultural values and searchers for their own
more personal needs. Too many are trapped in the slum with no way to
escape and thus, potential is drained from society like water through
a sieve, when so many resort to deviant behavior or find solace in anti-
social subcultures, simply because of social demands during the transi-
tional stages of adolescence,

> "Thwarted, or starved, in the important objects proper to
> young capacities, the boys and young men naturally find or
> invent deviant objects for themselves; this is the
> beautiful shaping power of our human nature. Their
> choices and inventions are rarely charming, usually stupid,
> and often disastrous (in the case of the violent gang);

> we cannot expect average kids to deviate with genius.
> But on the other hand, the young men who conform to the
> dominant society become for the most part apathetic,
> disappointed, cynical, and wasted."[5]

It seems almost more profitable to rebel or deviate, for at least in

these actions there is the possibility of adventure and a break in the

routine monotony.

One of the main problems of coming of age in America is the

absence of any well-defined guidelines marking the transition from

childhood to the adult world. There are no rites de passage to cere-

moniously initiate the maturing youth into his new social roles, so the

age-group conflicts are more severe in our culture. There have never

been any rites de passage to mark the transition to adulthood, but

before America became urbanized, early in this century, there was no

need for such ceremonies, for the child proceeded slowly to adulthood

by identifying with the parent, who prepared his child to function

in society. Usually, the boys followed in the same occupations as

their fathers. Today, one does not need learn only the occupational

role of farmer, machine-operator, or teacher, but with the multitude

of social roles, without a rite de passage to mark the transition from

childhood to adulthood, the child becomes discouraged when he has to

decide for himself how to act. Confusion over roles he is expected to

play as an adult often causes one to become alienated and sometimes

favor prolonged adolescence. Psychological identities and social

interests of teen-agers are not seen simply through their eyes but also

by the community. Often the transition from adolescence to adulthood

is a time of emotional stress and psychological fragmentation. "Aside

from the common contradictions between the child's and the adolescent's

world, as contrasted with the fond hopes and expectations of adults, is the frequently correlated problem of failing to provide psychological continuity in the cultural growth of the young."[6] Stress is caused when one changes roles, and his preparation for the new role has been inadequate. Certain psychological traits may be irrelevant once a child passes out of a certain age or peer group, and he is expected to develop a self-concept and become emotionally mature largely on his own. With the sudden change in role expectancy, and the lack of any formal initiation to the new role, the estrangement and disillusionment of youth are not uncommon reactions to various emotional strains—psychological urges to emulate adults, constant repression and hostility as expressions of socially-expected behavior and its frustration, and childhood practices of manipulating adults, avoiding them to protect their own standards. In many primitive cultures, the entire early years are devoted to preparation for the day the youth passes through the ceremony into adulthood and leaves behind his childhood memories and practices to become a participating, responsible member of the social order. Small wonder many feel alienated from our culture, when between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, they are suddenly expected to be mature and fend for themselves, changing their roles radically and deserting any ways of behaving that might be considered childish.

From an early age, children are expected to act in accordance with various sex roles, and any hint of femininity in a boy is ridiculed and promptly rejected. One of the reasons for self-estrangement is society's enforced behavioral codes, based on one's sex. As one grows up, he gradually matures. A boy's change of voice is one of the first signs of adolescence. Parents usually become increasingly

aware of maturational changes in their children and try to help in the child's personal adjustment. Certain aspects of the maturing process alarm adults. One's nickname, a sign of acceptance and even honor among one's peers, often causes much hostility towards parents, who refuse to see their son in the eyes of the youth culture. "Thus, the estranged and astounded parent learns that his or her beloved William (the erstwhile 'Billy Boy') is now addressed fondly by his companions as 'Toughie,' 'Pal,' 'the Rock,' and by as many other cognomens as the fertile imagination of the adolescent world can conjure up in relation to attainments, real or imagined."[7] The emotional stress builds up during the adolescent years till it reaches its height. When the youth breaks away from his family to become a participating member of society the zenith of this emotion is reached. Much of the protest of youth is an expression of the increasing desire "to shatter household ties and to assert one's independence as a self-initiating personality.[8]

The most difficult task, even more so than severing family ties, in winning one's spurs, is adjusting to the social role society demands based on one's sex. This aspect of the identity crisis causes inner turmoil and tension. One must integrate many aspects of life during the growing years and is expected to perform his role as a mature individual. The pressures to restrain his natural temperament causes psychological strain, for he is put into categories based on sex, regardless of his personal nature. The young child is "enjoined, wheedled, cajoled, and coerced" to behave in the manner society deems appropriate for his or her sex. A young boy is taught to be "a good loser" yet always ready to defend himself, to suppress his emotions--

hold back his tears, not to cling to mommy's apron, to play baseball

rather than listen to classical music and generally behave "like his

daddy."[9] The girl, although she may prefer to behave as a "tom boy"

in pre-adolescence, is early taught the rudiments of womanhood and

social graces--how to sit, walk, wear her clothes, and a million other

ways of acting properly. Margaret Mead feels the American sex role

one of the main causes of deviance, for those with temperament or

acquired traits contrary to expected behavior, become alienated and

deviate from established social patterns.[10]

Society's external pressures are internalized as frustrations

or repressed hostilities in the youth who cannot, due to temperament

or acquired sex roles, conform to social expectations. Just as one

struggles to assert his uniqueness in society, he must also cope with

his sex-identity crisis and attempt to be assimilated into this social

role. Homosexuals, drug addicts, sex criminals, and any perverts are

often deviating in attempt to escape social demands, which are contrary

to their temperament. A child with no physical disability may identify

strongly with the parent of his or her own sex, but our culture soon

condemns such attachment. Individual traits are so constricted in

compliance with our sex-dichotomy norms that the adjustments of some

lead them to introversion, neurosis, and pathological escapism. The

little boy who expresses his creative instincts by sewing is never given

the chance to become a great brain surgeon; rather his behavior is

condemned as feminine and he is told to play baseball with his friends.

The sexual role classification not only causes psychological stress and

turns deviants against society, but it destroys potential productive

lives and turns them to uncreative despair.

Rollo May, a distinguished existential psychoanalysist

has written a book concerning the pervasive anxiety in our society.

Dr. May believes present anxiety has occurred for a number of reasons,

but sees conformity as the most usual alternative to anxiety. One

adapts completely to the personality that culture patterns offer, and

becomes exactly as others expect him to be, he loses his individuality.

"Though this conformity is acquired by the individual as a means of

avoiding isolation and anxiety, it actually works the other way;

the individual conforms at the price of renouncing his autonomous

strength, and hence he becomes more helpless, powerless, and insecure."[11]

The conformist is Riesman's other-directed person. Those youths who do

not conform frequently suffer anxiety. As Alfred Adler wrote early in

this century,

> "They (youths) play the role of people whose feeling
> for society is defective, who have not discovered
> the point of contact with their fellow men, and look
> upon them as hostile. Traits of suspicion are very common
> among them; they are always on guard lest someone
> take advantage of them and I have often heard these
> children exclaim that it is necessary to be unscrupulous,
> i.e., that superiority must be attained."[12]

With the loss of individuality, has come an emphasis on conformity,

which does not alleviate anxiety but rather causes greater stress.

May feels that the most basic cause of self-estrangement

is the absence of myth in the American culture. Youth growing up

today have no absolutes, no ultimate values to rely on. There is no

security, solace, or support derived from myth, or rituals. As he

said, "At the point where myth and symbols go to pieces, so do in-
dividuals."[13] Everyone has an identity crisis, for it has become very

hard to discover who one really is. At the beginning of this century,

there was hope of getting ahead through diligence, honesty, and thrift.

Horatio Alger was the man of the hour. When alienation had become

increasingly widespread after 1945, Willy Loman destroyed that myth, for

he did all society dictated and ended up in the "economic ashcan."

Yet, Willy deceived himself till his final suicide by thinking himself

well-liked ("personality wins the day"). His son, Biff, prophetically

commented at the funeral, "But he never knew who he was"[14] and this

is the case so many youth of today experience. The tragedy confronting

one today in his search for identity is the mythless existence without

meaning, for "myths are the patterns that give meaning to life."[15] A

loneliness pervades the present, and none can escape it.

The way to overcome alienation, May feels, is to find meaning

in meaninglessness by cultivating the "myth of care." The "myth of care"

is a strong attachment, commitment, or identification with something in

life that enables an individual to derive meaning from life through

caring for someone or something. The reason we are detached, alienated

souls is because too much is expected of us too soon. We are expected

to be an individual and make our own choices without guidelines, for

all the great myths are gone. In the early days of the frontier,

when pioneers toiled to build homes in the wilderness, one who made his

life a success on his own was looked up to. Physical isolation among

early settlers was common on the frontier, but the community spirit

gave each man a feeling of belonging and participation. The estrangement

of the modern day was nonexistent. The estrangement we suffer today

must be transformed into constructive solitude, as Thoreau so dramat-
ically demonstrated in his simple life. When we begin to care and
commit ourselves, then we "can begin to find meaning that transcends
alienation."[16] It is through commitment and attachment "that man
will be led from an age of mythlessness and alienation to new meaning. He
will become the hero, able to face nothingness and death, overcome his
inner struggles, wrestle with non-being, and "knock on the door of
silence and hear music."[17]

The Horatio Alger myth has been shattered by Willy Loman's
failure, and there is no longer the emphasis on thrift and personal
effort to get ahead. There is little motivation to learn. Too much
has been taken away, and the automated world of the B.A., the union
card, and the time clock have dimmed initiative and strengthened dis-
illusionment. "The sense of initiative, causality, skill has been
discouraged. Merit is a trait of 'personality,' learning is the pos-
session of a diploma. Usefulness is a Union Card."[18] Largely restricted
in means of attaining success-goals, the poor youth of the cities turn
from work to find deviant means of satisfying their aims and values. In
the cities, jobs are scarce, and those without a high level of education
are relegated to unskilled, insignificant tasks, with no future. Paul
Goodman calls attention to the effect of the age of automation on youth
today.

> "In our society, bright lively children, with
> the potentiality for knowledge, noble ideals, honest effort
> and some kind of worth-while achievement, are trans-
> formed into useless and cynical bipeds, or decent young
> men trapped or early resigned, whether in or out of
> the organized system."[19]

Most youngsters of today favor a position outside the system, in a subculture where they can better cope with their anxiety among their peers, who suffer similar problems.

The sibling struggle for parental affection and various age conflicts cause anxiety in children and often carry over into later life. Many times the dominance of the mother becomes a barrier in the individual's attempt to achieve sexual maturity. Boys who have been closely supervised by their mothers, whose fathers spend much time away from home, find it difficult to assert their masculinity and achieve integrated sexual relationships. They later regret their upbringing and revolt against these earlier attachments--do things to embarrass their parents to assert their emancipation from them. A boy who has not had a meaningful relationship with his mother may seek fulfillment of this earlier need in later life. These adolescents will look for a strong, domineering woman, and usually find only unhappiness in marriage. The unhappy childhood memories of these alienated individuals may leave a scar on one's personality, which is absent among those who have received family support and been properly socialized. "For the alienated, this childhood past remains more 'actual,' more psychologically present, than for most; yet the courses of their lives cannot be said to be fixed or forced upon them by their childhoods."[20] The Gluecks in their research on delinquents have stressed early childhood impressions,

> "It is quite generally recognized nowadays, that certain
> early childhood experiences are likely to leave so
> burned-in an impression on the deepest emotional
> layers as to cause the growing personality to
> become scarred and twisted by frequent conflicts
> and frustrations, or to impel readily to socially mal-
> adapted conduct tendencies."[21]

The lack of parental affection or improper child-rearing is one of the most significant causes of the psychological anxiety in later adolescence, as these children continue to seek satisfaction of their unfulfilled needs. "The boy and girl who have not succeeded in gaining satisfactory statuses within their family; whose family is nonexistent, inadequate, or in personal conflict; whose relations with their parents and other older people at home involve a constant struggle against domination or neglect; whose school performance is unsatisfactory; whose opportunities to engage in other community activities are limited--these frustrated and underpriveleged children can find in peer groups, especially in conflict gangs, the opportunities for individual achievement otherwise denied."[22]

One of the major sources of age conflicts between children and adults is that frequently in their identity crisis adolescents are not taken seriously. Something which may seem most significant to a child may be viewed as ridiculous by an adult. Goodman again has brought this youth crisis into focus,

> "...it is hard to grow up when existing facts are
> treated as though they do not exist. For then
> there is no dialogue, it is impossible to be taken
> seriously, to be understood, to make a bridge
> between oneself and society."[23]

Society looks upon youth today as a social problem, but passively waits for some deus exmachina to furnish a solution. The subcultures of youth--beatniks, peaceniks, street gangs--are frequently criticized by journalists, authors, and free-lance writers.

The tragedy of being unwanted is what causes deepest anxiety among the youth today. There is nothing constructive to do in the cities, so the kids hang around, with no worthwhile prospect, no sense of justification, for nothing is their own. Boredom destroys, and "when one does nothing, one is threatened by the question, is one nothing."[24] There is a desperate need to prove oneself, and not only in games, sports, but gangwars, where one is accorded 'rep' based on his achievements in combat and ability to dominate others by strength of personality or show. The ones who create interest and excitement are those who are looked up to as the leaders, for they initiate alternatives to boredom on the block.

Not only are they not given enough adult attention, but they have nowhere to play or release their inner emotions. There are no longer neighborhoods, to play in, nor are the parks safe. Much of this is due to the increased family mobility, many moving out of the inner city and those without enough financial security, working their way into the low rent districts and slums. "Children are torn from their school chums and this destroys culture."[25] The loss of community in the urban world today is one of the prime causes of adolescent estrangement. With the decline of neighborhoods has come the disappearance of play-grounds. Playing in the streets was once a common sight in New York City, but the cars have discouraged many ball games and the boys are forced to seek out a Sunday-deserted parking lot to play stickball. They have nowhere to go, much worse, no one seems to care. Technology, family mobility, decline of the neighborhood, and the loss of the country by a

spreading megalopolis have all helped destroy any real environment for
children to grow up in. "In the city life that has replaced the farm
and frontier, spur-winning gives new forms to the old activities--
learning how to smoke and swear, hearing about sexual exploits, showing
athletic prowess, taking part in school pranks and escapades."[26] The
schools do not help, as they are hideously overcrowded, poorly lighted,
and understaffed. In Harlem tests at one school showed "native
intelligence" declined every two years. Too many find education too
hard, for they are not shown the necessary fundamentals or given proper
guidance at home or school, so they give up, and wait for the day when
they can quit, or simply stay out of school for more opportunity to
hang around the block all day. As one delinquent commented, "The main
thing that I didn't like was because in each one of our different
houses, it was always a business section where boys and girls got in
difficulty because of the environment. We didn't have the facilities
for recreation, nor any of the things which interest teen-age children."[27]

The dilemma for youth, especially the lower class city dwellers,
amplifies the perplexity of the alienation crisis confronting modern
man. Absence of myths as grounds for ultimate value, no real sense of
belonging, unconcerned parents, unexciting and scarce jobs, restrictions
on one's behavior based on categorized sex roles, and a multitude of
other influences exert emotional strain on adolescents that causes a
pervading anxiety during the years of preparation for adulthood. The
most crucial time of one's life is during the teen-age years, when he
establishes his uniqueness and attempts to carve a niche in the social

order where he can participate as a responsible member of society.
Technology intensifies the identity problem, by requiring an over-
whelming number of decisions be made without available criteria and by
dissociating the meaningless work from the rest of life. "During a
period of confusion about moral standards and about the vague, ill-
defined limits of personal behavior, our young people are bewildered and
at a loss to know what is expected of them, what their functions are,
and how far they may go in achieving the poorly defined status of
adulthood."[28] The family has declined and left the child largely
self-reliant. Unable to cope with the confused situation, many of
these troubled youths, especially in cities, seek adventure and security
within peer structures, commonly referred to as gangs. It is to
these delinquents and their groups that we now turn.

Footnotes

Chapter IV

1 Lerner, America as a Civilization, II, p. 578.

2 Felix M. Keesing, Cultural Authropology, New York, 1962, p. 165.

3 Ibid, p. 168.

4 The Uncommitted, p. 271.

5 Goodman, Growing Up Absurd, p. 13, my parentheses.

6 Herbert A. Bloch and Arthur Niederhoffer, The Gang, New York, 1958, p. 43.

7 Ibid., p. 62.

8 The Gang, p. 70.

9 Ibid., p. 76.

10 See Margret Mead, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies, New York, 1935.

11 Rollo May, The Meaning of Anxiety, New York, 1950, p. 174.

12 Alfred Adler, The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology, New York, 1932, p. 348.

13 Rollo May, Speech entitled, "Identity, Myth, and Value," at Bucknell University, March 30, 1967.

14 Cf. Arthur Miller, The Death of a Salesman, New York, 1945.

15 May's lecture.

16 loc. cit.

17 Ibid.

18 Goodman, op. cit., p. 88.

19 Growing Up Absurd, p. 14.

20 The Uncommitted, p. 156.

21 Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Delinquents in the Making, New York, 1952, p. 134.

22 Milton L. Barron, The Juvenile in Delinquent Society, New York, 1956, p. 155.

23 Goodman, _op_. _cit_., p. 39.

24 _Ibid_, p. 41.

25 _Growing Up Absurd_, p. 75.

26 Lerner, _op_. _cit_., p. 580.

27 Benjamin Fine, _1,000,000 Delinquents_, New York, 1955, p. 87.

28 Herbert A. Bloch and Frank T. Flynn, _Delinquency_, New York, 1956, p. 4.

Chapter V

Juvenile Delinquents - Poor Aliens of the Slums

> "Delinquent subcultures....represent specialized
> modes of adaptation to this problem of adjust-
> ment. Two of these subcultures....provide illegal
> avenues to success goals. The retreatist sub-
> culture consists of a loosely structured group of
> persons who have withdrawn from competition in
> the larger society, who anticipate defeat and now
> seek escape from the burden of failure."
>
> ---Cloward and Ohlin,
> Delinquency and Opportunity

Since the turn of the century and increasingly after
World War II, juvenile delinquency has become a major social problem.
The social complexity caused by rapid advances in technology has turned
youth to their peers for help in solving the identity crisis. The
adolescents of today need emotional outlets for aggressions and
frustrations. Anxiety pervades the youth culture, and "mostly these
kids have nothing to do and will have nothing worthwhile to do. They
feel worthless and guilty, and these feelings are often enhanced by
unusual hostility at home, both taken and given."[1] For the lower class
youth of the slums and impoverished areas of the cities, the delinquent
subcultures become the most feasible solution to their need for
appreciation and adventure. They are bored or unhappy with everything,
and at least associations with others of one's own age fosters hope of

escape from the monotony of tenement life, beatings, and tongue lashings by drunk, irrate parents.

Delinquency has a variety of meanings, dependent upon different opinions. The courts classify delinquents as those with an offense or record or those who have had any "run-in" with the law. By legal standards in most states, one is considered a juvenile until he reaches sixteen (legally over seven, under sixteen, as judged by Children's Court in the state of New York.) The community looks upon delinquency as anti-social behavior in children and adolescents, usually disruptive to the community and often resulting in violation of the norms. As Benjamin Fine, who did exhaustive research with many youthful offenders, stated, "Juvenile delinquency is a pattern of behavior manifested by a youth below the age of eighteen that is contrary to the laws of the land, and the accepted mores, and that is anitsocial in character."[2] These are various forms of delinquent behavior, ranging from promiscuous sex behavior, assault and battery, to breaking and entering, violent fighting among rivals, and dope-taking. The behavior represents different attempts, either to find excitement in the dull life of the slum or withdrawal from the entire culture and society in which one lives through drug-induced "kicks". As Bloch and Niederhoffer describe the delinquent subculture, "In a sense, this is a subculture of negation in which the positive values of the prevailing culture are distorted and inverted for uses best suited to a philosphy of youthful dissidence and protest."[3] The violent anti-social behavior is reinforced in the

peer group, and indeed is highly regarded, for one successful in break-
ing society's laws gains the esteem of the members of the criminal
gang subculture. Delinquency covers a large area, but it is centered
among the working class youth of the cities, whose parents are poorly
educated, make little money, and offer the child no security. The
Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project in New York City (1961) has
defined delinquency as "a wide umbrella; it can include anything
from deliberate homicide to disturbing the peace, from a serious crime
to a trivial offense."[4] There has been a notable spread of delinquency
in the past two decades from the slum neighborhoods, for as cities
continue to stretch their outer extremities, tenements are commonly
found back-to-back with luxury apartments, so there is increased
awareness of the problem on the part of those once isolated from it.

The physical environment has a profound effect on these
underprivileged youth, and most anti-social behavior reported in the
newspapers occurs in poor slum neighborhoods. The decline of the strong
patriarchal family coupled with an increased concentration at the bottom of
the economic scale have caused reduction in effective family socialization,
and the cohesion of this primary group is disrupted when both parents
must work to support the family. Sometimes both are away from home
during the day, so the growing child turns to his peers for support.
There is limited opportunity for the child to learn how to relate to
others, so he tends to seek personal gratification. As one delinquent

spoke of his homelife, "Outside, in the neighborhood, life was full
of pleasure and excitement, but at home it was dull and drab and full
of nagging, quarreling, and beating, and stuffy and crowded besides."[5]
Most often, delinquents seek solace, in the streets, from rejecting parents
or excitement, wholly absent in a tenement where the parents are away
at work. The statistical studies by Shelton and Eleanor Glueck sub-
stantiate the environmental influence assumption. In 85% of one thousand
of the cases they studied, the youths were from crowded areas, where
crime and vice were rampant. The mother usually had to work to supplant
the father's meagre wages. Nearly half of the boys came from broken
homes. In a different study, conducted by Michigan in 1948, only 44%
of 23,500 delinquents were from homes of happy marriages. As Albert
Deutsch has described the common environmental conditions, "The child
delinquent is most apt to come from a rather large family in the low-
income brackets, living in crowded quarters in a congested neighborhood."[6]

The broken family often lies behind a youth's membership in a
gang. In a large majority of gang studies, this is the dominant factor.
Children who cannot find acceptance in the home, turn to the streets.
As Fine views this need of affection, "Emotional undernourishment is
not only a characteristic in the lives and homes of the lower economic
brackets. Children left alone, deprived of parental love, affection
and supervision, will form their own peer groups, regardless of slums
or palaces."[7] Richard Sterne, in a study of delinquency and broken
homes, points out that with parents absent or neglectful, norms and
mores are not strictly enforced, and the youths naturally do not become
properly socialized. To put it in Freudian terms, "The delinquent with

defective superego has little guilt feeling or remorse. He does not
represent the average citizen in conformity to conventional morality."[8]
Children who are raised in a household where parents are divorced,
separated, or even unhappy, are not given the mental security they need.
As a result, they often show violence and hatred as a behavioral outlet
of pent-up emotional frustrations. The parents are identified with the
adult world at-large, and the youth becomes aggressive, hostile, rebell-
ious, and rejects them for his peers. "Many children find greater satis-
faction in being the doorkeeper or errand boy for the gang than in
receiving the approval of adults."[9]

These rejected youths are alienated from the adult world and
have no aspirations toward middle-class standards. The family is not
the only factor that turns the child to the streets to become delinquent;
the parents may influence his behavior by teaching him criminal behavior.
As an officer who worked closely with delinquents in New York wrote,
"Some children become delinquent after being physically or spiritually
cast out of their homes. But others, accepted by their parents, learn
from those very adults the ways of thinking and doing that produce
delinquency."[10] Too many parents punish their children cruelly for
their own faults and shortcomings. A child who is continually beaten
for no apparent reason developes hatred for the parent, or may even
become so frustrated that he becomes psychotic. Frequently, a poor
father, unable to achieve success, turns to drink and whips his son
while drunk, as if the son was at fault. In lower class Negro families,
the father is frequently absent from home, and the mother lives with a
succession of men. Another problem in delinquent homes is overprotection
of some immigrant families. Minority group (Puerto Ricans, Italians,

predominantly) parents try to impose the old cultural values on their children, who are in continual contact with the American way of life, and unable to adjust, so they reject the way of "the old country" and break away from domination of their parents. Harrison Salisbury has estimated that 95% of the gang members in New York City are from broken homes. As he writes, concerning the role of the broken home, "Security. Security. Security. This is close to the surface of almost everything the youngsters do or say, want of security is what leads them into the gang and want of security is what keeps them in this dangerous limbo."[11] The children without the necessary emotional support become alienated at an early age and turn to associations of peers as a way out of their predicament.

Boys are turned from the schools into the streets. In overcrowded city schools, a youngster is an unknown. No one gives him personal attention unless he is an outstanding student, or discipline problem. As Duke, a leader of the Balkans in New York City, explained, "The teachers would always pick me out for not doing work or eat me out for something. I mean, if I attended regularly they would find fault with my haircut or something else. Sometimes I felt like strangling them--so I would just cut."[12] The language problem is frequently an unsurmountable obstacle for immigrant children. "An early teenager is caught in the following trap: he gets nothing out of school and does not do his homework; on the other hand, he is too young to get working papers."[13] The influence of the gang is felt in the public schools, for the boys gather in the bathroom or halls to pass the time. These gang members sometimes cause much trouble in the classrooms,

and it is not surprising that once a boy is expelled, he seldom returns. With a pervasive atmosphere of impersonality and formal rules, absence of individual attention, these city youths soon tire of the classroom routine and desert the school for the more challenging life of the streets.

The relations of violent gangs whose members do attend school are fascinating. They approach more closely the social norms in schools than anywhere else. Usually, the gang members who attend school do not "pack a piece" (carry a weapon), unless they are on hostile terms with a rival at the same school. When a "cool" is on between street clubs, they may even associate together at school. Sometimes, the Kings and Silver Knights (rivals on New York's Lower East Side) gather in the bathroom or behind the auditorium stage to pass a bottle of cheap wine. Most care little for rigorous academic discipline——it is monotonous boredom kept in P.S. 146 from 8:30 to 3 five days a week. School is torture to those immigrant children who are illiterate and have little ambition. "Feeling vaguely wrong themselves in school and around teachers, these children hunt for diversion and escape from the 'square' world they never made."[14] Often, these juveniles quit before sixteen and spend the normal school hours in the local candy store, on the corner, or occupied with other indifferent gang members in numerous gang activities.

There are three basic orientations of delinquent subcultures according to Cloward and Ohlin, each offering emotional outlet, chance to rebel or withdraw. The criminal is based on the norms of the adult criminal subculture, totally opposed to society's institutionalized norms. It is composed of those delinquents who steal, rob stores, and

conduct other acts violating the legal code. The violent or conflict

subculture, probably most widely covered by the press, is composed of

the "boppin" gangs, which live their lives for "rep" gained in degradation

and devastation of their enemies. These are the gangs which cause the

bloodshed and violent outbreaks in the hot summer nights, when one

gang "goes down" to another's "turf," with everybody "packin,"

and a full-fledged gang war ensues. The retreatist subculture is com-

posed of the double failures, who have had their paths to success-

goals blocked by their environment or social means and also failed

through deviant measures to attain them. They are the drug-addicts,

who retreat from reality and go on a "trip" or "kick" in hopes of

escaping the horror of their depressed existence. "The participants

in these drug subcultures have become alienated from conventional roles,

such as those required in the family or the occupational world."[15]

There are certain attitudes and views common among these subcul-

tures. The first two are defiant attempts to assert one's self against

the despised adult society, while the third is an escape through drugs.

Norms of these subcultures are all anti-social: the conflict or violent

model is the 'bopper,' always hangin' with the gang, ready to fight

and die to defend his 'rep' and the gang's honor, who shows his hatred

through unpredictable, destructive assaults. One's 'rep' provides

him with the respect and approval of peers; a youth trying to develop

a self concept needs recognition and when he is rejected by the adult

world, he acquires a reputation as a member of the worst gang by being

tough and violating social norms. This is his only way of being recognized.

"He views himself as isolated and the adult world as indifferent. The

commitments of adults are to their own interests and not to his. Their

explanations of why he should believe differently are 'weak,' as are their efforts to help him."[16] The retreatist subculture of the "cool cat" is characterized by a yearn to escape this world. Many of these dope-takers feel themselves above the social order--"like trying to take a trip, man, like a cool buzz, dad--with a little grass or a cool cube;" the retreatists are on a continuous "kick:" sex, marijuana, LSD, alcohol, jazz, and any combination of these. They are trying to turn inward to escape from painful realities to inner solitude. The criminal groups are those delinquents who have become ingrained with society's success goals and use any means to achieve them. These are the car-stealers, jack-rollers, store robbers, and purse snatchers, usually influenced by older criminals.

The conflict or violent gang attracts most of the attention, for murder is the greatest offense against society. These gangs are the ones which prowl the streets in search of adventure. They keep their "turf" clear of rival enemies. The Egyptian Kings are such a gang. On a hot, summer night in July, 1957, some of the Kings were excited, as they gathered in a tenement hallway near 135th Street and Broadway. They were all "packin," and preparing to "go down on" the Jesters, who had beaten up a few of their boys the previous night. They moved out about 7:30 p.m. to rendezvous with the Dragons, a brother club, at a candy store on 152nd. After the ritual of passing the bottle to prime their courage, or dull their fears, the gangs moved by two's and three's, so as not to look suspicious, up to Highland Park, a distance of about twenty blocks. There were only eighteen who showed. In such a situation, the gang often becomes so keyed up for the fight that all youths in the neighborhood are feared rivals. They gathered in the

shrubbery around the pool. At about 10:20, Michael Farmer, a fifteen-
year-old boy partially crippled by polio, was walking his friend home
through the park when the Kings jumped them. It was a short struggle.
As one King later described the murder in court,

> "Magician stabbed him and the guy he....like hunched over.
> He's standing up and I knock him down. Then he was
> down on the ground, everybody was kickin' him, stompin'
> him, punchin' him, stabbin' him, so he tried to get back
> up and I knock him down again. Then the guy stabbed
> him in the back with a bread knife."[17]

This violent activity is a common occurrence among rival gangs,
but this shocking incident caused great public concern in New York City,
until the actual murderers; identified as the Cap Man and the
umbrella man, were sentenced to death.

Most of the violent gangs originate in the poorer areas, where
social control is weakest. These youngsters have been deprived of
both conventional and deviant means to achieve success. There is
little contact with the adult world, and these neighborhoods are very
unstable. "Transiency and instability, in combination, produce powerful
pressures for violent behavior among the young in these areas."[18] These
delinquents feel deprived and are disgusted by their absent opport-
unities; these condemned condemn the system for injustice and turn to
their peers for help, with little concern for the social consequences
of their actions. They feel the injustice they are done by society is
justification for their deviance. The gang is a collective solution
to the estranged feeling of many of these deprived youths, for the
psychological stress "can be relieved if the alienated person can gain
the support of others who are in the same position and who share the
view that their misfortunes are due to an unjust system of social

arrangements."[19] The gang does not become important or develop co-hesiveness until the adult community recognizes its deviant patterns of behavior.

The emergent patterns of leadership in a gang reflect the need of the members for protection, and an older, proven fighter is usually designated as the Pres. or Chief. All the others are subject to his order. He chooses his officers, his loyal buddies. There is a distinguishable cycle of leadership in most gangs. The first Pres. is fairly normal and often has a superior family background, and he is admired because of his early training and advantages. As the conflict with a rival gang evolves, he may be momentarily superseded by a new leader--the deeply disturbed, violent, homicidal killer. He has the most "heart"--a violent disregard for himself in battle. He laughs at rival attacker's outside his "turf" and "Sounds" (ridicules) bigger, tougher gang members. If there is a conflict, this new leader usually triumphs over the old, and he leads the gang recklessly into rumbles, caring little for his own welfare. If the gang loses, the chief is re-placed by the big organizer, more controlled, slick dealer, who rarely gives other members any voice in the gang policy.

The cohesiveness and strict obedience to the gang's code of conduct among these conflict groups are remarkable. This peer-group is the dominant medium in one's need for security, recognition, and new experience. The roles one plays in the gang are most prominent in his formulation of the self-concept. He becomes part of another world when he becomes a member of the gang. He withdraws his support from society

and becomes committed to the gang. One does what the Chief says or
he is beaten up or thrown out. Milton Barron has emphasized the strength
of the gang in producing conformity,

> "The individual member is more sensitive to its sanction
> and disapproval than to those of any other groups. The
> family, for example, may decide what the child's mode of
> dress will be, but the peer group's reaction is crucial in
> determining whether or not the form of dress is satisfactory
> to the child. The same is usually true about the child's
> speech, manners, relationships with the other sex, and so
> on."[20]

The gang gives one a place, a sense of belonging. Delinquent gangs
are a paradox in a sense, for when one joins, there is a rejection of
the social order, and other youths become alienated from society,
yet at the same time they achieve a psychic wholeness and approval,
lacking before. "The activities of the gang offer a measure of shared
status, a measure of security and a sense of belonging. The boys do
not have to face life alone--the group protects them."[21] During
the later years of adolescence (from 19-21), peer group strength
declines, and the gang's control over individuals weakens. When one
faces the dim prospects of his future without the security of the gang,
often he turns to drugs.

The delinquent subculture of the addict and "cool cat"
is referred to by Cloward and Ohlin as the retreatist subculture. It
is distinct from the criminal and conflict groups and usually involves
older youths, who resort to drugs after repeated failings. When one
begins using drugs, he immediately alienates himself from society,
which condemns drug-taking in excess. "To the extent that he orients
himself toward the standards of the drug-addict world and expresses
his orientation verbally and through continuing acceptance of narcotics,

the drug-using adolescent widens the gap and reinforces the hostile
feelings between himself and his former associates."[22] These drug-
users are sometimes suffering character disorders or neurotic symptoms.
The Medical Superintendent at Riverside Hospital in New York has posed
the question concerning what neurotic individuals did prior to the use
of drugs. Some of these drug-takers who experiment, do not get "hooked."
Beatniks try drugs for kicks, to transcend their earthly existence; "swing-
ing with it!" enables them to momentarily escape beyond the bounds of
bodily limitations. Drug-users are most likely to be loners, who
associate with others only to assure a steady supply of drugs.

The ties among drug-users are not as stable as those between
conflict and criminal gang members, for "the kick" is largely an in-
dividual experience. Usually, after one tries drugs, then becomes involved
in a group of addicts through which he can obtain the drug, he drifts
into isolation, using the group only as a supply channel. The new
durg-taker must prove his trustworthiness before he is taken into confidence
by addicts. After he has made appropriate connections, become socialized
to the ways of the addict, the control exerted over him by drugs and
others in the subculture makes it nearly impossible to break away,
yet he remains a lonely person.

Robert Merton feels this retreatism is the easy way out for
those who have had both legitimate and illegitimate means blocked in
quest for success-goals. As he sees this escapism through drugs, "The
conflict is resolved by abandoning both precipitating elements, the goals
and the norms. The escape is complete, the conflict is eliminated and

the individual is asocialized."[23] Merton identifies two causal factors
of drug retreatism: repeated failures to reach culturally approved
values through conformity to society's norms and inability to achieve
such goals by improper means due to internal prohibitions (the social
norms are so ingrained that the individual will not use deviant means
to achieve the goals). The drug addict is a social wreck, who fails
and withdraws within his own world. Marshall Clinard takes an opposing
viewpoint, and feels drug use may cause anomie. He feels pursuit of
drugs is a stimulus rather than an escape from social demands, for
"not all drug addiction arises from anomie or is retreatist or deviant,
and drug addiction may produce anomia. Addiction may, therefore, occur
in any combination with the other three and also when all are absent."[24]

The "cats" and addicts usually rob or steal to obtain money
for drugs. Girls frequently become prostitutes, and boys roll queers
(beat them up and take their valuables). Drug addicts secure dope
through channels of the adult underworld or from "junkies" in their
own subculture. The successful cat enjoys a "kick" but is not necessarily
"hooked." He carries on a lucrative "hustle" to maintain his supply.
The violence of the street gang is replaced by cunning, shrewdness, and
ability to outwit others. He peddles drugs or simps as most cats
thrive on exploitation of women. His behavior, unlike that of the
criminal gang member, is not income-producing but simply a means of
obtaining "the ultimate escape." The cat is cool--wears the "big
time duds" and struts arrogantly along with "mean threads." His suave
air is enhanced by colorful vacabulary and gestures. The "cool"
detachment leaves him apart from society, his only concern being selfish
personal gratification.

The criminal subculture's primary drive is acquisitiveness,
usually in the form of money. The significant fact of this delinquent
sphere is the close connection between these adolescents and older,
experienced criminals, who influence them. "Among the environmental
supports of a criminal style of life are integration of offenders at
various age levels and close integration of the carriers of conventional
and illegitimate values."[25] This subculture is most likely to develop
in a fairly well-integrated neighborhood, where the youths are continually
in contact with peers and older deviants. They look up to these older
boys or gangsters, who have succeeded in attaining a certain amount
of success through anti-social means. The adults exert social control
over these criminal types, for the boys aspire to the big time and look
up to racketeers, junkies, and big shots. The criminal subculture is
most likely to exploit more deviant measures to achieve its goals than
the other two. The criminal gang is the most resistant to change, due
to its close association with the established adult criminal world.

Although the situation of the juvenile delinquent is not very
promising, some youths do leave the gangs, usually for criminal careers,
but infrequently they become integrated back into the social order.
As the individuals in a gang mature, their activities change, from hell-
raising, jack-rolling, and violent rumbles to personal concerns about
the future;without the security they desire as they grow older they
turn to looking for a steady job and a steady girl. It is during
the late teens and early twenties, when faced by the seeming hopelessness
of the future without the security of one's peers, that these adolescents
are most susceptible to drugs and in greatest danger of joining the

retreatist subcultures. Most of the gangs are in a continual flux,
ever changing leadership, making new alliances and new enemies, as
members drift in and out. One way to escape the gang is by moving away,
and most of those who are able to improve their socio-economic status
by either legitimate or illegitimate (which is usually the case) means
leave their place of origin.

Alienation among youths undergoing the identity crisis is
most strongly felt by underprivileged urban dwellers, who lack the necessary
background elements for proper socialization and future success. Juvenile
delinquency attracts attention to these youths who are forced to rely
largely on themselves in developing a self concept. Obviously, alienation
is not present only in lower class youth, but its effect is most
pronounced in the slums, and the deviant behavior that causes a real
social problem. These youths grow up feeling unwanted, detached, and
without ambition or initiative. The only paths to success lead into
conflict with institutionalized norms and way past the problem of personal
alienation. It has emerged as a definite social phenomenon. Its
impact on the lower class youth of the cities has been most devastating
but alienation affects adults and young people alike in all classes.
The slum environment vividly calls attention to this psychological
impoverishment and anxiety so prominent among those youths who cannot
resolve their identity crisis and are aliens of society.

Footnotes

Chapter V

1 Paul Goodman, Growing Up Absurd, p. 193.

2 Benjamin Fine, 1,000,000 Delinquents, New York, 1955, p. 31.

3 Herbert A. Bloch and Arthur Niederhoffer, The Gang, New York, 1958, p. 13.

4 Robert M.Mac Iver, "Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project," New York City, City College of New York, 1961, p. 5.

5 Clifford A. Shaw, The Jack-Roller, Chicago, 1930, p. 52.

6 Albert Deutsch, Our Rejected Children, Boston, 1950, p. 184.

7 Fine, op. cit., p. 99.

8 1,000,000 Delinquents, p. 71.

9 Milton L. Barron, The Juvenile In Delinquent Society, New York, 1956, p. 155.

10 Captain Harold L. Stallings and David Dressler, Juvenile Officer, New York, 1954, p. 111.

11 Harrison E. Salisbury, The Shook-Up Generation, New York, 1958, p. 71.

12 Lewis Yablonsky, The Violent Gang, New York, 1962, p. 67.

13 Paul Goodman, op. cit., p. 204.

14 Seymour Rubenfeld, Family of Outcasts, New York, 1965, p. xiv.

15 Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, Glencoe, Illonois, 1960, p. 20.

16 Ibid., p. 25.

17 Yablonsky, op. cit., p. 17.

18 Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., p. 172.

19 Ibid, p. 126.

20 Milton Barron , op. cit., p. 154.

21   D.W. Wilmer and others, "Heroin Use and Street Gangs," Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science, XLVIII (1957), p. 409.

22 "Drug Addiction among Adolescents," from Conferences held at the New York Academy of Medicine, Sponsored by the Committee on Public Health Regulation of New York Academy of Medicine, with assistance of the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, New York City, 1953, p. 74.

23   Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, Rev. and enl., Glencoe, Illonois, 1957, p. 154.

24   Marshall B. Clinard and others, Anomie and Deviant Behavior, New York, 1964, p. 51.

25   Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., p. 62.

Chapter VI

Conclusion: The Modern Problem

"And--particularly for young people--the sense of help-
lessness is intensified by the appearance of successful
operation which surrounds the huge glistening machinery
of our society. It hums with any intimidating smoothness.
How could any individual be needed much?....It is not sur-
prising that young people shrug their shoulders and find
something else to talk about."
                              ---John Gardner, Secretary
                                 Of Health, Education and
                                 Welfare

There are many social problems confronting Americans today,

but none bears so heavily on the individual as the pervading feelings

of estrangement, loneliness, despair, and meaninglessness, which have

spread throughout all socio-economic classes since the late 1930's and

early 1940's. Society has become so complex and its demands so great,

that often those confronted by the alarming situation of becoming a

responsible adult in society, reject their expected roles and retreat

or deviate from culturally-approved values and goals. The loss of

traditional values and decline of morality have had the most far-reaching

effect on the psychological framework of individuals in our culture,

for without absolutes and universally accepted behavioral codes, all

values become relative and each person makes his own choice. As has

been shown, this estrangement and meaninglessness in the automated,

impersonal social order is even more extensive among the lower classes,

who simply are deprived of material means to approach success-goals.

For the youth of these classes, especially in the cities, where ghettos

and slums abound, establishing a place in society often becomes a
veritable impossibility, so they withdraw or join their own groups,
as the only solution to their alienation.

It is not only the youth of the social classes farther down
the economic scale who suffer these feelings; it has become common
even among the more fortunate adolescents with strong family ties
and adequate financial backgrounds. Many colleges are facing problems
of "fringe" cults, composed of students who detach themselves from
the social order and live in their own ways, usually in dirty clothes,
unwashed and indulging in socially unapproved practices. Sexual
promiscuity and drug-taking are common among these youths. Most attention
has been attracted by these alienated students at Harvard and Berkeley,
but they are found throughout the country. They suffer not so much
from isolation and meaninglessness as from self-estrangement, which
causes them to withdraw within their own groups and prolong their
adolescence. There appear to be an abundance of these types concentrated
on the West Coast and various sections (Greenwich Village being the
best known) of New York City. These youths are passive, "philosopher-
types," who feel so estranged that they want no involvement with society
and its problems. Their philosophy is "Love everyone. Don't interfere.
Accept people and life as they are; do not try to change things."
These are the beatniks, the hipsters, and society's "fringe" members.
They blow pot, take "trips" with LSD, practice Zen, and seek to transcend
reality through psychedelic revelations and intense consciousness
leading to mystical ecstasy. These groups may be the most alienated;
although they are not violent or in any way hostile, they simply reject
society and all its standards and institutions.

Alienation permeates all social classes and is experienced by all youth of these classes. It is most obvious in the lower classes, for their deviant means in attempting to alleviate this feeling are contrary to accepted social practices and violate the norms of society. This isolation and meaninglessness have become increasingly recognized by many sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and journalists since its increase after 1945, until today, it is regarded as a serious problem. Erich Fromm has aptly labelled this predominant mood the pathology of normalcy; he describes one suffering this "social neurosis" in present America as,

> "....a person who acts and feels like an automaton;
> who never experiences anything which is really his;
> who experiences himself entirely as the person he
> thinks he is supposed to be; whose artificial smile has
> replaced genuine laughter; whose meaningless chatter
> has replaced communicative speech; whose dulled despair
> has taken the place of genuine pain."[1]

This is the mass man, devoid of initiative, conforming to prescriptions of the mass media and middle-class values, who never gets excited about life, nor does he care to.

The various social and psychological aspects of this problem have been mentioned. If one were to cite a single factor as the cause of alienation in the twentieth century (which would be ridiculous,) he might point to the absence of any universal religious-humanistic principles today. We are living in an immoral world, devoid of traditional values. Two hundred years ago, men knew what was wrong because it had always been wrong. Not so today. Morality is relative. There are no longer strict, universally, behavioral guidelines for men

to follow. Various movements have demonstrated the impact of alienation
on entire countries; fascism, nazism, and Stalinism enabled one to
escape from freedom by projecting his insignificance behind the
charismatic leader of the fatherland. All these movements caused the
worst of social evils: war, death, disease, and murder. In the United
States, there have been no such movements. Here, we have only recently
begun to feel the impact of the changes that have been occurring for
the past two hundred years, and some writers feel since the advent of
man. The result is a feeling of anomie, separation, isolation, in-
security, anxiety, or whatever else one wishes to call what I have
labelled alienation. Perhpas this mounting crisis will reach its
culmination in America before the end of this century, but one can
only hope that its far-reaching ramifications will be less devastating
than the movements in France, Germany, and Russia during the early
decades of this century.

Alienation is a phenomenon of modern man. My presentation
has concerned its impact on underpriveleged adolescents, for I feel
one must understand why youth is alienated before he attempts to see
the wider-spread of estrangement today; the psychological stress on
one's developing self concept is greatest when he is forced to rely on
himself (as delinquents are) at an early age. Once imposed on individuals
by the economic order, alienation is nowadays chosen by some as their
orientation toward society. Although alienation affords one criterion
for assessing society at present, there are others. Our American
society has changed so rapidly that not only individuals but whole
groups and subcultures are alienated. Solution of this problem presupposes

a re-evaluation of the social order. This has been no attempt to evaluate the problem; but merely a brief sketch to illustrate increasing separation of men from each other and society, and the effect of this estrangement on impoverished urban youth during their crucial maturing years.

Footnotes

Chapter VI

1 Erich Fromm, <u>The Sane Society</u>, p. 24.

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