Identity
Youth and Crisis
5. ADOLESCENCE

As technological advances put more and more time between early school life and the young person's final access to specialized work, the stage of adolescing becomes an even more marked and conscious period and, as it has always been in some cultures in some periods, almost a way of life between childhood and adulthood. Thus in the later school years young people, beset with the physiological revolution of their genital maturation and the uncertainty of the adult roles ahead, seem much concerned with faddish attempts at establishing an adolescent subculture with what looks like a final rather than a transitory or, in fact, initial identity formation. They are sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the ideal prototypes of the day. In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, which must now include sexual maturity, some adolescents have to come to grips again with crises of earlier years before they can install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity. They need, above all, a moratorium for the integration of the identity elements ascribed in the foregoing to the childhood stages: only that now a larger unit, vague in its outline and yet immediate in its demands, re-places the childhood milieu—"society." A review of these elements is also a list of adolescent problems.

If the earliest stage bequeathed to the identity crisis an important need for trust in oneself and in others, then clearly the adolescent looks most fervently for men and ideas to have faith in, which also means men and ideas in whose service it would seem worth while to prove oneself trustworthy. (This will be discussed further in the chapter on fidelity.) At the same time, however, the adolescent fears a foolish, all too trusting commitment, and will, paradoxically, express his need for faith in loud and cynical mistrust.

If the second stage established the necessity of being defined by what one can will freely, then the adolescent now looks for an opportunity to decide with free assent on one of the available or unavoidable avenues of duty and service, and at the same time is mortally afraid of being forced into activities in which he would feel exposed to ridicule or self-doubt. This, too, can lead to a paradox, namely, that he would rather act shamelessly in the eyes of his elders, out of free choice, than be forced into activities which would be shameful in his own eyes or in those of his peers.

If an unlimited imagination as to what one might become is the heritage of the play age, then the adolescent's willingness to put his trust in those peers and leading, or misleading, elders who will give imaginative, if not illusory, scope to his aspirations is only too obvious. By the same token, he objects violently to all "pedantic" limitations on his self-images and will be ready to settle by loud accusation all his guiltiness over the excessiveness of his ambition.

Finally, if the desire to make something work, and to make it work well, is the gain of the school age, then the choice of an occupation assumes a significance beyond the question of remuneration and status. It is for this reason that some adolescents prefer not to work at all for a while rather than be forced into an otherwise promising career which would offer success with-out the satisfaction of functioning with unique excellence.

In any given period in history, then, that part of youth will have the most affirmatively exciting time of it which finds itself in the wave of a technological, economic, or ideological trend seemingly promising all that youthful vitality could ask for.

Adolescence, therefore, is least "stormy" in that segment of
youth which is gifted and well trained in the pursuit of expanding technological trends, and thus able to identify with new roles of competency and invention and to accept a more implicit ideological outlook. Where this is not given, the adolescent mind becomes a more explicitly ideological one, by which we mean one searching for some inspiring unification of tradition or anticipated techniques, ideas, and ideals. And, indeed, it is the ideological potential of a society which speaks most clearly to the adolescent who is so eager to be affirmed by peers, to be con-firmed by teachers, and to be inspired by worth-while "ways of life." On the other hand, should a young person feel that the environment tries to deprive him too radically of all the forms of expression which permit him to develop and integrate the next step, he may resist with the wild strength encountered in animals who are suddenly forced to defend their lives. For, indeed, in the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity.

Having come this far, I would like to give one example (and I consider it representative in structure) of the individual way in which a young person, given some leeway, may utilize a traditional way of life for dealing with a remnant of negative identity. I had known Jill before her puberty, when she was rather obese and showed many "oral" traits of voracity and dependency while she also was a tomboy and bitterly envious of her brothers and in rivalry with them. But she was intelligent and always had an air about her (as did her mother) which seemed to promise that things would turn out all right. And, indeed, she straightened out and up, became very attractive, an easy leader in any group, and, to many, a model of young girlhood. As a clinician, I watched and wondered what she would do with that voraciousness and with the rivalry which she had displayed earlier. Could it be that such things are simply absorbed in fortuitous growth?

Then one autumn in her late teens, Jill did not return to college from the ranch out West where she had spent the summer. She had asked her parents to let her stay. Simply out of liberality
Identity are not uncommon. Youth after youth, bewildered by the in-capacity to assume a role forced on him by the inexorable standardization of American adolescence, runs away in one form or another, dropping out of school, leaving jobs, staying out all night, or withdrawing into bizarre and inaccessible moods. Once "delinquent," his greatest need and often his only salvation is the refusal on the part of older friends, advisers, and judiciary personnel to type him further by pat diagnoses and social judgments which ignore the special dynamic conditions of adolescence. It is here, as we shall see in greater detail, that the concept of identity confusion is of practical clinical value, for if they are diagnosed and treated correctly, seemingly psychotic and criminal incidents do not have the same fatal significance which they may have at other ages.

In general it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which most disturbs young people. To keep themselves together they temporarily overidentify with the heroes of cliques and crowds to the point of an apparently complete loss of individuality. Yet in this stage not even "falling in love" is entirely, or even primarily, a sexual matter. To a considerable extent adolescent love is an attempt to arrive at a definition of one's identity by projecting one's diffused self-image on another and by seeing it thus reflected and gradually clarified. This is why so much of young love is conversation. On the other hand, clarification can also be sought by destructive means. Young people can become remarkably clannish, intolerant, and cruel in their exclusion of others who are "different," in skin color or cultural background, in tastes and gifts, and often in entirely petty aspects of dress and gesture arbitrarily selected as the signs of an in-grouper or out-grouper. It is important to understand in principle (which does not mean to condone in all of its manifestations) that such intolerance may be, for a while, a necessary defense against a sense of identity loss. This is unavoidable at a time of life when the body changes its proportions radically, when genital puberty floods body and imagination with all manner of impulses, when intimacy with the other sex approaches and is,

The Life Cycle: Epigenesis of Identity on occasion, forced on the young person, and when the immediate future confronts one with too many conflicting possibilities and choices. Adolescents not only help one another temporarily through such discomfort by forming cliques and stereotyping themselves, their ideals, and their enemies; they also insistently test each other's capacity for sustaining loyalties in the midst of inevitable conflicts of values.

The readiness for such testing helps to explain (as pointed out in Chapter II) the appeal of simple and cruel totalitarian doctrines among the youth of such countries and classes as have lost or are losing their group identities—feudal, agrarian, tribal, or national. The democracies are faced with the job of winning these grim youths by convincingly demonstrating to them—by living it—that a democratic identity can be strong and yet tolerant, judicious and still determined. But industrial democracy poses special problems in that it insists on self-made identities ready to grasp many chances and ready to adjust to the changing necessities of booms and busts, of peace and war, of migration and determined sedentary life. Democracy, therefore, must resent its adolescents with ideals which can be shared by young people of many backgrounds, and which emphasize autonomy in the form of independence and initiative in the form of constructive work. These promises, however, are not easy to fulfill in increasingly complex and centralized systems of industrial, economic, and political organization, systems which increasingly neglect the "self-made" ideology still flaunted in oratory. This is hard on many young Americans because their whole upbringing has made the development of a self-reliant personality dependent on a certain degree of choice, a sustained hope for an individual chance, and a firm commitment to the freedom of self realization.

We are speaking here not merely of high privileges and lofty ideals but of psychological necessities. For the social institution which is the guardian of identity is what we have called ideology. One may see in ideology also the imagery of an aristocracy its widest possible sense, which connotes that within a defined
world image and a given course of history the best people will come to rule and rule will develop the best in people. In order not to become cynically or apathetically lost, young people must somehow be able to convince themselves that those who succeed in their anticipated adult world thereby shoulder the obligation of being best. For it is through their ideology that social systems enter into the fiber of the next generation and attempt to absorb into their lifeblood the rejuvenative power of youth. Adolescence is thus a vital regenerator in the process of social evolution, for youth can offer its loyalties and energies both to the conservation of that which continues to feel true and to the revolutionary correction of that which has lost its regenerative significance.

We can study the identity crisis also in the lives of creative individuals who could resolve it for themselves only by offering to their contemporaries a new model of resolution such as that expressed in works of art or in original deeds, and who furthermore are eager to tell us all about it in diaries, letters, and self-representations. And even as the neuroses of a given period reflect the ever-present inner chaos of man's existence in a new way, the creative crises point to the period's unique solutions.

We will in the next chapter present in greater detail what we have learned of these specialized individual crises. But there is a third manifestation of the remnants of infantilism and adolescence in man: it is the pooling of the individual crises in transitory upheavals amounting to collective "hysteric.'' Where there are voluble leaders their creative crises and the latent crises of their followers can be at least, studied with the help of our assumptions—and of their writings. More elusive are spontaneous group developments not attributable to a leader. And it will, at any rate, not be helpful to call mass irrationalities by clinical names. It would be impossible to diagnose clinically how much hysteria is present in a young nun participating in an epidemic of convulsive spells or how much perverse "sadism" in a young Nazi commanded to participate in massive parades or in mass killings. So we can point only most tentatively to certain similar-ities between individual crises and group behavior in order to indicate that in a given period of history they are in an obscure contact with each other.

But before we submerge ourselves in the clinical and biographic evidence for what we call identity confusion, we will take a look beyond the identity crisis. The words "beyond identity," of course, could be understood in two ways, both essential for the problem. They could mean that there is more to man's core than identity, that there is in fact in each individual an "I,' an observing center of awareness and of volition, which can transcend and must survive the psychosocial identity which is our concern in this book. In some ways, as we will see, a some-times precocious self-transcendence seems to be felt strongly in a transient manner in youth, as if a pure identity had to be kept free from psychosocial encroachment. And yet no man (except a man aflame and dying like Keats, who could speak of identity in words which secured him immediate fame) can transcend himself in youth. We will speak later of the transcendence of identity. In the following "beyond identity" means life after adolescence and the uses of identity and, indeed, the return of some forms of identity crisis in the later stages of the life cycle.

6. BEYOND IDENTITY

The first of these is the crisis of intimacy. It is only when identity formation is well on its way that true intimacy—which is really a counterpointing as well as a fusing of identities—is possible. Sexual intimacy is only part of what I have in mind, for it is obvious that sexual intimacies often precede the capacity to develop a true and mutual psychosocial intimacy with another person, be it in friendship, in erotic encounters, or in joint inspiration. The youth who is not sure of his identity shies away from interpersonal intimacy or throws himself into acts of intimacy which are "promiscuous" without true fusion or real self-abandon.

Where a youth does not accomplish such intimate relationships with others—and, I would add, with his own inner
resources—in late adolescence or early adulthood, he may settle for highly stereotyped interpersonal relations and come to retain a deep sense of isolation. If the times favor an impersonal kind of interpersonal pattern, a man can go far, very far, in life and yet harbor a severe character problem doubly painful because he will never feel really himself, although everyone says he is "somebody."

The counterpart of intimacy is distaniation: the readiness to repudiate, isolate, and, if necessary, destroy those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to one's own. Thus, the lasting consequence of the need for distaniation is the readiness to fortify one's territory of intimacy and solidarity and to view all outsiders with a fanatic "overvaluation of small differences" between the familiar and the foreign. Such prejudices can be utilized and exploited in politics and in war and secure the loyal self-sacrifice and the readiness to kill from the strongest and the best. A remnant of adolescent danger is to be found where intimate, competitive, and combative relations are experienced with and against the selfsame people. But as the areas of adult responsibility are gradually delineated, as the competitive encounter, the erotic bond, and merciless enmity are differentiated from each other, they eventually become subject to that ethical sense which is the mark of the adult and which takes over from the ideological conviction of adolescence and the moralism of childhood.

Freud was once asked what he thought a normal person should be able to do well. The questioner probably expected a complicated, "deep" answer. But Freud simply said, "Lieben and arbeiten" ("to love and to work"). It pays to ponder on this simple formula; it grows deeper as you think about it. For when Freud said "love," he meant the generosity of intimacy as well as genital love; when he said love and work, he meant a general work productiveness which would not preoccupy the individual to the extent that he might lose his right or capacity to be a sexual and a loving being.

Psychoanalysis has emphasized genitality as one of the developmental conditions for full maturity. Genitality consists in the capacity to develop orgasmic potency which is more than the discharge of sex products in the sense of Kinsey's "outlets." It combines the ripening of intimate sexual mutuality with full genital sensitivity and with a capacity for discharge of tension from the whole body. This is a rather concrete way of saying something about a process which we really do not yet quite understand. But the experience of the climactic mutuality of orgasm clearly provides a supreme example of the mutual regulation of complicated patterns and in some way appeases the hostilities and the potential rages caused by the daily evidence of the oppositeness of male and female, of fact and fancy, of love and hate, of work and play. Such experience makes sexuality less obsessive and sadistic control of the partner superfluous.

Before such genital maturity is reached, much of sexual life is of the self-seeking, identity-hungry kind; each partner is really trying only to reach himself. Or it remains a kind of genital combat in which each tries to defeat the other. All this remains as part of adult sexuality, but it is gradually absorbed as the differences between the sexes become a full polarization within a joint life style. For the previously established vital strengths have helped to make the two sexes first become similar in consciousness, language, and ethics in order to then permit them to be maturely different.

Man, in addition to erotic attraction, has developed a selectivity of "love" which serves the need for a new and shared identity. If the estrangement typical for this stage is isolation, that is, the incapacity to take chances with one's identity by sharing true intimacy, such inhibition is often reinforced by a fear of the outcome of intimacy: offspring—and care. Love as mutual devotion, however, overcomes the antagonisms inherent in sexual and functional polarization, and is the vital strength of young adulthood. It is the guardian of that elusive and yet all-pervasive power of cultural and personal style which binds into a "way of life" the affiliations of competition and co-operation, production and procreation.
If we should continue the game of "I am" formulations "beyond identity" we should have to change the tune. For now the increment of identity is based on the formula "We are what we love."

Evolution has made man a teaching as well as a learning animal, for dependency and maturity are reciprocal: mature man needs to be needed, and maturity is guided by the nature of that which must be cared for. Generativity, then, is primarily the concern for establishing and guiding the next generation. There are of course, people who, from misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this drive to off-spring of their own, but to other forms of altruistic concern and creativity which many absorb their kind of parental drive. And indeed, the concept of generativity is meant to include productivity and creativity, neither of which, however, can replace it as designations of a crisis in development. For the ability to lose oneself in the meeting of bodies and minds leads to a gradual expansion of ego-interests and to a libidinal investment in that which is being generated. Where such enrichment fails altogether, regression to an obsessive need for pseudointimacy takes place, often with a pervading sense of stagnation, boredom, and interpersonal impoverishment. Individuals, then, often begin to indulge themselves as if they were their own—or one another's—one and only child; and where conditions favor it, early invalidism, physical or psychological, becomes the vehicle of self-concern. On the other hand, the mere fact of having or even wanting children does not "achieve" generativity. Some young parents suffer, it seems, from a retardation in the ability to develop true care. The reasons are often to be found in early child-hood impressions; in faulty identifications with parents; in excessive self-love based on a too strenuously self-made personality; and in the lack of some faith, some "belief in the species," which would make a child appear to be a welcome trust. The very nature of generativity, however, suggests that its most circumscribed pathology must now be sought in the next generation.

In the aging person who has taken care of things and people and has adapted himself to the triumphs and disappointments of being, by necessity, the originator of others and the generator of things and ideas—only in him the fruit of the seven stages gradually ripens. I know no better word for it than integrity. Lacking a clear definition, I shall point to a few attributes of this stage of mind. It is the ego's accrued assurance of its proclivity for order and meaning—an emotional integration faithful to the image-bearers of the past and ready to take, and eventually to renounce, leadership in the present. It is the acceptance of one's one and only life cycle and of the people who have become significant to it as something that had to be and that, by necessity, permitted of no substitutions. It thus means a new and different love of one's parents, free of the wish that they should have been different, and an acceptance of the fact that one's life is one's own responsibility. It is a sense of comradeship with men and women of distant times and of different pursuits who have created orders and objects and sayings conveying human dignity and love. Although aware of the relativity of all the various life that is, in the form of those unavoidable estrangements which we have listed for childhood and youth and which may appear in aggravated form as a result of a generative failure on the part of the parents.

As to the institutions which reinforce generativity and safe-guard it, one can only say that all institutions by their very nature codify the ethics of generative succession. Generativity is itself a driving power in human organization. And the stages of childhood and adulthood are a system of generation and re-generation to which institutions such as shared households and divided labor strive to give continuity. Thus the basic strengths enumerated here and the essentials of an organized human community have evolved together as an attempt to establish a set of proven methods and a fund of traditional reassurance which enables each generation to meet the needs of the next in relative in-dependence from personal differences and changing conditions.
styles which have given meaning to human striving, the possessor of integrity is ready to defend the dignity of his own life style against all physical and economic threats. For he knows that an individual life is the accidental coincidence of but one life cycle with but one segment of history, and that for him all human integrity stands and falls with the one style of integrity of which he partakes.

Clinical and anthropological evidence suggest that the lack or loss of this accrued ego integration is signified by disgust and by despair: fate is not accepted as the frame of life, death not as its finite boundary. Despair expresses the feeling that time is short, too short for the attempt to start another life and to try out alternate roads to integrity. Such a despair is often hidden behind a show of disgust, a misanthropy, or a chronic contemptuous displeasure with particular institutions and particular people—a disgust and a displeasure which, where not allied with the vision of a superior life, only signify the individual's contempt of himself.

A meaningful old age, then, preceding a possible terminal senility, serves the need for that integrated heritage which gives indispensable perspective to the life cycle. Strength here takes the form of that detached yet active concern with life bounded by death, which we call wisdom in its many connotations from ripened "wits" to accumulated knowledge, mature judgment, and inclusive understanding. Not that each man can evolve wisdom for himself. For most, a living tradition provides the essence of it. But the end of the cycle also evokes "ultimate concerns" for what chance man may have to transcend the limitations of his identity and his often tragic or bitterly tragicomic engagement in his one and only life cycle within the sequence of generations. Yet great philosophical and religious systems dealing with ultimate individuation seem to have remained responsibly related to the cultures and civilizations of their times. Seeking transcendence by renunciation, they yet remain ethically concerned with the "maintenance of the world. By the same token, a civilization can be measured by the meaning which it gives to the full cycle of life, for such meaning, or the lack of it, cannot fail to reach into the beginnings of the next generation, and thus into the chances of others to meet ultimate questions with some clarity and strength.

To whatever abyss ultimate concerns may lead individual men, man as a psychosocial creature will face, toward the end of his life, a new edition of an identity crisis which we may state in the words "I am what survives of me." From the stages of life, then, such dispositions as faith, will power, purposefulness, competence, fidelity, love, care, wisdom—all criteria of vital individual strength—also flow into the life of institutions. Without them, institutions wilt; but without the spirit of institutions pervading the patterns of care and love, instruction and training, no strength could emerge from the sequence of generations.

Psychosocial strength, we conclude, depends on a total process which regulates individual life cycles, the sequence of generations, and the structure of society simultaneously: for all three have evolved together.
CHAPTER IV

Identity Confusion in Life History and Case History

1. BIOGRAPHIC I: CREATIVE CONFUSION

G.B.S. (AGE 70) ON YOUNG SHAW (AGE 20)

WHEN GEORGE BERNARD SHAW was a famous man of seventy, he was called upon to review and preface the unsuccessful work of his early twenties, namely, two volumes of fiction that had not previously been published.) As one would expect, Shaw proceeded to light of the production of his young adulthood, but not without offering the reader a detailed analysis of young Shaw. Were he not so deceptively witty in what he says about his younger years, his observations might well have been recognized as an analytical achievement which, in fact, hardly calls for additional interpretation. Yet it is Shaw's own mark of identity that he eases and teases his reader along a path of apparent superficialities and sudden depths. I dare to excerpt him here for my purposes only in the hope that I will make the reader curious enough to follow every step of his exposition.

G.B.S. (for this is the public identity which was one of his masterpieces) describes young Shaw as an "extremely disagree-able and undesirable" young man, "not at all reticent of diabolical opinion," while inwardly "suffering . . . from simple cow-ardice . . . and horribly ashamed of it." "The truth is," he concludes, "that all men are in a false position in society until they have realized their possibilities and imposed them on their neighbors. They are tormented by a continual shortcoming in them-selves; yet they irritate others by a continual overweening. This discord can be resolved by acknowledged success or failures only: everyone is ill at ease until he has found his natural place, whether it be above or below his birthplace." But Shaw must always exempt himself from any universal law which he inadvertently pronounces, so he adds: "This finding of one's place may be very puzzling by the fact that there is no place in ordinary society for extraordinary individuals."

Shaw proceeds to describe a crisis at the age of twenty. This crisis was not caused by lack of success or the absence of a defined role, but by too much of both: "I made good in spite of myself, and found, to my dismay, that Business, instead of expelling me as the worthless imposter I was, was fastening upon me with no intention of letting me go. Behold me, therefore, in my twentieth year, with a business training, in an occupation which I detested as cordially as any sane person lets himself de-test anything he cannot escape from. In March 1876 I broke loose." Breaking loose meant to leave family and friends, business and Ireland, and to avoid the danger of success unequal to "the enormity of my unconscious ambition." He granted himself a prolongation of the interval between youth and adulthood, which we will call a "psychosocial moratorium." He writes: "When I left my native city, I left this phase behind me, and associated no more with men of my age until, after about eight years of solitude in this respect, I was drawn into the Socialist revival of the early eighties, among Englishmen intensely serious and burning with indignation at very real and very fundamental evils that affected all the world." In the meantime, he seemed to avoid opportunities, sensing that "behind the conviction that they could lead to nothing that I wanted, lay the unspoken fear that they might lead to something I did not want." This occupational part of the moratorium was reinforced by an intellectual
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one: "I cannot learn anything that does not interest me. My memory is not indiscriminate; it rejects and selects; and its selections are not academic. . . . I congratulate myself on this; for I am firmly persuaded that every unnatural activity of the brain is as mischievous as any unnatural activity of the body. . . . Civilization is always wrecked by giving the governing classes what is called secondary education."

Shaw settled down to study and to write as he pleased, and it was then that the extraordinary workings of an extraordinary personality came to the fore. He managed to abandon the kind of work he had been doing without relinquishing the work habit:

My office training had left me with a habit of doing something regularly every day as a fundamental condition of industry as distinguished from idleness. I knew I was making no headway unless I was doing this, and that I should never produce a book in any other fashion. I bought supplies of white paper, demy size, by sixpence-worths at a time; folded it in quarto; and condemned myself to fill five pages of it a day, rain or shine, dull or inspired. I had so much of the schoolboy and the clerk still in me that if my five pages ended in the middle of a sentence I did not finish it until the next day. On the other hand, if I missed a day, I made up for it by doing a double task on the morrow. On this plan I produced five novels in five years. It was my professional apprenticeship...

We may add that these five novels were not published for over fifty years, but Shaw had learned to write as he worked, and to wait as he wrote. How important such initial ritualization of his work life was for the young man's inner defenses may be seen from one of those casual (in fact, parenthetical) remarks with which the great wit almost coyly admits his psychological insights: "I have risen by sheer gravitation, too industrious by acquired habit to stop work (I work as my father drank)." He thus points to that combination of addictiveness and compulsiveness which we see as the basis of much pathology in late adolescence and of some accomplishments in young adulthood.

His father's 'drink neurosis" Shaw describes in detail, finding in it one of the sources of his biting humor: "It had to be either a family tragedy or family joke." For his father was not "con-
vivial, nor quarrelsome, nor boastful, but miserable, racked with shame and remorse." However, the father had a "humorous sense of anticlimax which I inherited from him and used with much effect when I became a writer of comedy. His anti-climax depended for their effect on our sense of the sacredness (of the subject matter). . . . It seems providential that I was driven to the essentials of religion by the reduction of every factitious or fictitious element in it to the most irreverent absurdity."

A more unconscious level of Shaw's Oedipal tragedy is represented with dreamlike symbolism in what looks like a "screen memory," that is, one condensed scene standing for others of a like kind:

A boy who has seen "the governor" with an imperfectly wrapped-up goose under one arm and a ham in the same condition under the other (both purchased under heaven knows what delusion of festivity) butting at the garden wall in the belief that he was pushing open the gate, and transforming his tall hat to a concertina in the process, and who, instead of being overwhelmed with shame and anxiety at the spectacle, has been so disabled by merriment (uproariously shared by the maternal uncle) that he has hardly been able to rush to the rescue of the hat and pilot its wearer to safety, is clearly not a boy who will make tragedies of trifles instead of making trifles of tragedies. If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance.

It is obvious that the analysis of the psychosexual aspect of Shaw's personality could find a solid anchor point in the symbolism of paternal impotence in this memory.

Shaw explains his father's downfall with a brilliant analysis of the socioeconomic circumstance of his day. For the father was "second cousin to a baronet, and my mother the daughter of a country gentleman whose rule was, when in difficulties, mortgage. That was my sort of poverty." His father was "the younger son of a younger son of a younger son" and he was "a downstart and the son of a downstart." Yet he concluded: "To say that my father could not afford to give me a university education is like saying that he could not afford to drink, or that I could not afford to become an author. Both statements are true;
but he drank and I became an author all the same."

His mother he remembers for the "one or two rare and delightful occasions when she buttered my bread for me. She buttered it thickly instead of merely wiping a knife on it." Most of the time, however, he says significantly, she merely "accepted me as a natural and customary phenomenon and took it for granted that I should go on occurring in that way." There must have been something reassuring in this kind of impersonality, for technically speaking, I should say she was the worst mother conceivable, always, however, within the limits of the fact that she was incapable of unkindness to any child, animal, or flower, or indeed to any person or thing whatsoever. . . ." If this could not be considered either a selective devotion or an education, Shaw explains: "I was badly brought up because my mother was so well brought up. . . . In her righteous reaction against . . . the constraints and tyrannies, the scoldings and browbeatings and punishments she had suffered in her childhood . . . she reached a negative attitude in which having no substitute to pro-pose, she carried domestic anarchy as far as in the nature of things it can be carried." All in all, Shaw's mother was "a thoroughly disgusted and disillusioned woman . . . suffering from a hopelessly disappointing husband and three uninteresting children grown too old to be petted like the animals and the birds she was so fond of, to say nothing of the humilitating inadequacy of my father's income."

Shaw had really three parents, the third being a man named Lee ("meteoric," "impetuous," "magnetic") who gave Shaw's mother lessons in singing, not without revamping the whole Shaw household as well as Bernard's ideals:

Although he supplanted my father as the dominant factor in the house-hold, and appropriated all the activity and interest of my mother, he was so completely absorbed in his musical affairs that there was no friction and hardly any intimate personal contacts between the two men: certainly no unpleasantness. At first his ideas astonished us. He said that people should sleep with their windows open. The daring of this appealed to me; and I have done so ever since. He ate brown bread instead of white: a startling eccentricity. Of the many identity elements which ensued from such a perplexing picture, let me select, condense, and name three for this occasion.

1. The Snob

"As compared with similar English families, we had a power of derisive dramatization that made the bones of the Shavian skeletons rattle more loudly." Shaw recognizes these as "family snobbery mitigated by the family sense of humor." On the other hand, "though my mother was not consciously a snob, the divinity which hedged an Irish lady of her period was not acceptable to the British suburban parents, all snobs, who were within her reach (as customers for private music lessons)." Shaw had "an enormous contempt for family snobbery" until he found that one of his ancestors was an Earl of Fife: "It was as good as being descended from Shakespeare, whom I had been unconsciously resolved to reincarnate from my cradle."

2. The Noisemaker

All through his childhood, Shaw seems to have been exposed to an oceanic assault of music making: the family played trombones and ophicleides, violoncellos, harps, and tambourines—and, most of all (or was it worst of all), they sang. Finally, how-ever, he taught himself to play the piano, and this with intrusive noisiness. When I look back on all the banging, whistling, roaring, and growling inflicted on nervous neighbours during this process of education, I am consumed with useless remorse. . . . I used to drive [my mother] nearly crazy by my favorite selections from Wagner's Ring, which to her was "all recitative," and horribly discordant at that. She never complained at the time, but confessed it after we separated, and said that she had sometimes gone away to cry. If I had committed a murder I do not think it would trouble my conscience very much; but this I cannot bear to think of.

That, in fact, he may have learned to get even with his musical tormentors, he does not profess to realize. Instead, he compromised by becoming a music critic, i.e., one who writes about the noise made by others. As a critic, he chose the nom de plume Corno di Bassetto—the name of an instrument which hardly
anybody knew and which is so meek in tone that "not even the devil could make it sparkle." Yet Bassetto became a sparkling critic, and more: "I cannot deny that Bassetto was occasionally vulgar; but that does not matter if he makes you laugh. Vulgarity is a necessary part of a complete author's equipment; and the clown is sometimes the best part of the circus."

3. The Diabolical One

How the undoubtedly lonely little boy (whose mother listened only to the musical noisemakers) came to use his imagination to converse with a great imaginary companion, is described thus: "In my childhood I exercised my literary genius by composing my own prayers. . . . They were a literary performance for the entertainment and propitiation of the Almighty." In line with his family's irreverence in matters of religion, Shaw's piety had to find and rely on the rock-bottom of religiosity which, in him, early became a mixture of "intellectual integrity ... synchronized with the dawning of moral passion." At the same time it seems that Shaw was (in some unspecified way) a little devil of a child. At any rate, he did not feel identical with himself when he was good: "Even when I was a good boy, I was so only theatrically, because, as actors say, I saw myself in the character." And indeed, at the completion of his identity struggle, i.e., "when Nature completed my countenance in 1880 or thereabouts (I had only the tenderest sprouting of hair on my face until I was 24), I found myself equipped with the upgrowing moustaches and eyebrows, and the sarcastic nostrils of the operatic fiend whose airs (by Gounod) I had sung as a child, and whose attitudes I had affected in my boyhood. Later on, as the generations moved past me, I . . . began to perceive that imaginative fiction is to life what the sketch is to the picture or the conception to the statue."

Thus G.B.S., more or less explicitly, traces his own roots. Yet it is well worth noting that what he finally became seems to him to have been as innate as the intended reincarnation of Shakespeare referred to above. His teacher, he says, "puzzled me with her attempts to teach me to read; for I can remember no time at

which a page of print was not intelligible to me, and can only suppose that I was born literate." However, he thought of a number of professional choices: "As an alternative to being a Michelangelo I had dreams of being a Badeali (note, by the way, that of literature I had no dreams at all, any more than a duck has of swimming)."

He also calls himself "a born Communist" (which, we hasten to say, means a Fabian socialist), and he explains the peace that comes with the acceptance of what one seems to be made to be; the "born Communist . . . knows where he is, and where this society which has so intimidated him is. He is cured of his MAUVAISE HONTE . . ." Thus "the complete outsider" gradually became his kind of complete insider: "I was," he said, "outside society, outside politics, outside sport, outside the Church—but this "only within the limits of British barbarism. . . . The moment music, painting, literature, or science came into question the positions were reversed: it was I who was the Insider."

As he traces all of these traits back into childhood, Shaw becomes aware of the fact that only a tour de force could have integrated them all:

If I am to be entirely communicative on this subject, I must add that the mere rawness which so soon rubs off was complicated by a deeper strangeness which has made me all my life a sojourner on this planet rather than a native of it. Whether it be that I was born mad or a little too sane, my kingdom was not of this world: I was at home only in the realm of my imagination, and at my ease only with the mighty dead. Therefore, I had to become an actor, and create for myself a fantastic personality fit and apt for dealing with men, and adaptable to the various parts I had to play as author, journalist, orator, politician, committee man, man of the world, and so forth.

"In this," Shaw concludes significantly, "I succeeded later on only too well." This statement is singularly illustrative of that faint disgust with which older men at times review the inexorable identity which they had come by in their youth—a disgust which in the lives of some can become mortal despair and inexplicable psychosomatic involvement.
The end of his crisis of younger years, Shaw sums up in these words: "I had the intellectual habit; and my natural combination of critical faculty with literary resource needed only a clear comprehension of life in the light of an intelligible theory: in short, a religion, to set it in triumphant operation." Here the old Cynic has circumscribed in one sentence what the identity formation of any human being must add up to. To translate this into terms more conducive to discussion in more complicated and therefore more respectable terms: Man, to take his place in society, must acquire a "conflict-free," habitual use of a dominant faculty, to be elaborated in an occupation; a limitless resource, a feedback, as it were, from the immediate exercise of this occupation, from the companionship it provides, and from its tradition; and finally, an intelligible theory of the processes of life which the old atheist, eager to shock to the last, calls a religion. The Fabian socialism to which he, in fact, turned is rather an ideology, a general term to which we shall adhere, for reasons which will become clear at the end of this chapter.

II. WILLIAM JAMES, HIS OWN ALIENIST

William James was preoccupied all his life with what was then called "morbid psychology." He himself suffered in his youth and into his manhood under severe emotional strain for which he vainly sought the help of a variety of nerve cures. His letters also attest to the fact that he was interested in his friends' crises and that he offered them a kind of passionate advice which betrayed his own struggle for sanity. In the peculiar milieu of Boston, furthermore, which enjoys such blatant contrasts between materialistic vigor and the immersion of spirit and mind, he was drawn into the argument over the matter of faith healing. And finally, he was one of the men who played host to the emerging psychiatric schools, among them that of Freud, who visited this country in 1907. While Freud himself impressed him as a man obsessed with fixed ideas (he could make nothing in his own case with Freud's dream theories, James said, as have many of the most and the least intelligent before and after him), he neverthe-
thirty he accepted the offer of President Eliot, who had early "spotted" him, to teach anatomy at Harvard. James's invalidism, however, was comparable to that of Darwin—that is, a restriction of activities and associations which left at any given time only a narrow path for interest and activity. And yet along that narrow path such men find, as if with a sleepwalker's sure-footedness, their final goal of intellectual and social concentration. In James's case the path led from artistic observation, through a naturalistic sense of classification and the physiologist's grasp of organic functioning, to the exile's multilingual perceptiveness, and finally through the sufferer's self-knowledge and empathy to psychology and philosophy. As James put it sovereignly: "I originally studied medicine in order to be a physiologist, but I drifted into psychology and philosophy from a sort of fatality. I never had any philosophic instruction, the first lecture on psychology I ever heard being the first I ever gave."

It was not until he wrote, during a period of middle-aged cardiac dismay, his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, that James gave an undoubted autobiographic account of a state "of the worst kind of melancholy," purportedly reported to him by a young "French sufferer."

Whilst in this state of philosophic pessimism and general depression of spirits about my prospects, I went one evening into a dressing-room in the twilight, to procure some article that was there; when suddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. . . . It was like a revelation; and although the immediate feelings passed away, the experience has made me sympathetic with the morbid feelings of others ever since. . . . I dreaded to be left alone. I remember wondering how other people could live, how I myself had ever lived, so unconscious of that pit of insecurity beneath the surface of life. My mother in particular, a very cheerful person, seemed to me a perfect paradox in her unconsciousness of danger, which you may well believe I was very careful not to disturb by revelations of my own state of mind. I have always thought that this experience of melancholia of mine had a religious bearing. . . . I mean that the fear was so invasive and powerful, that, if I had not clung to scripture-texts like *The eternal God is my refuge, etc. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, etc., I am the Resurrection and the Life, etc.* I think I should have grown really insane.

To this James added in a footnote a reference to a similar crisis of alienation (and psychiatrists were then called "alienists") which had been experienced and described by his father thus:

One day . . . towards the close of May, having eaten a comfortable dinner, I remained sitting at the table after the family had disappeared, idly gazing at the embers in the grate, thinking of nothing, and feeling only the exhilaration incident to a good digestion, when suddenly—in a lightning-flash as it were—fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

A comparison of the two attacks leaves open the question as to how much conformity with his father's inner life and life style, and how much liberation by way of a revelation may be seen in the experience. One thing is certain: each age has its own forms of alienation (forms often more culturebound than the sense of being "beside oneself" would suggest) and both the father's and the son's inner struggle concerned the identity of naked and stubborn selfhood so typical for extreme individual-ism, as against the surrender to some higher identity be it outer and all-enveloping, or inner and all-pervasive. That the father, as he further reports, in his moment of distress reluctantly turned to his wife, while the son assures us that he did not wish to disturb his unaccountably cheerful mother, makes one wonder how much anxiety it took for the self-made men of that day to turn to the refuge of woman.

As Henry James, Sr., put it, reviving a bit of agrarian romanticism, Time and again while living at this dismal water-cure, and listening to its endless 'strife of tongues' about diet, and regimen, and disease, and politics, and parties, and persons, I have said to myself, The curse of mankind, that which keeps our manhood so little and so depraved, is its sense of self-hood, and the absurd, abominable opinionativeness it engenders. How sweet it would be to find oneself no longer man, but one of those innocent and ignorant sheep pasturing upon that placid hillside, and drinking in eternal dew and freshness from Nature's
lavish bosom!"  

One important step on William James's road to maturity and some liberation from acute alienation is reported by him, the other by his father.

"I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life," James wrote to his father; "I finished the first part of Renouvier’s second 'Essais' and see no reason why his definition of Free Will—'the sustaining of a thought because I choose to when I might have other thoughts'—need be the definition of an illusion. At any rate, I will assume for the present—until next year—that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will."  

To this he adds a sentence which admirably expresses a principle dominant in today's ego psychology:

Hitherto, when I have felt like taking a free initiative, like daring to act originally, without carefully waiting for contemplation of the external world to determine all for me, suicide seemed the most manly form to put my daring into; now, I will go a step further with my will, not only act with it, but believe as well; believe in my individual reality and creative power. My belief, to be sure, can’t be optimistic—but I will posit life (the real, the good) in the self-governing resistance of the ego to the world. Life shall [be built in] doing and suffering and creating.

I am quoting this formulation of a self-governing as well as a resisting aspect of the ego to emphasize what has become the psychoanalytic meaning of it, that is, the inner synthesis which organizes experience and guides action.

And here is Henry James, Sr.'s report on his son's other great and liberating thought-experience:

[William] came in the other afternoon while I was sitting alone, and after walking the floor in an animated way for a moment, broke out: 'Bless my soul, what a difference between me as I am now and as I was last spring at this time!' . . . He had a great effusion. I was afraid of interfering with it, or possibly checking it, but I ventured to ask what especially in his opinion had produced the change. He said several things . . . but more than anything else, his having given up the notion that all mental disorder requires to have a physical basis. This had become perfectly untrue to him. . . . He has been shaking off his respect for men of mere science as such, and is even more universal

No doubt old Henry, Sr., suited his son's words a bit to his own style of thought, but this scene is typically James. Clearly, the first insight, concerning the self-determination of free will, is related to the second, that is the abandonment of physiological factors as fatalistic arguments against a neurotic person's continued self-determination. Together they are the basis of psycho-therapy, which, no matter how it is described and conceptualized, aims at the restoration of the patient's power of choice.

2. GENETIC: IDENTIFICATION AND IDENTITY

The autobiographies of extraordinary (and extraordinarily self-perceptive) individuals are one source of insight into the development of identity. In order to describe the universal genetics of identity, one would wish to be able to trace its development through the life histories of "ordinary" individuals. Here I must rely on general impressions from daily life, on guidance work with mildly disturbed young people, and on my participation in one of the rare "longitudinal" studies—a source which excludes the detailed publication of biographic data. In the following genetic sketch, some repetition of what has been said previously is unavoidable.

Adolescence is the last stage of childhood. The adolescent process, however, is conclusively complete only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identifications to a new kind of identification, achieved in absorbing sociability and in competitive apprenticeship with and among his age mates. These new identifications are no longer characterized by the playfulness of childhood and the experimental zest of youth: with dire urgency they force the young individual into choices and decisions which will, with increasing immediacy, lead to commitments "for life." The task to be performed here by the young person and by his society is formidable. It necessitates, in different individuals and in different societies, great variations in the duration, intensity, and ritualization of adolescence. Societies
offering, as individuals require, more or less sanctioned intermediary periods between childhood and adulthood, often characterized by a combination of prolonged immaturity and provoked precocity.

In postulating a "latency period" which precedes puberty, psychoanalysis has given recognition to some kind of psychosexual moratorium in human development—a period of delay which permits the future mate and parent first to go to whatever "school" his culture provides and to learn the technical and social rudiments of a work situation. The libido theory, however, offers no adequate account of a second period of delay, namely, prolonged adolescence. Here the sexually matured individual is more or less retarded in his psychosexual capacity for intimacy and in the psychosocial readiness for parenthood. This period can be viewed as a psychosocial moratorium during which the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made for him.

If, in the following, we speak of the community's response to the young individual's need to be "recognized" by those around him, we mean something beyond a mere recognition of achievement; for it is of great relevance to the young individual's identity formation that he be responded to and be given function and status as a person whose gradual growth and transformation make sense to those who begin to make sense to him. It has not been sufficiently recognized in psychoanalysis that such recognition provides an entirely indispensable support to the ego in the specific tasks of adolescing, which are: to maintain the most important ego defenses against the vastly growing intensity of impulses (now invested in a matured genital apparatus and a powerful muscle system); to learn to consolidate the most important "conflict-free" achievements in line with work opportunities; and to resynthesize all childhood identifications in some unique way and yet in concordance with the roles offered by some wider section of society—be that section the neighborhood block, an anticipated occupational field, an association of kindred minds, or perhaps (as in Shaw's case) the "mighty dead."

A moratorium is a period of delay granted to somebody who is not ready to meet an obligation or forced on somebody who should give himself time. By psychosocial moratorium, then, we mean a delay of adult commitments, and yet it is not only a delay. It is a period that is characterized by a selective permissiveness on the part of society and of provocative playfulness on the part of youth, and yet it also often leads to deep, if often transitory, commitment on the part of youth, and ends in a more or less ceremonial confirmation of commitment on the part of society. Such moratoria show highly individual variations, which are especially pronounced in very gifted people (gifted for better or for worse), and there are, of course, institutional variations linked with the ways of life of cultures and subcultures.

Each society and each culture institutionalizes a certain moratorium for the majority of its young people. For the most part, these moratoria coincide with apprenticeships and adventures that are in line with the society's values. The moratorium may be a time for horse stealing and vision-quests, a time for Wanderschaft or work "out West" or "down under," a time for "lost youth" or academic life, a time for self-sacrifice or for pranks—and today, often a time for patienthood or delinquency. For much of juvenile delinquency, especially in its organized form, must be considered to be an attempt at the creation of a psychosocial moratorium. In fact, I would assume that some delinquency has been a relatively institutionalized moratorium for a long time in parts of our society, and that it forces itself on our awareness now only because it proves too attractive and compelling for too many youngsters at once. In addition to all this, our society seems to be in the process of incorporating psychiatric treatment as one of the few permissible moratoria for young people who otherwise would be crushed by standardization and mechanization. This we must consider carefully, for the label or diagnosis one acquires during the psychosocial moratorium is of the utmost importance for the process of identity formation.

But the moratorium does not need to be consciously experi-
enced as such. On the contrary, the young individual may feel deeply committed and may learn only much later that what he took so seriously was only a period of transition; many "recovered" delinquents probably feel quite estranged about the "foolishness" that has passed. It is clear, however, that any experimentation with identity images means also to play with the inner fire of emotions and drives and to risk the outer danger of ending up in a social "pocket" from which there is no return. Then the moratorium has failed; the individual is defined too early, and he has committed himself because circumstances or, indeed, authorities have committed him.

LINGUISTICALLY as well as psychologically, identity and identification have common roots. Is identity, then, the mere sum of earlier identifications, or is it merely an additional set of identifications?

The limited usefulness of the mechanism of identification becomes obvious at once if we consider the fact that none of the identifications of childhood (which in our patients stand out in such morbid elaboration and mutual contradiction) could, if merely added up, result in a functioning personality. True, we usually believe that the task of psychotherapy is the replacement of morbid and excessive identifications by more desirable ones. But as every cure attests, "more desirable" identifications at the same time tend to be quietly subordinated to a new, unique Gestalt which is more than the sum of its parts. The fact is that identification as a mechanism is of limited usefulness. Children at different stages of their development identify with those part aspects of people by which they themselves are most immediately affected, whether in reality or fantasy. Their identifications with parents, for example, center in certain overvalued and ill-understood body parts, capacities, and role appearances. These part aspects, furthermore, are favored not because of their social acceptability (they often are everything but the parents' most adjusted attributes) but by the nature of infantile fantasy which only gradually gives way to more realistic judgment.

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In later childhood the individual is faced with a comprehensible hierarchy of roles, from the younger siblings to the grand-parents and whoever else belongs to the wider family. All through childhood this gives him some kind of a set of expectations as to what he is going to be when he grows older, and very small children identify with a number of people in a number of respects and establish a kind of hierarchy of expectations which then seeks "verification" later in life. That is why cultural and historical change can prove so traumatic to identity formation: it can break up the inner consistency of a child's hierarchy of expectations.

IF WE consider introjection, identification, and identity formation to be the steps by which the ego grows in ever more mature interplay with the available models, the following psychosocial schedule suggests itself.

The mechanism of introjection (the primitive "incorporation" of another's image) depends for its integration on the satisfactory mutuality between the mothering adult (s) and the mothered child. Only the experience of such initial mutuality provides a safe pole of self-feeling from which the child can reach out for the other pole: his first love "objects."

The fate of childhood identifications, in turn, depends on the child's satisfactory interaction with trustworthy representatives of a meaningful hierarchy of roles as provided by the generations living together in some form of family.

Identity formation, finally, begins where the usefulness of identification ends. It arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new configuration, which, in turn, is dependent on the process by which a society (often through subsocieties) identifies the young individual, recognizing him as somebody who had to become the way he is and who, being the way he is, is taken for granted. The community, often not without some initial mistrust, gives such recognition with a display of surprise and pleasure in making the acquaintance of a newly emerging individual.
For the community in turn feels "recognized" by the individual who cares to ask for recognition; it can, by the same token, feel deeply—and vengefully—rejected by the individual who does not seem to care.

A community's ways of identifying the individual, then, meet more or less successfully the individual's ways of identifying himself with others. If the young person is "recognized" at a critical moment as one who arouses displeasure and discomfort, the community sometimes seems to suggest to the young person that he change in ways that to him do not add up to anything "identical with himself." To the community, the desirable change is nevertheless conceived of as a mere matter of good will or of will power ("he could if he wanted to") while resistance to such change is perceived as a matter of bad will or, indeed, of inferiority, hereditary or otherwise. Thus the community often underestimates to what extent a long, intricate childhood history has restricted a youth's further choice of identity change, and also to what extent the community could, if it only would, still help to determine a youth's destiny within these choices.

All through childhood tentative crystallizations of identity take place which make the individual feel and believe (to begin with the most conscious aspect of the matter) as if he approximately knew who he was—only to find that such self-certainty ever again falls prey to the discontinuities of development itself. An example would be the discontinuity between the demands made in a given milieu on a little boy and those made on a "big boy" who, in turn, may well wonder why he was first made to believe that to be little is admirable, only to be forced to ex-change this more effortless status for the special obligations of one who is "big now." Such discontinuities can, at any time, amount to a crisis and demand a decisive and strategic repatterning of action, leading to compromises which can be compensated for only by a consistently accruing sense of the practicability and feasibility of such increasing commitment. The cute, or ferocious, or good small boy who becomes a studious, or gentle-manly, or tough big boy must be able—and must be enabled—to combine both sets of values in a recognized identity which permits him, in work and play and in official and intimate behavior, to be (and to let others be) a combination of a big boy and a little boy.

The community supports such development to the extent that it permits the child, at each step, to orient himself toward a complete "life plan" with a hierarchical order of roles as represented by individuals of different ages. Family, neighborhood, and school provide contact and experimental identification with younger and older children and with young and old adults. A child, in the multiplicity of successive and tentative identifications, thus begins early to build up expectations of what it will be like to be older and what it will feel like to have been younger—expectations which become part of an identity as they are, step by step, verified in decisive experiences of psychosocial fittedness.

The final identity, then, as fixed at the end of adolescence, is superordinated to any single identification with individuals of the past: it includes all significant identifications, but it also alters them in order to make a unique and reasonably coherent whole of them.

THE critical phases of life have been described in psychoanalysis primarily in terms of instincts and defenses, i.e., as "typical danger situations." Psychoanalysis has concerned itself more with the encroachment of psychosexual crises on psychosocial and other) functions than with the specific crisis created by the maturation of each function. Take for example a child who is learning to speak: he is acquiring one of the prime functions supporting a sense of individual autonomy and one of the prime techniques for expanding the radius of give-and-take. The mere indication of an ability to give intentional sound-signs soon obligates the child to "say what he wants." It may force him to achieve by proper verbalization the attention which was afforded him previously in response to mere gestures of needfulness. Speech not only increasingly commits him to his own char-
acteristic kind of voice and to the mode of speech he develops, it also defines him as one responded to by those around him with changed diction and attention. They in turn expect henceforth to be understood by him with fewer explanations or gestures. Furthermore, a spoken word is a pact. There is an irrevocably committing aspect to an utterance remembered by others, although the child may have to learn early that certain commitments (adult ones to a child) are subject to change without notice, while others (his to them) are not. This intrinsic relationship of speech not only to the world of communicable facts, but also to the social value of verbal commitment and uttered truth is strategic among the experiences which mark ego development. It is this psychosocial aspect of the matter which we must learn to relate to the by now better known psychosexual aspects represented, for example, in the autoerotic enjoyment of speech; the use of speech as an oral or otherwise erotic "con-tact"; or in such organ-mode emphases as eliminative or intrusive sounds or uses of speech. Thus the child may come to develop, in the use of voice and word, a particular combination of whining or singing, judging or arguing as part of a new element of the future identity, namely, the element "one who speaks and is spoken to in such-and-such a way." This element in turn will be related to other elements of the child's developing identity (he is clever and/or good-looking and/or tough) and will be compared with other people, alive or dead, judged as ideal or evil.

It is the ego's function to integrate the psychosexual and psychosocial aspects on a given level of development and at the same time to integrate the relation of newly added identity elements with those already in existence—that is, to bridge the in-escapable discontinuities between different levels of personality development. For earlier crystallizations of identity can become subject to renewed conflict when changes in the quality and quantity of drive, expansions in mental equipment, and new and often conflicting social demands all make previous adjustments appear insufficient and, in fact, make previous opportunities and rewards suspect. Yet such developmental and normative crises differ from imposed, traumatic, and neurotic crises in that the very process of growth provides new energy even as society offers new and specific opportunities according to its dominant conception of the phases of life. From a genetic point of view, then, the process of identity formation emerges as an evolving configuration—a configuration which is gradually established by successive ego syntheses and resyntheses throughout childhood. It is a configuration gradually integrating constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles.

The final assembly of all the converging identity elements at the end of childhood (and the abandonment of the divergent ones) appears to be a formidable task: how can a stage as "abnormal" as adolescence be trusted to accomplish it? It is not always easy to recall that in spite of the similarity of adolescent 'symptoms' and episodes to neurotic and psychotic symptoms and episodes, adolescence is not an affliction but a normative crisis, i.e., a normal phase of increased conflict characterized by a seeming fluctuation in ego strength as well as by a high growth potential. Neurotic and psychotic crises are defined by a certain self-perpetuating propensity, by an increasing waste of defensive energy, and by a deepened psychosocial isolation; while normative crises are relatively more reversible, or, better, traversable, and are characterized by an abundance of available energy which, to be sure, revives dormant anxiety and arouses new conflict, but also supports new and expanded ego functions in the searching and playful engagement of new opportunities and associations. What under prejudiced scrutiny may appear to be the onset of a neurosis often is only an aggravated crisis which might prove to be self-liquidating and even, in fact, contributive to the process of identity formation.

It is true, of course, that the adolescent, during the final stage of his identity formation, is apt to suffer more deeply than he ever did before or ever will again from a confusion of roles. And
it is also true that such confusion renders many an adolescent defenseless against the sudden impact of previously latent malignant disturbances. But it is important to emphasize that the diffused and vulnerable, aloof and uncommitted, yet demanding and opinionated personality of the not-too-neurotic adolescent contains many necessary elements of a semi-deliberate role experimentation of the "I dare you" and "I dare myself" variety. Much of this apparent confusion thus must be considered social play—the true genetic successor of childhood play. Similarly, the adolescent's ego development demands and permits playful, if daring, experimentation in fantasy and introspection. We are apt to be alarmed when the adolescent reveals a "closeness to consciousness" in his perception of dangerous fantasies (fantasies that had been suppressed at earlier stages and will be suppressed again later), especially if, in our zealous pursuit of our task of "making conscious" in the psychotherapeutic situation, we push someone who is already leaning out a little too far over the precipice of the unconscious. The adolescent's leaning out over any number of precipices is normally an experimentation with experiences which are thus becoming more amenable to ego control, provided they are not prematurely responded to with fatal seriousness by overeager or neurotic adults. The same must be said of the adolescent's "fluidity of defenses," which so often causes genuine concern on the part of the worried clinician. Much of this fluidity is anything but pathological, for adolescence is a crisis in which only fluid defense can overcome a sense of victimization by inner and outer demands and in which only trial and error can lead to the most felicitous avenues of action and self-expression.

In general, one may say that in regard to the social play of adolescents, prejudices similar to those which once concerned the nature of childhood play are not easily overcome. We alternately consider such behavior irrelevant, unnecessary, or irrational, and ascribe to it purely regressive and neurotic meanings. As in the past, when the study of children's spontaneous games was neglected in favor of that of solitary play, so now the mutual "joinedness" of adolescent clique behavior fails to be properly assessed in our concern for the individual adolescent. Whether or not a given adolescent's newly acquired capacities are drawn back into infantile conflict depends to a significant extent on the quality of the opportunities and rewards available to him in his peer clique as well as on the more formal ways in which society at large invites a transition from social play to work experimentation and from rituals of transit to final commitments, all of which must be based on an implicit mutual contract between the individual and society.

Is the sense of identity conscious? At times, of course, it seems only too conscious. For between the double prongs of vital inner need and inexorable outer demand, the as yet experimenting individual may become the victim of a transitory extreme identity consciousness, which is the common core of the many forms of "self-consciousness" typical for youth. Where the processes of identity formation are prolonged (a factor which can bring creative gain), such preoccupation with the "self-image" also prevails. We are thus most aware of our identity when we are just about to gain it and when we (with that startle which motion pictures call a "double take") are somewhat surprised to make its acquaintance; or, again, when we are just about to enter a crisis and feel the encroachment of identity confusion—a syndrome to be described presently.

An optimal sense of identity, on the other hand, is experienced merely as a sense of psychosocial well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of "knowing where one is going," and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count.

3. PATHOGRAPHIC: THE CLINICAL PICTURE OF SEVERE IDENTITY CONFUSION

Pathography remains the traditional source of psychoanalytic insight. In the following, I shall sketch a syndrome of disturbances in young people who can neither make use of the careers
provided in their society nor create and maintain for themselves (as Shaw did) a unique moratorium all their own. They come, instead, to psychiatrists, priests, judges, and recruitment officers in order to be given an authorized if ever so uncomfortable place in which to wait things out. What follows is a first formulation of the more severe symptoms of identity confusion. It is based on clinical observations made in the fifties, on individuals diagnosed as preschizophrenics or, for the most part, as "borderline" cases in the Austen Riggs Center in the Berkshires and in the Western Psychiatric Institute in Pittsburgh. The clinically oriented reader will rightly feel that in my endeavor to understand identity confusion as a developmental disturbance, I neglect the diagnostic signs which would mark a malignant and more irreversible condition. Identity confusion, of course, is not a diagnostic entity, but I would think that a description of the developmental crisis in which a disturbance had its acute onset should become part of any diagnostic picture, and especially of any prognosis and any statement concerning the kind of therapy indicated. This whole chapter serves the purpose of indicating such an additional diagnostic direction, but it does not demonstrate in detail the way in which it could be made functional. The nonclinical reader, on the other hand, should be warned that any sympathetic and nonmedical description of mental states makes any reader believe that he—or somebody near to him—shares the condition described. And, indeed, it is easy (in the sense of usual) to have one or a number of the symptoms of identity confusion, but quite difficult to accomplish the more severe ensemble of them all which could be verified in the individual case only by a trained observer.

A state of acute identity confusion usually becomes manifest at a time when the young individual finds himself exposed to a combination of experiences which demand his simultaneous commitment to physical intimacy (not by any means always overtly sexual), to decisive occupational choice, to energetic competition, and to psychosocial self-definition. Whether or not the ensuing tension will lead to paralysis now depends primarily on the regressive pull exerted by a latent illness. This regressive pull often receives the greatest attention from workers in our field, partially because we are on more familiar ground wherever we can diagnose signs of regression and partially because it is the regression which calls for cure. Yet the disturbances under discussion cannot be comprehended without some insight into the specific conditions which may have forced a transitory adolescent regression on the individual as an attempt to postpone and to avoid, as it were, a psychosocial foreclosure. The social function of the state of paralysis which ensues is that of maintaining a state of minimal actual choice and commitment. But alas, illness, too, commits.

**The Problem of Intimacy**

That many of our patients break down at an age which is properly considered more preadult than postadolescent is explained by the fact that often only an attempt to engage in intimate fellowship and competition or in sexual intimacy fully reveals the latent weakness of identity.

True "engagement" with others is the result and the test of firm self-delineation. As the young individual seeks at least tentative forms of playful intimacy in friendship and competition, in sex play and love, in argument and gossip, he is apt to experience a peculiar strain, as if such tentative engagement might turn into an interpersonal fusion amounting to a loss of identity and requiring, therefore, a tense inner reservation, a caution in commitment. Where a youth does not resolve such strain, he may isolate himself and enter, at best, only stereotyped and formalized interpersonal relations; or he may, in repeated hectic attempts and dismal failures, seek intimacy with the most improbable partners. For where an assured sense of identity is missing, even friendships and affairs become desperate attempts at delineating the fuzzy outlines of identity by mutual narcissistic mirroring: to fall in love then often means to fall into one's mirror image, hurting oneself and damaging the mirror. During lovemaking or in sexual fantasies a loosening of sexual identity...
threatens; it even becomes unclear whether sexual excitement is experienced by the individual or by his partner, and this applies in either heterosexual or homosexual encounters. The ego thus loses its flexible capacity for abandoning itself to sexual and affectual sensations in a fusion with another individual who is both partner to the sensation and guarantor of one's continuing identity: fusion with another becomes identity loss. A sudden collapse of all capacity for mutuality threatens, and a desperate wish ensues to start all over again, with a (quasideliberate) regression to a stage of basic bewilderment and rage such as only the very small child experiences.

It must be remembered that the counterpart of intimacy is distantiation, i.e., the readiness to repudiate, ignore, or destroy those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to one's own. Intimacy with one set of people and ideas would not be really intimate without an efficient repudiation of another set. Thus, weakness or excess in repudiation is an intrinsic aspect of the inability to gain intimacy because of an incomplete identity: whoever is not sure of his "point of view" cannot repudiate judiciously.

Young persons often indicate in rather pathetic ways the feeling that only by merging with a "leader" can they be saved, the leader being an adult who is able and willing to offer himself as a safe object for experimental surrender and as a guide in the re-learning of the very first steps toward an intimate mutuality and a legitimate repudiation. The late adolescent wants to be an apprentice or disciple, a follower, a sexual servant, or patient to such a person. When this fails, as it often must from its very intensity and absoluteness, the young individual recoils to a position of strenuous introspection and self-testing which, given particularly aggravating circumstances or a history of relatively strong autistic trends, can lead him into a paralyzing borderline state. Symptomatically, this state consists of a painfully heightened sense of isolation; a disintegration of the sense of inner continuity and sameness; a sense of over-all ashamedness; an inability to derive a sense of accomplishment from any kind of activity. In these young patients, masturbation and nocturnal emissions, far from being an occasional release of excess pressure, only serve to aggravate tension. They become part of a vicious cycle in which omnipotent narcissism is momentarily heightened only to give way to a sense of physical and mental castration and emptiness. Thus, life is happening to the individual rather than being lived by his initiative; his mistrust leaves it to the world, to society, and indeed to psychiatry to prove that he does exist in a psychosocial sense, i.e., can count on an invitation to become himself.

**DIFFUSION OF TIME PERSPECTIVE**

In extreme instances of delayed and prolonged adolescence, an extreme form of a disturbance in the experience of time appears which, in its milder form, belongs to the psychopathology of everyday adolescence. It consists of a sense of great urgency and yet also of a loss of consideration for time as a dimension of living. The young person may feel simultaneously very young, and in fact babylike, and old beyond rejuvenation. Protests of missed greatness and of a premature and fatal loss of useful potentials are common among our patients, as they are among adolescents in cultures which consider such protestations romantic; the implied malignancy, however, consists of a decided disbelief in the possibility that time may bring change, and yet also of a violent fear that it might. This contradiction is often expressed in a general slowing up which makes the patient behave, within the routine of his activities and of his therapy, as if he were moving in molasses. It is hard for him to go to bed and face the transition into a state of sleep, and it is equally hard for him to get up and face the necessary restitution of wakefulness; it is hard to come to the therapeutic appointment, and hard to leave it. Such complaints as "I don't know," "I give up," and "I quit" are by no means mere habitual statements reflecting a mild depression; they are often expressions of the kind of despair discussed by Edward Bibring as a wish on the part of the ego "to let itself die."
The assumption that life could actually be made to end with the end of adolescence or at tentatively planned later "dates of expiration" is by no means entirely unwelcome, and, in fact, can become the only condition on which a tentative new beginning can be based. Some of our patients even require the feeling that the therapist does not intend to commit them to a continuation of life if treatment should fail to prove it really worthwhile. Without such a conviction the moratorium would not be a real one. In the meantime, the "wish to die" is a really suicidal wish only in those rare cases where "to be a suicide" becomes an inescapable identity choice in itself. I am thinking here of a pretty young girl, the oldest of a number of daughters of a mill worker. Her mother had repeatedly expressed the thought that she would rather see her daughters dead than become prostitutes, and at the same time she suspected "prostitution" in the daughters' every move toward companionship with boys. The daughters were finally forced into a kind of conspiratorial sorority of their own, obviously designed to elude the mother, in order to experiment with ambiguous situations and yet probably also to give each other protection from men. They were finally caught in compromising circumstances. The authorities, too, took it for granted that they intended to prostitute themselves, and they were sent to a variety of institutions where they were forcefully impressed with the kind of "recognition" society had in store for them. No appeal was possible to a mother who, they felt, had left them no choice, and much of the good will and understanding of social workers was sabotaged by circumstances. At least for the oldest girl—for a number of reasons—no other future was possible except that of another chance in another world. She hanged herself after having dressed nicely and written a note which ended with the cryptic words "Why I achieve honor only to discard it . . ."

DIFFUSION OF INDUSTRY

Severe identity confusion is regularly accompanied by an acute upset in the sense of workmanship, either in the form of an inability to concentrate on required or suggested tasks or in a self-destructive preoccupation with some one-sided activity, i.e., excessive reading. The way in which such patients sometimes, under treatment, find the one activity in which they can re-employ their once lost sense of workmanship is a chapter in itself. Here it is well to keep in mind the stage of development which precedes puberty and adolescence, namely, the elementary school age, when the child is taught the prerequisites for participation in the particular technology of his culture and is given the opportunity and the life task of developing a sense of workmanship and work participation. As we saw, the school age significantly follows the Oedipal stage: the accomplishment of real, not merely playful, steps toward a place in the economic structure of society permits the child to reidentify with parents as workers and tradition bearers rather than as sexual and familial beings, thus nurturing at least one concrete and more "neutral" possibility of becoming like them.

The tangible goals of the elementary practice of skills are shared by and with age mates in places of instruction (sweathouse, prayer house, fishing hole, workshop, kitchen, schoolhouse) most of which, in turn, are geographically separated from the home, from the mother, and from infantile memories; here, however, there are wide differences in the treatment of the sexes. Work goals, then, by no means only support or exploit the suppression of infantile instinctual aims; they also enhance the functioning of the ego, in that they offer a constructive activity with actual tools and maity into activity thus acquires a new field of manifestation, in terials in a communal reality. The ego's tendency to turn passive many ways superior to the mere turning of passive into active in infantile fantasy and play, for now the inner need for activity, practice, and work completion is ready to meet the corresponding demands and opportunities in social reality.

Because of the immediate Oedipal antecedents of the beginnings of a work identity, however, the attitude toward work in our young patients reverses gears toward Oedipal competitiveness and sibling rivalry. Thus identity confusion is accompanied not only by an inability to concentrate, but by an excessive awareness of as well as an abhorrence of competitiveness. Al-
though the patients in question usually are intelligent and able and have often shown themselves successful in office work, scholastic studies, and sports, they now lose the capacity for work, exercise, and sociability and thus lose the most important vehicle of social play and the most significant refuge from formless fantasy and vague anxiety. Instead, infantile goals and fantasies are dangerously endowed with the energy emanating from matured sexual equipment and vicious aggressive power. One parent, again, becomes the goal; the other, again, the hindrance. Yet this revived Oedipal struggle is not and must not be interpreted as exclusively or even primarily a sexual one. It is a turn toward the earliest origins, an attempt to resolve a diffusion of early introjects and to rebuild shaky childhood identifications—in other words, a wish to be born again, to learn once more the very first steps toward reality and mutuality and to be given renewed permission to develop again the functions of contact, activity, and competition.

A young patient who had found himself blocked in college nearly read himself blind during the initial phase of his treatment, apparently in a destructive overidentification with father and therapist, both of whom were professors. Guided by a resourceful "painter in residence," he came upon the fact that he had an original talent to paint, an activity which was prevented only by his advancing treatment from becoming a self-destructive overactivity. As painting proved to be a valuable asset in the patient's gradual acquisition of a sense of identity of his own, one night he dreamed a different version of a dream which previously had always ended in frightened awakening. As always, he was fleeing from fire and persecution, but this time he fled into a stand of trees which he had sketched himself, and as he fled into it the charcoal drawing turned into a real forest with infinite perspectives.

THE CHOICE OF THE NEGATIVE IDENTITY

The loss of a sense of identity is often expressed in a scornful and snobbish hostility toward the roles offered as proper and desirable in one's family or immediate community. Any aspect of the required role, or all of it—be it masculinity or femininity, nationality or class membership—can become the main focus of the young person's acid disdain. Such excessive contempt for their backgrounds occurs among the oldest Anglo-Saxon and the newest Latin or Jewish families; it can become a general dislike for everything American and an irrational overestimation of everything foreign, or the reverse. Life and strength seem to exist only where one is not, while decay and danger threaten wherever one happens to be. This typical fragment from a case report illustrates the superego's triumph of depreciation over a young man's faltering identity: "A voice within him which was disparaging him began to increase at about this time. It went to the point of intruding into everything he did. He said, 'If I smoke a cigarette, if I tell a girl I like her, if I make a gesture, if I listen to music, if I try to read a book—this third voice is at me all the time—'You're doing this for effect; you're a phony.'" This disparaging voice became rather relentless. One day on the way from home to college, his train crossed through the New Jersey swamplands and some poorer sections of cities, and he felt overwhelmingly that he was more congenial with people who lived there than he was with people on the campus or at home. Life seemed to exist only in those places, and the campus, in contrast, was a sheltered, effeminate place.

In this example, it is important to recognize not only an overweening superego, overclearly perceived as a deprecating inner voice (but not integrated enough to lead the young man into an alternative career), but also the acute identity confusion as projected on segments of society. An analogous case is that of a French-American girl from a rather prosperous mining town who felt panicky to the point of paralysis when alone with a boy. It appeared that numerous superego injunctions and identity conflicts had, as it were, short-circuited in the obsessive idea that every boy had a right to expect from her a yielding to sexual practices popularly designated as "French." Such estrangement from national and ethnic origins rarely
leads to a complete denial of personal identity, although the angry insistence on being called by a particular given name or nickname is not uncommon among young people who try to find refuge in a new name label. Yet, confabulatory reconstructions of one's origin do occur. An especially inventive high school girl from Middle-European stock secretly sought the company of Scottish immigrants, carefully studying and easily assimilating their dialect and their social habits. With the help of history books and travel guides she reconstructed for herself a childhood in a given milieu in an actual township in Scotland, which was apparently quite convincing to some descendants of that country throughout long evening talks. She spoke of her American-born parents as "the people who brought me over here," and when sent to me introduced herself as "Lorna" and described her childhood "over there" in impressive detail. I went along with the story, saying that it had more inner truth than reality to it. And indeed the inner truth turned out to be a memory, namely, the girl's erstwhile attachment to a woman neighbor who had come from the British Isles and who had given her more of the kind of love she wanted than her parents did or could. The force behind the near-delusional power of the invented "truth" was in turn a death wish against her parents, which is latent in all severe identity crises. The semideliberateness of the delusion came to the fore when I finally asked the girl how she had managed to marshall all the details of life in Scotland. "Bless you, sir," she said, in a pleading Scottish brogue, "I needed a past.

Needless to say, with such gifts for language, histrionics, and personal warmth, a "delusion" is very different in nature and prognosis from a truly psychotic condition.

On the whole, however, our patients' conflicts find expression in a more subtle way than the abrogation of personal identity. They choose instead a negative identity, i.e., an identity perversely based on all those identifications and roles which, at critical stages of development, had been presented to them as most undesirable or dangerous and yet also as most real. For example, a mother whose first-born son died and who, because of complicated guilt feelings, had never been able to attach to her later surviving children the same amount of religious devotion that she bestowed on the memory of her dead child, aroused in one of her sons the fateful conviction that to be sick or dead was a better assurance of being "recognized" than to be healthy and about. A mother who was filled with unconscious ambivalence toward a brother who had disintegrated into alcoholism again and again responded selectively only to those traits in her son which seemed to point to a repetition of her brother's fate, with the result that this "negative" identity sometimes seemed to have more reality for the son than all his natural attempts at being good. He worked hard at becoming a drunkard, and, lacking the necessary ingredients, ended up in a state of stubborn paralysis of choice.

In other cases the negative identity is dictated by the necessity of finding and defending a niche of one's own against the excessive ideals either demanded by morbidly ambitious parents or in-deed actualized by superior ones. In both cases the parents' weaknesses and unexpressed wishes are recognized by the child with catastrophic clarity. The daughter of a man of brilliant showmanship ran away from college and was arrested as a prostitute in the Negro quarter of a southern city, while the daughter of an influential southern Negro preacher was found among narcotic addicts in Chicago. In such cases it is of utmost importance to recognize the mockery and vindictive pretense in such role playing, for the white girl had not really prostituted herself, and the colored girl had not really become an addict—yet. Needless to say, however, each of them had put herself into a marginal social area, leaving it to law enforcement officers and psychiatric agencies to decide what stamp to put on such behavior. A corresponding case is that of a boy presented to a psychiatric clinic as "the village homosexual" of a small town. On investigation, it appeared that the boy had succeeded in assuming this fame without any actual acts of homosexuality except one, much earlier in his life, when he had been raped by some older boys.
Such vindictive choices of a negative identity represent, of course, a desperate attempt at regaining some mastery in a situation in which the available positive identity elements cancel each other out. The history of such a choice reveals a set of conditions in which it is easier for the patient to derive a sense of identity out of a total identification with that which he is least supposed to be than to struggle for a feeling of reality in acceptable roles which are unattainable with his inner means. The statement of a young man that "I would rather be quite insecure than a little secure" and of a young woman that "at least in the gutter I'm a genius," circumscribe the relief following the total choice of a negative identity. Such relief is, of course, often sought collectively in cliques and gangs of young homosexuals, addicts, and social cynics.

Some forms of upper-class snobbism must be included here because they permit some people to deny their identity confusion through recourse to something they did not earn themselves, such as their parents' wealth, background, or fame, or to some things they did not create, such as styles and art forms. But there is a "lower lower" snobbism too, which is based on the pride of having achieved a semblance of nothingness. At any rate, many a sick or desperate late adolescent, if faced with continuing conflict, would rather be nobody or somebody totally bad or, indeed, dead—and this by free choice—than be not-quite-somebody. The word "total" is not accidental in this connection; we have endeavored to describe in Chapter II a human proclivity to a "totalistic" reorientation when, at critical stages of development, reintegration into a relative "wholeness" seems impossible. The totalistic solution of a psychotic break cannot be discussed here.14

SPECIFIC FACTORS IN FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

In the discussion of patients who share a relevant pathogenic trend, we are apt to ask ourselves what their parents have in common. I think one may say that a significant number of the mothers in our case histories have in common several outstanding traits, which are not necessarily dependent on their actual social status. First, a 'pronounced status awareness of the climbing and pretentious or the "hold-on" variety. They would at almost any time be willing to overrule matters of honest feeling and intelligent judgment for the sake of a facade of wealth or status, propriety and "happiness"; in fact, they try to coerce their sensitive children into a pretense of a "natural" and "glad-to-be-proper" sociability. Secondly, they have the special quality of penetrating omnipresence; their ordinary voices as well as their softest sobs are sharp, plaintive, or fretful and cannot be escaped within a considerable radius. One patient all through childhood had a repetitive dream of a pair of snipping scissors flying around a room: the scissors proved to symbolize his mother's voice, cutting and cutting off.15 These mothers love, but they love desperately and intrusively. They are themselves so hungry for approval and recognition that they burden their young children with complicated complaints, especially about the fathers, almost pleading with them to justify their mothers' existence by their existence. They are highly jealous and highly sensitive to the jealousy of others. In our context it is especially important that the mother is intensely jealous of any sign that the child may identify primarily with the father or, worse, base his very identity on that of the father. It must be added that whatever these mothers are, they are more so toward the patient. Behind the mother's persistent complaints, then, that the father failed to make a woman out of her is the complaint, deeply perceived by both mother and child, that the patient failed to make a mother of her. The conclusion is inescapable that these patients in turn have, from the very beginning of their lives, deeply hurt their mothers by shying away from them because of an utter intolerance of what at first looks like extreme temperamental differences. These differences, however, turn out to be only extreme expressions of an essential affinity, by which I mean to imply that the patient's excessive tendency to withdraw, or to act randomly, and the mother's desperate social intrusiveness have in common a basic social vulnerability.
What I describe here is, in its milder forms, so usual a type that it cannot possibly be "blamed" for the child's illness, especially since not all children in the family seem to respond with equal malignancy. We must also bear in mind that we usually meet these mothers when they are already doubly on the defensive. But I think we can say with assurance that we have here again a reciprocal negative reaction of mother and child which is the malignant opposite of mutuality.

The fathers, although usually successful and often outstanding in their fields, do not stand up against their wives at home because of an excessive dependence on them, in consequence of which the fathers also are deeply jealous of their children. What initiative and integrity they have either surrenders to the wife's intrusiveness or tries guiltily to elude her, and as a result the mother becomes all the more needy, plaintive, and "sacrificial" in her demands upon all or some of her children.

Of the relationship of our patients to their brothers and sisters I can only say that it seems to be more symbiotic than most sibling relationships are. Because of an early identity hunger, our patients are apt to attach themselves to one brother or sister in a way resembling the behavior of twins except that here we have one twin, as it were, trying to treat a non-twin as a twin. They seem apt to surrender to a total identification with at least one sibling in ways which go far beyond the "altruism by identification" described by Anna Freud. It is as if our patients surrendered their own identity to that of a brother or sister in the hope of regaining a bigger and better one by some act of merging. For periods they succeed, but the letdown which must follow the breakup of the artificial twinship is only the more traumatic. Rage and paralysis follow the sudden insight—also possible in one of a pair of twins—that there is enough identity only for one, and that the other seems to have made off with it.

The early childhood histories of our patients are, on the whole, remarkably bland. Some infantile autism is often observed but it is usually rationalized by the parents. Yet one has the general impression that the degree of malignancy of the acute identity confusion in late adolescence depends on the extent of this early autism, and that it will determine the depth of regression and the extent of the return to old introjects. As to particular traumata in childhood or youth, one item seems frequent, namely, a severe physical trauma either in the Oedipal period or in early puberty, usually in connection with a separation from home. This trauma may consist of an operation or a belatedly diagnosed physical defect or it may be an accident or a severe sexual traumatization.

Otherwise, the early pathology conforms with that which we have come to regard as typical for the dominant psychiatric diagnosis given. Obviously, identity confusion is not a clinical diagnosis. But there remains always the decisive question whether, for example, an identity confusion of the paranoid type is to be taken as a case of paranoia that happens to occur in youth or as a disposition for paranoia aggravated by acute identity confusion, which is relatively reversible if the confusion can be made to subside. This "technical" question cannot be dealt with here. But another critical problem is obvious from our whole discussion. It is the danger, discussed in sociological terms by Kai T. Erikson, that the patient of this age group will choose the very role of patient as the most meaningful basis for an identity formation.

4. SOCIETAL: FROM INDIVIDUAL CONFUSION TO SOCIAL ORDER

I.

Having offered a picture of the whole condition of acute identity confusion, I would like now to take up each of the part-symptoms described and relate it to two phenomena seemingly remote from one another: the individual's childhood and cultural history. Since we take it for granted that the conflicts we meet in our case histories in vastly aggravated form are, in principle, common to all individuals, so that the picture presented is only a distorted reflection of the normal adolescent state, we may now inquire, first, how this state can be shown to revive old
childhood conflicts and, second, what are the various avenues which cultures offer to "normal" youths so that they may over-come the forces that pull them back into infantile regressions and find ways of mobilizing their inner strength for future-oriented pursuits.

First, then, the pull back into childhood, the regressive aspects of adolescent conflict. I hope I will not complicate this matter unbearably by reintroducing the chart in order to "locate" regressive trends in our scheme of psychosocial development. I know that some readers will have wondered what to do with the as yet unassigned parts of the chart. Others would probably prefer to read on and leave the diagram to those interested in such charting. I will, therefore, insert here a paragraph intended only for chart fanciers, explaining to them the way in which, throughout this section, the numbers after certain items refer to the chart. Other readers may ignore this next paragraph as well as all subsequent numbers in parentheses. To them, I hope, the text will speak for itself.

Only the diagonal of the epigenetic chart (p. 94) has been fully discussed in Chapter III. It depicts, we said, the ontogenetic unfolding of the main components of psychosocial vitality (I.i—VIII.8). We have also filled in some aspects of the vertical leading from infancy to identity, from I.5 to V.S. These are the specific contributions which previous stages make directly to the development of identity, namely, the primitive trust in mutual recognition; the rudiments of a will to be oneself; the anticipation of what one might become; and the capacity to learn how to be, with skill, what one is in the process of becoming. But this also means that each of these stages contributes a particular estrangement to identity confusion: the earliest would come about with an "autistic" inability to establish mutuality. The most radical forms of identity confusion, we have just seen, can be traced back to such early disturbances. Here, a basic confusion of contradictory introjects undermines, as it were, all future identifications and thus also their integration in adolescence. Taking our cues, then, from the clinical picture just described, and experi-
quite "utopian," that is, based on expectations which would call for a change in the laws of historical change. But then, again, youth can attach itself to seemingly utopian world images which somehow prove to be realizable in part, given the right leader—and historical luck. Time confusion, then, is more or less typical for all adolescents at one stage or another, although it becomes pathologically marked only in some.

What does the social process do about this, from culture to culture, and from one era to another? I can only offer some suggestive examples. Thus, there was the romantic period, when youth (and artists and writers) were preoccupied with the ruins left by a dead past which seemed more "eternal" than the present. To be emphasized here, however, is not the mere turning to a distant past, but a concomitant change in the whole quality of temporal experience. This, under different cultural or historical conditions, can be acquired in settings as different (to choose from examples already mentioned in this book) as a vision-quest in the blinding prairie sun or dancing to drumbeat throughout the night; in utterly passive drug-induced floating in "absolute" time or in goose stepping to blaring trumpets in preparation for the Thousand Year Reich. There is, in fact, an indispensable temporal aspect to all ideology, including the ideological significance which the goals and values of different civilizations have for youth, be they bent on salvation or reform, adventure or conquest, reason or progress, in accordance with newly developing identity potentials. For among the essentials which they provide for youth is a sensually convincing time perspective compatible with a coherent world image. It makes supreme sense that today, when the standardization of anticipated futures is at its height, thousands of young people would choose to behave as if the moratorium were a way of life and a separate culture. As they choose to forget about their future, society for-gets that theirs is only a modern—that is, more populous and more publicized—form of an old phenomenon, as is clearly revealed by the quality of revival in some of our young people's display.

Identity Confusion in Life History, Case History

We also diagnosed identity-consciousness among the ingredients of identity confusion, and we meant by it a special form of painful self-consciousness which dwells on discrepancies between one's self-esteem, the aggrandized self-image as an autonomous person, and one's appearance in the eyes of others. In our patients an occasional total obliteration of self-esteem contrasts sharply with a narcissistic and snobbish disdain of the judgment of others. But again, we see corresponding, if less extreme, phenomena in that sensitivity of adolescents which alternates with defiant shamelessness in the face of criticism. Again, these are primitive defenses, upholding a shaky self-certainty against the sense of doubt and shame (II.2) which we discussed in the last chapter. While this is normally a transitory matter, it persists in some character formations and remains characteristic of many creative people who experience, according to their own testimony, repeated adolescences and with them the full cycle of sensitive withdrawal and forceful self-exhibition.

Self-consciousness (V.2) is a new edition of that original doubt which concerned the trustworthiness of the parents and of the child himself—only in adolescence, such self-conscious doubt concerns the reliability of the whole span of childhood which is now to be left behind and the trustworthiness of the whole social universe now envisaged. The obligation now to commit oneself with a sense of free will to one's autonomous identity can arouse a painful over-all ashamedness somehow comparable to the original shame and rage over being visible all around to all-knowing adults—only such shame now adheres to-one's having a public personality exposed to age mates and to be judged by leaders. All of this, in the normal course of events, is outbalanced by that self-certainty (V.2) now characterized by a definite sense of independence from the family as the matrix of self-images, and a sureness of anticipation.

Among the societal phenomena corresponding to this second conflict there is a universal trend toward some form of uniformity either in special uniforms or in distinctive clothing through which incomplete self-certainty, for a time, can hide in a group...
certainty. Such certainty has always been provided by the age-old badges as well as the sacrifices of investitures, confirmations, and initiations, but it can also be temporarily and arbitrarily created by those who care to differ, radically, and yet must evolve a certain uniformity of differing (zoot-suiters, beatniks). These and less obvious uniformities are enforced by comprehensive shaming among peers, a judgmental give-and-take and a cruel banding together which leaves outsiders "holding the bag" in painful, if sometimes creative, isolation.

The display of a total commitment to a role fixation (V.3) as against a free experimentation with available roles has an obvious connection with earlier conflicts between free initiative and Oedipal guilt in infantile reality, fantasy, and play. Where our patients regress below the Oedipal crisis to a total crisis of trust, the choice of a self-defeating role often remains the only acceptable form of initiative on the way back and up, and this in the form of a complete denial of ambition as the only possible way of totally avoiding guilt. The normal expression of relatively guilt-free and in fact more or less "delinquent" initiative in youth, however, is an experimentation with roles which follows the unwritten codes of adolescent subsocieties and thus is not lacking a discipline of its own.

Of the social institutions which undertake to channel as they encourage such initiative and to provide atonement as they appease guilt, we may point here, again, to initiations and confirmations: they strive within an atmosphere of mythical timelessness to combine some badge of sacrifice or submission with an energetic push toward sanctioned ways of action—a combination which, where it works, assures the development in the novice of an optimum of compliance with a maximum sense of free choice and solidarity. This special proclivity of youth—namely, the achievement of a sense of free choice as the very result of ritual regimentation—is, of course, universally utilized in army life.

Extreme work paralysis (V.4) is the logical sequence of a deep sense of the inadequacy of one's general equipment. Such a sense of inadequacy, of course, does not usually reflect a true lack of potential; it may, rather, convey the unrealistic demands made by an ego ideal willing to settle only for omnipotence or omniscience; it may express the fact that the immediate social environment does not have a niche for the individual's true gifts; or it may reflect the paradoxical fact than an individual in early school life was seduced into a specialized precocity which out-distanced his identity development. For all these reasons, then, the individual may be excluded from that experimental competition in play and work through which he learns to find and insist on his own kind of achievement and his work identity. This can become especially relevant in an early turn to delinquency—delinquents being, in many ways, the "positive" counterparts of our patients because at least they act out in company what the isolate suppresses. Some mockery of work and yet a competition with it is obvious in such delinquent phrases as "doing a job" (that is, a burglary) or "making a good job of it" in the sense of completing a destruction. From here it is only one step to another obvious consideration, namely, that young people must have learned to enjoy a sense of apprenticeship (IV.4) in order not to need the thrill of destruction. Schizoids and delinquents have in common a mistrust of themselves, a disbelief in the possibility that they could ever complete anything of value. This, of course, is especially marked in those who, for some reason or other, do not feel that they are partaking of the technological identity of their time. The reason may be that their own gifts have not found contact with the productive aims of the machine age or that they themselves belong to a social class (here "upper-upper" is remarkably equal to "lower-lower") that does not par-take of the stream of progress.

Social institutions support the strength and distinctiveness of the budding work identity by offering those who are still learning and experimenting a certain status of apprenticeship, a moratorium characterized by defined duties and sanctioned competitions as well as by special license. These, then, are the regressive trends in the identity crisis
which are particularly clearly elaborated in the symptoms of identity confusion and some of the social processes which counteract them in daily life. But there are also aspects of identity formation which anticipate future development. The first of these is what we may call a polarization of sexual differences (V.6), i.e., the elaboration of a particular ratio of masculinity and femininity in line with identity development. Some of our patients suffer more lastingly and malignantly from a state not uncommon in a milder and transient form in all adolescence: the young person does not feel himself clearly to be a member of one sex or the other, which may make him the easy victim of the pressure emanating, for example, from homosexual cliques, for to some persons it is more bearable to be typed as something, anything, than to endure drawn-out bisexual confusion. Some, of course, decide on an ascetic turning away from sexuality which may result in dramatic breakthroughs of bewildering impulses. For bisexual confusion (V.6) in adolescence joins identity-consciousness in the establishment of an excessive preoccupation with the question of what kind of man or woman, or what kind of intermediate or deviate, one might become. In his totalistic frame of mind, an adolescent may feel that to be a little less of one sex means to be much more, if not all, of the other. If at such a time something happens that marks him socially as a deviant, he may develop a deep fixation, reinforced by the transvaluation of a negative identity, and true intimacy will then seem dangerous. Here the sexual mores of cultures and classes make for immense differences in the psychosocial differentiation of masculine and feminine and in the age, kind, and ubiquity of genital activity. These differences can obscure the common fact discussed above, namely, that the development of psychosocial intimacy is not possible without a firm sense of identity. Induced by special mores, young people in confusion may foreclose their identity development by concentrating on early genital activity without intimacy; or, on the contrary, they may concentrate on social, artistic, or intellectual aims which underplay the genital element to an extent that there is a permanent weakness of genital polar-
individual identity-consciousness; (4) inducement to a collective experimentation with roles and techniques which help overcome a sense of inhibition and personal guilt; (5) introduction into the ethos of the prevailing technology and thus into sanctioned and regulated competition; (6) a geographic-historical world image as a framework for the young individual's budding identity; (7) a rationale for a sexual way of life compatible with a convincing system of principles; and (8) submission to leaders who as super-human figures or "big brothers" are above the ambivalence of the parent-child relation. Without some such ideological commitment, however implicit in a "way of life," youth suffers a confusion of values (V.8) which can be specifically dangerous to some but which on a large scale is surely dangerous to the fabric of society.

In the conclusion of a pathographic sketch, then, I have also sketched in some phenomena which are the domain of social science. I can justify this only in the belief that clinical work, in trying to arrive at some workable generalities in regard to individual pathology, may well come upon aspects of the social process which the social sciences have by necessity neglected. A psychosocial study of the case history or the life history cannot afford to neglect them. So we return, once more, to Shaw's formulation, and let it lead us to a few concluding thoughts.