Theodore Lidz

The Young Adult

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From *The Person* by Theodore Lidz

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The lengthy developmental process as a dependent apprentice in living draws to a close as individuals attain an identity and the ability to live intimately with a member of the opposite sex, and contemplate forming families of their own. They have attained adult status with the completion of physical maturation, and, it is hoped, they have become sufficiently well integrated and emotionally mature to utilize the opportunities and accept the responsibilities that accompany it. They have reached a decisive point on their journeys. They have dropped the pilot and now start sailing on their own—but they have been taught to navigate and they have been provided with charts, albeit charts that can be but approximately correct for the currents and reefs change constantly. They have practiced under more or less competent supervision, taken trips in sheltered waters, and now they assume responsibility for themselves and must accept the consequences of their decisions. Usually couples decide to share the journey, and soon others join them, bidden and unbidden, whose welfare depends upon their skills and stability.

However, some will still tarry undecided about where they will journey, or the course they will take to an unfamiliar place, or whether to try out partners imaginatively or in actuality before setting forth. Some are still uncertain about where they will find their place in the scheme of things, whether they wish to find a place in the scheme, or whether there is a scheme of things at all. Those who delay are a minority, but include among them many who will be innovators, creators, and leaders, and therefore they require that we, too, pause to consider their transition through a period that Keniston (1970) has designated as *youth,* during which youths seek to reconcile potential conflicts between their emerging identities and the social order.

Still, the energies and interests of most young adults will now be directed beyond their own growth and development. Their independence from their parental families motivates them to achieve an interdependence with others and find their places in society. Through vocation and marriage they become united to networks of persons, find tasks that demand involvement, and gain roles into which they fit and are fitted and which help define their identities. They are virtually forced to become less self-

centered through the very pursuit of their own interests.

The time when adult life starts is not set chronologically, for persons may have entered upon their vocations and selected spouses some time in adolescence, and others will remain tentative in their commitments through their twenties and may, in some respects, be considered still adolescent. If persons are still uncommitted, most make their occupational choices early in adulthood. Most individuals will also give up their much sought independence to share with another in marriage. Then the life cycle rounds to the point at which young adults are again confronted by the start of life, but now as members of the parental generation, and they often undergo profound personality reorientations as they become involved in the unfolding of a child's life. The period ends at a somewhat indefinite time, approximately when children's needs no longer form a major focus of attention, usually between thirty-five and forty, when persons have attained stable positions in society, or, at least, when they realize that they must come to terms with what they will be able to make out of their one and only life.

Young adults are at the height of their physical and mental vigor as they launch upon making their ways in the world; and their energies are usually expended more effectively than they were during adolescence. The expansiveness of adolescence had usually given way to efforts at consolidation in late adolescence, but young adults must focus energies and interests even more definitively as they commit themselves to a specific way of life; to marriage, with its libidinal investment in a single significant person; and to producing and nurturing a new generation. Now, more than ever, alternative ways of life must be renounced to permit the singleness of purpose required for success and to consolidate one's identity; and intimacy becomes reserved for a single person to make possible meaningful sharing with a spouse. Although commitment to another person entails the danger of being carried along in the other's inadequacies or misfortunes, its avoidance carries the penalty of lack of opportunity to be meaningful to others and have others become meaningful to the self.

Vocational choice and marital choice are two of the most significant decisions of a lifetime. Although they are sometimes made easily and even seemingly casually, they are both extremely complex matters that are resultants of the individual's entire personality development. They are two cardinal resultants of the lengthy process of achieving adulthood that we have been tracing; and now these decisions will become major determinants of the course of the individual's further personality development, of the

satisfactions that will be gained from life, and of the trials and problems that will ensue and strain the integration of the personality and perhaps even warp it. The individual's own capacities and integration markedly influence the choices of occupation and spouse, and then influence how the person can cope with and gain fulfillment from both—and subsequently from being a parent. We shall, in the following two chapters, scrutinize the choices of vocation and spouse and then consider the tasks involved in adjusting to marriage and being a parent, but we shall first consider the period of youth and the integration of persons as they start adult life.

YOUTH

Keniston has suggested that a new stage in the life cycle, *youth,* has emerged with the growing complexities of postindustrial civilizations.[1] For many, the commitments of adult life do not follow directly upon adolescence. Indeed, in periods during which the assumption of adult status is delayed, there may be a prolongation of adolescence, and late adolescents and unmarried young adults are grouped together as "youth."[2]

Youth, in Keniston's usage of the word, does not designate such prolongation of adolescence, but rather a distinct stage in the life cycle through which only a limited number of people pass. These are persons who, having gained an ego identity or self-concept, become caught up in tensions between the self and society. "The awareness of actual or potential conflict, disparity, lack of consequence between what one is (one's identity, values, integrity) and the resources and demands of existing society increase. The adolescent is struggling to define who he is, the youth begins to sense who he is and thus to recognize the possibility of conflict and disparity between his emerging self-hood and his social order" (Keniston, 1974, p. 405). A central problem of the period is to find ways in which the self and society can become more congruent; and a critical task in personality development lies in achieving *individuation* (Jung, 1926)—the capacity to acknowledge reality and to cope with it, either through acceptance or through revolutionary opposition, but preserving a sense of "self," of intactness and wholeness of self—distinct from society, even if engaged in fostering social reform or in revolutionary activity. *Individuation* is a psychological process or an "intrapsychic" matter in which one's ego identity is differentiated from the social system in which one lives. Failure to individuate properly leads to conformity to societal norms, which is, of course, simply the lot of most persons, but which can be scorned by youth as "selling out" or

being "brain washed," and becomes a denial of the self when it is a matter of *overconformity.* The antipodal danger is *alienation,* in which efforts to preserve autonomy lead to the withdrawal from the social matrix that gives life substance, and perhaps even from interpersonal relations that give life meaning. A variant of alienation occurs when meaning and fulfillment are sought through psychedelic drugs.

It seems rather clear that *Youth* is not an altogether new stage of development. Over the ages many persons who were visionary, creative, or revolutionary passed through some such stage. In times of stress and change—as during the Great Depression of the 1930s—some young persons, because of their accurate perceptions of societal deficiencies, have been reluctant to enter into the adult world, for that seemed to be the way to stagnation if not simply an acquiescence in society's inequities and corruption. However, these were youths of superior cognitive capacities which permitted them to develop high ethical standards and to view matters from a perspective different from that of most of their contemporaries, and therefore they were usually, though not necessarily, persons who were highly educated. As currently about seventeen percent of young people in the United States complete college, a much higher proportion than heretofore, it is possible for a significant number of persons to experience the conflicts between self and society that lead to the developmental stage we are calling *youth.*

When we consider, the characteristics of *youth* depend upon the attainment of the stage of *formal operations* in cognitive development and then moving on to appreciation of the *relativity of social systems* and of the social roles and mores they encompass; to recognition of the *malleability of persons,* and how greatly who they are and what they become depend on how and where they are brought up; and to *transcend conventional morality* and even the postconventional morality of the social contract to attain a higher universal justice about which individuals can and must make their own judgments. The concepts of social relativity, developmental malleability, and universal abstract morality are not new, but they are interrelated matters that have of late taken on new pertinence. Becoming caught up in them opens new horizons for a youth, but in so doing creates developmental problems that can demolish the individual and not just one's individuation.

Relativism

The theory of relativity has affected thinking outside the physical sciences. *We* are concerned with the relativism that has arisen from gaining perspective through the study of other times, other civilizations, and other cultures that enables some persons to overcome their ethnocentricities and recognize the validity and utility of the ways of other peoples, even though they are very divergent from our own; and, consequently, that the ways and standards of our own society are more or less arbitrary. Persons may then believe that they have no obligation to adhere to societal norms, and claim that members of the society are simply indoctrinated or "brainwashed" to conform and preserve its constricting if not iniquitous ways. Particularly in times when societal ways run counter to a person's self-concept and ideals and lead to disillusionment in the society—as in the United States during the Vietnam war and the Watergate scandals—youths feel the schism between self and society intensely. The conflict need not lead to political activism to change society, or to a rejection of society with a dropping out into an "alternate culture" such as a communal way of life, but may lead to rejection of the self, with concomitant despair or even suicide, or to efforts to transform the self through study, meditation, Zen, psychoanalysis. Youths may also find a solution of the dilemma by choosing a career, such as medicine, that will permit them to preserve their ethical values within a social system they reject, or to embrace a legal career that will enable them to help correct injustice or change society.

Another consequence of relativism may be even more threatening. Recognizing the relativity of values as well as mores, youths may find themselves without a sense of meaning or purpose. The query "What difference does anything make if there is no meaning, no purpose, no God?" can lead to paralyzing existential anxiety or to an empty hedonism to counter despair, but for some it can open the way to a new freedom in directing their lives. A young man who was uncertain about his decision to study for the clergy took a moratorium of a year to reach a decision and spent much of it reading in a university library. His search after the nature of God led to a conviction that there could be neither a Deity nor a hereafter. However, after a period of personal disorientation and anxiety, he decided that if there were no general scheme of things and no meaning to the universe, that if he did not wish to be miserable, he would have to give meaning to his life. As he had no interest in bowing out of life, he decided that he could, as an American, make a game of his life and see what score he could make; or he might make a work of art of his life and strive to live an interesting tale of adventure, or a well-balanced introspective novel; or he might

seek to help others live less troubled lives. He found that new ways of thinking about life had opened before him. He had, in a sense, learned that his life need not be empty because the world lacked purpose; it was up to him to provide meaning for his life. He had, in a sense, achieved what Perry (1970) has termed "commitment within relativism."

Human Malleability

The increased awareness of human malleability—the recognition of how greatly what persons become depends upon how and where they are brought up—has brought about a major social revolution that has greatly affected youth. Young people have been major movers in the civil-rights movement, the Peace Corps, Head Start, women's liberation, and other activities that seek to enable people to develop more fully and have better opportunities in life. It has also led some youths to believe in their own *omnipotentiality*—of their own capacities to change themselves and the direction of their lives. They need not follow in their parents' footsteps, or even in the patterns provided by the past; and they can, if they persevere, achieve beyond their earlier expectations for themselves. A young person may even believe that complete self-transformation is possible without regard to prior upbringing, education, and innate capacities. A college student, having learned that people can make of themselves whatever they wish, decided to become a harpsichord virtuoso, ignoring his lack of any musical training up to the age of twenty-one and his lack of any particular musical aptitude. Such persons have not yet overcome the egocentricity of formal operations and fail to differentiate between cognitive solutions of problems and the actualization of the imagined solution. However, at a more realistic level, young people have delayed, studied, and worked to change the direction and scope of their lives. Occasionally, the multiplicity of potential futures can virtually paralyze. A college student caught up in several divergent interests engendered by her courses and her extracurricular work in the inner city could not decide between them, and then came to realize that she might also be interested in areas in which she had not yet had experience. She spent hours asking friends why they had decided on one career or another. Eventually, she decided it mattered little what career she chose as long as it interested her and could be of benefit to others, and she then decided to study journalism because it could encompass many of her interests.

Abstract Morality

The attainment of the highest and most abstract level of morality also contains dangers. It will be recalled that according to Kohlberg's (1964) conceptualization of moral development, a limited number of persons move beyond conventional morality to define right and wrong in terms of the well-being of all members of a society, and of these some transcend such considerations to embrace more universalistic standards in which individuals must judge for themselves whether laws conform to higher principles such as the "golden rule." Persons can then become caught up in the relativism of laws and "justice," and reach idiosyncratic standards in which they take the law into their own hands; or even decide that, as everything is relative, the entire system of conventional morality is meaningless. They forget that societies have, at least to some extent, gradually developed moral systems that help preserve the integrity of the society and its members.[3] As Keniston (1974) has commented regressions from this highest form of morality can occur and lead to the amoral behaviors that are sometimes encountered in countercultures, and give license for orgiastic sex and unbridled drug usage; or to anarchy as the highest form of political morality.

Having entered into a relativistic world, youths can find it difficult to find solid footing, guidelines for their behavior, and directions for their future lives. They are apt to question if not distrust conventional roles, values, and mores; and to turn their backs against lessons that can be gained from the past and seek to start afresh and make a new world. Clearing new trails through the jungle is a difficult task that does not get a person very far quickly. The youth makes forays into society and at commitments to other persons, seeking a workable way to relate to society and within society; or toward finding or founding a new and more congenial society; or searching for the right companion and to learn whether one is ready to form a permanent and exclusive relationship with another.

Many youths find direction, at least temporarily, by participating in movements that allow them to exercise their higher morality by combating some social ill. Marxism, antiwar movements, and civil rights have engaged generations of American youth. At a more individual level, they may decide on careers that will help lessen the woes of others or can enable them to improve society. They help bring about changes in society and its mores. Currently, the belief that sexual practices are the concern only of the individuals involved, rather than a matter of general moral values, has enabled young persons to live experimentally

with one or more partners and delay marriage. During the Vietnam war, the youth in the United States were caught between their self-concepts and their country's unjust posture, and the young men found themselves in a dilemma concerning whether or not to avoid military service.

At present, young women may be having greater difficulties during *youth* than men. They are very apt to be caught up in tensions between their emergent ego identities and society's expectations and delimitations of women. Their conflict is further aggravated by their own ambivalent desires to achieve in careers and also to devote at least part of their lives to motherhood—a desire which, if not deeply rooted in women's biological makeup, has been deeply ingrained in most women during their formative years. As we have considered (Chapter 10) adolescent girls are entering womanhood at a time when women's roles in society have been changing profoundly. Most women now work before they have children, but do not become seriously engaged in pursuing careers: although they may be involved in the Women's Liberation movement, they are largely concerned with equal opportunity and pay at work, the condescending or sexual attitudes of employers toward them, having the freedom to pursue a career should they so wish, etc., but their basic orientation continues along traditional feminine lines of becoming a wife, helpmate, and mother. However, the highly educated women who move into and through the period of *youth* find a real conflict between their self-image as highly competent persons who wish to pursue careers and societal expectations for them. Their achievement orientation has conventionally been considered more masculine than feminine; and they may feel caught between their strivings to achieve and their own images of themselves as women. With relatively few models to follow, they are involved in changing both the way society regards and treats women and the way women regard themselves. They believe that women can be achievement oriented and still retain expressive characteristics, and that men should incorporate expressive as well as achievement-oriented instrumental characteristics. Women's liberation for them encompasses fundamental changes in the ethos of the society rather than simply the practical matters concerning equality of opportunity and treatment. However, as Martina Horner has found, bright, highly competent college women have feared success, considering that achievement requires competition, that competition is aggressive, and that aggression is unfeminine. She further found that two-thirds of college men did better in competitive than noncompetitive situations, as compared with fewer than one-third of the women subjects.[4] It is hoped that such anxieties concerning achievement have diminished under the impact of Women's Liberation

movements, but it is unlikely that they will become extinguished in the near future.

The problems of female youth are also accentuated because they have greater freedom than men in the choice of future roles. They can decide to be primarily wives and mothers, and gain considerable gratification from it; but being a husband and father has not yet become a career for men. Here, as elsewhere, the ability to choose opens the way for inner conflict.

The awareness of the *relativism* of societal standards and roles as well as the feeling of *omnipotentiality* that is so much part of *youth* enables young women to move beyond the stereotypes of male and female roles, of the concept that instrumental functions are male and expressive functions essentially female, and to consider themselves doing almost anything that men can do. They can also go beyond objectivity and insist that sexual equality means the absence of any differences between the sexes,[5] and in the process deny the advantages of being a woman—rejecting any desire to have a child. They may also turn away from any need for a man, and find that they can gain sexual fulfillment through lesbian relationships. Perhaps, more unfortunately, they may become aggressively overcompetitive, identifying with the enemy, so to speak, and forgetting that they had objected to such aggressive competitive behavior in men.

Seeking new ways of being women, female *youth* usually remain away from home after college. They need the companionship of others who share their aspirations and encourage their strivings. They may live with a man while at college, encouraged to learn that there are men who find them attractive because of their abilities, but they must be certain that it is not that they are attractive despite their abilities. If they are to have a career they must find the proper man who will help them manage both career and marriage. They may also wish to be certain that having a career will continue to be more important than motherhood, or find ways of combining the two. It is important that they become aware of the difficulties of dual-career marriages from other colleagues, or at least recognize that a woman must be extremely well organized to manage it. We shall return to consider such matters in the chapters on occupational and marital choice.

We have been considering *youth* as a stage in the life cycle of some particularly well-endowed and sensitive young people. We must, however, also realize that a period between the end of adolescence

and the firm commitments of marriage and serious occupational involvement exists for graduate students and single persons in their twenties. It is often a time of trying out, trying occupations and partners, often an enjoyable time without serious responsibilities. Today, with the more or less socially approved practice of living with a member of the opposite sex in trial marriage or simply for convenience and enjoyment, the pressures to marry have diminished, and the duration of the period of youthful living is increasing.

THE INTEGRATION OF THE YOUNG ADULT

What does the young man or woman require within the self to make the essential decisions concerning career and marriage and have a reasonable chance of gaining strength and finding satisfaction from them? Fortunately, perhaps, psychiatrists are not required to sit in judgment and only very few persons seek their opinion and permission. We have followed the phasic preparation since birth for the assumption of adult status, and we shall not attempt to summarize here the steps by which a person integrates, achieves an ego identity and a capacity for true intimacy. We shall but attempt to state briefly some of the essential and some of the desirable aspects of a person's integration at this stage of life —concepts which will be amplified in subsequent chapters. Although it is simple to illustrate how deficiencies in achieving such capacities can lead a person into serious difficulties, we hesitate to call them requisites rather than desiderata, for few, if any, persons have all of these attributes, and the attainment of any of them always remains a matter of "more or less." We are considering an ideal, so to speak, to convey how a mature young adult might be integrated.

Young adults have, as we discussed in the preceding two chapters, become reasonably independent of their parents. They have established fairly clear boundaries between themselves and their parents; properly, they have not been burned in the process and become wary of ever relating intimately again, but they recognize that their paths and their parents' now diverge because they are moving toward different goals. If their early development went well, the revolt through which they gained their own identities has subsided and they can appreciate their parents on a fairly realistic basis. They no longer need their parents as essential objects who support and direct them, for parental figures have been internalized and are thus a salient part of their identities, and they do not need to attach themselves to another person immediately to ward off feelings of emptiness when they leave their

parents, nor seek sexual relations primarily to counter loneliness. As they become spouses and parents themselves, they will continue to take on characteristics of their parents, but their identities will now also include derivatives from other significant persons. When the early family environment has been unfortunate, later relationships with teachers, friends, or friends' parents may have furnished stabilizing forces, more suitable objects for identification, and more hopeful objectives. In the process, they have learned to separate themselves and keep away those persons, including a parent, who are injurious to them, and perhaps even malignant if internalized as part of themselves. They do not' confuse new significant persons in their lives with parents or siblings to the extent of repetitively reenacting old intrafamilial problems. A man does not, for example, awaken at night uncertain whether he is sleeping with his wife or mother, as did the son of a highly seductive woman; or a woman repeat with her daughter and husband an old rivalry with her sister for their father's affection.

As a result of the reorganization accomplished during adolescence, those components of the superego derived from internalization of the parents and their directives are less important. The individual may still follow parental dictates, but because they have been incorporated into the person's own ethical system rather than because of fear of displeasing the parents. Indeed, as we have previously noted, much of what had been reasonable and useful in the superego now becomes part of the ego, and becomes more and more fully incorporated into the core of the ego—that is to say, into the basic orientation upon which decisions are made. The directives which help the individual to decide what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior now concern social and cultural norms and ideologic standards that are superordinate to parental dictates. The parents are no longer seen from the perspective of the child. They are no longer regarded as omnipotent figures who could take care of all difficulties if only they would, nor are they "split" into good parents who take care of one, and bad parents who do not. They are recognized as having both capabilities and inadequacies and more or less ambivalently as promoting both affection and anger; and concomitantly the superego now permits latitude for sexual outlets which, in turn, can help diminish the urgency of id impulsions. Although certain impulses, desires, and behavior arouse guilt, shame, or anxiety, these emotions are more likely to become signals to alter behavior or attitudes rather than leading to self-punitive depressions.

The ego tends to have greater control, considering one's ultimate wellbeing before giving in to immediate gratifications. A mass of data garnered from personal experience as well as from the person's

cultural heritage can he utilized in reaching decisions. It can be manipulated imaginatively in an effort to try out alternative courses and their probable consequences, and also for fantasied gratifications; but the person distinguishes between pure fantasy and what it might be possible to realize. Magic and wishful thinking have given way before the need to turn fantasy into action so as to be able to gain the realization of wishes. Individuals appreciate that others perceive and experience events differently from the way they do, and both the limitations of their own views and the different ideas and feelings of others must be taken into account in seeking to bring ideas to fruition. Young adults now know enough about themselves and the world to decide whether the realization of a wish or a fantasy is a possibility worth pursuing.

A major aspect of a person's ability to carry out adaptive behavior concerns the capacities to tolerate tensions and the inevitable anxieties of life and still adhere to objectives and work through difficulties. The ability to adhere to commitments is usually taken as an index of "character," for it permits consistency and the avoidance of distraction by each attractive opportunity—whether it is an opportunity at work extraneous to one's own goals or a sexual distraction. Whereas at some periods in adolescence or young adulthood each fork in a road seems to require a decision, as the course of a life may be changed by following one path rather than the other, after commitments have been made, the objectives determine the ultimate direction and it matters little if one route or the other is followed for a stretch in progressing toward the goal.

Tensions and frustrations create anxiety and depressive spells but do not lead too often to a search for regressive solace in sensuality, in sleep, or in loss of self-awareness through the use of alcohol or narcotics. Frustrations are recognized as a part of life and, although avoided, they are accepted when necessary without mobilizing undue hostility and aggression—and such aggression as is aroused is directed toward overcoming the frustration rather than in vengeance or in hurting the self or those whom one needs. Various mechanisms of defense help control anxiety, but they are not called into play to an extent that markedly distorts the perception of the world or blinds one to realistic difficulties which must be faced and managed.

Now that problems of dependency and symbiotic strivings have been worked through, the boundaries of the self are secure enough for young adults no longer unconsciously to fear losing their identities when they seek after intimacy. They do not fear that a needed person will devour, engulf, or

annihilate them, or that the loss of the self in orgasm will lead to obliteration; nor will they confuse themselves with a child, as does a mother who feeds her child when she is hungry. The young woman, however, needs to keep her boundaries sufficiently fluid to accept having a fetus within her, and to form a symbiotic bond with an infant.

A person is now secure enough in his or her gender identity not to need to prove his masculinity or her femininity to the self and others by repetitive compulsive sexual activity, or in undue masculine aggressivity or feminine seductiveness. And both men and women will realize that being a member of one sex or the other has both advantages and disadvantages, and are ready to make the most of the advantages rather than deplore their fate.

It has been customary in psychoanalytic literature to evaluate the stability and maturity of the progression to adult life in terms of the capacity for genital sexuality—properly, not simply the capacity for pleasure from orgasm in heterosexual relationships, but to enjoy sexuality in a meaningful intimate relationship. It is apparent, however, that some persons lead satisfactory and highly productive lives, even though they never achieve such genital sexuality, and that a person's maturity, including emotional maturity, may better be considered in terms of the achievement of a firm ego identity as well as the capacity for intimacy, recognizing that the capacity to come to terms with frustration or one's inadequacy can be a major aspect of maturity.

The developmental achievements that we have been considering as necessary for proper behavior in early adult life have been presented in rather black and white terms. In actuality, no one fully outgrows childhood needs and dependency strivings; no one progresses to adulthood unscarred by emotional traumata and more or less injurious relationships; no one manages to avoid being caught up in trying to solve some old problems; even-one continues to be somewhat motivated to gratify residual pregenital strivings; and we all utilize defenses of our ego that are no longer really necessary, and transfer characteristics of parents onto other significant persons. These are the things that color personalities and provide a distinctiveness and human frailty to all.

Still, such deficiencies, to sum up, should not lead persons to invest too much energy and effort in repetitively seeking after solutions to old problems poured ever again into new bottles, and should not

prevent them from seeking completion in the present and the future rather than through the impossible task of remaking the past. Adults should also be capable of accepting the realization that many of the ways and rules of society are arbitrary, but that people need such regulations in order to live together—and they do not feel deceived and cheated by the arbitrariness of the rules; and they find their places in the social system, accepting it while hoping to improve it. Nor are they so readily disillusioned by other people, for faced by the difficulties in living they have become more tolerant of the failures and even deceptions of others.

Whatever their preparation, the time has come for young adults to make their own way in the world; they can delay and linger in the protection of the homes, or in the halls of their alma maters, where the storms of the world are filtered and refined, but they cannot tarry too long without commitment and the direction it provides. The choice of an occupation and the choice of a mate are the decisions that start them on their way. While both of these choices are often made as a rather natural progression in the path that a life has been taking, they are both highly *overdetermined,* tending to be resultants of the total developmental process together with the realistic opportunities available at the critical time of life. Although a single factor may clearly predominate in leading to a decision, a variety of factors virtually always enters consideration; and the conscious motives are often only rationalizations of unconscious forces that are exerting an indirect and disguised but powerful influence. The decisions may be no less useful and no less wise because of such unconscious influences, for unconscious motives may direct a person to significant and essential needs that are neglected or denied consciously, and because unconscious decisions can include repressed memories and intangible and nebulous perceptions and associations that may have considerable importance.

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Notes

1 Much as Aries (1962) contends that prior to the industrial revolution "childhood" did not exist, and the idea that adolescence as a stage of life first developed at the start of the present century (Demos and Demos, 1969). There are, however, reasons to challenge these contentions. In most nonliterate (primitive) societies, though children may be expected to help with adult tasks, they are treated differently from adolescents and adults. The participants in the "Children's Crusade" were neither under six nor adults. As R. W. Beales (1975) has clearly documented, children were not considered competent to decide on conversion or fully responsible in seventeenth-and eighteenth-century New England. Jonathan Edwards placed the upper limits of childhood at fourteen; Thomas Hooker believed that a child of ten or twelve lived "the life of a beast" and could not consider the mysteries of salvation; etc. In the early days of Massachusetts only a person who was over sixteen could be executed for striking or cursing a parent.

Similarly, there is evidence of recognition of an adolescent period in nonliterate societies and in the early New England settlements. Among the Stone-Age peoples of Papua/New Guinea a boy does not become an adult after going through the pre-adolescent or adolescent initiation rituals, but spends many years learning the skills a man requires as well as the myths and rituals essential to the society; not until around the age of nineteen is he considered a man and ready to marry. A distinction is made between prepubescent and post-menarchal girls everywhere, and in Papua/New Guinea the postpubertal girls have special privileges until they marry. In early New England the period of apprenticeship, which did not end until the age of twenty or twenty-one, was, in a sense, equivalent to the period of adolescence. Beales (1975) notes that elements of a "youth culture" existed in colonial New England. In the early eighteenth century elders bemoaned the licentious ways of youth who frequented taverns, participated in lewd practices, frolics, and company-keeping. The term "youth" seems to have been applied to older adolescents and unmarried young adults.

2 'We find that in colonial New England "youth" for Benjamin Coleman (1720) was a "chusing time":

> NOW O Young People is *your chusing time,* and commonly your fixing *time;* and as you fix it is like to last. Now you commonly chuse your *Trade;* betake your selves to your business for life, show what you incline to, and how you intend to be imployd all your days. Now you chuse your *Master* and your Education or Occupation. And now you dispose of your self in *Marriage* ordinarily, place your *Affections, give* away your hearts, look out for some *Companion* of life, whose to be as long as you live. And is this indeed the work of your Youth?

3 In questioning conventional morality, some even see no reason for the incest taboo, not realizing how important it is to the emergence of the child from ties to parents and the family, as well as to the maintenance of the family. Many major dramatic works—Hamlet, Oedipus Rex, Aeschylus's Oresteia—concern the woes that follow upon incestuous behavior.

4 In a type of projective test given to ninety female and eighty-eight male first-and second-year college students, fifty-nine of the women but only eight of the men made up stories that reflected fear of success. The main trend of the women's stories indicated fear of being rejected, losing marital opportunities, and losing friends as a consequence of being at the top of the class. Others gave evidence that such success might mean they lacked femininity and might be abnormal. Some even denied that it would be possible for a woman to head a medical school class; and one woman gave the bizarre response "She starts proclaiming her surprise and joy. Her classmates are so disgusted with her behavior that they jump on her in a body and beat her. She is maimed for life" (Horner, 1968).

5 As reflected in some writings of proponents of radical Women's liberation. The ultimate was seen in a first-year medical student (not at Yale) who called a professor of anatomy a male chauvinist and left the lecture hall when he sought to demonstrate (on a skeleton) the differences between the male and female pelvis.