CHAPTER 6
PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY YOUTH

6.1 Introduction

By way of introduction, the following meaningful and interesting descriptions, points for discussion, distinctions, demarcations and pronouncements regarding youth and the period of youth are presented:

- Youth: The category of persons who are on the way from one social position (child) to another (adult).
- During the period of youth, youth are independent participants in society. Societally, the period of youth has acquired a meaningful *prolongation* and *appreciation.*
- Puberty: 12-17 years
- Adolescence: 17-25 years
- Period of youth: 12-25 years

- Groups: high school students, students, working youth, laboring youth

- Characteristics of youth:
  Most important physical characteristics: rapid physical growth and change; awakening of sexuality; new experiences with one's own body; restless; self-conscious.

  Most important intellectual characteristics: critical; asks how and how come; seeks sense and purpose; critically examines, tests and questions values; rejects hypocrisy and value systems.

  Conspicuous emotional characteristics: lability, emotional distress, sensitivity (among others, because of biological reasons), nervousness, uneasy, shame, irritated, withdrawing, uncertain; infatuation, gender relationships; boredom, daydreaming, need for intimacy; need for the group; storm and stress; being off balance (embarrassment and aggression).

Conspicuous spiritual characteristics: disbelief, conflict, alienation; religious awakening and deepening; idealism.

Conflict:
- because of the position between child/adult; he/she is dependent but seeks independence.
- Between social and moral values.

* Pronouncements about youths through the ages:

Plato: 469-322 B.C.
The youth of today are luxurious. They have bad manners, disrespect authority, no respect for elders and prefer to talk more than work.

Aristotle: 384-322 B.C.
The youth are naïve, idealistic, excessively self-assured about their knowledge and power. They think they know everything, and always are very certain about it; hence, they repeat everything.

Hegendorphinus: 1529
I shame myself to have to say how impudently parents allow their children to present themselves, but they go their own way.

Martin Luther: 1540
From the preschool period to the 21st year, youth begin all kinds of wantonness b y their play, by chasing after girls, by going to places for drinks, etc . and after that begin to work a little bit.

John Locke 1690
Lately I have consulted with so many parents who admit that they no longer know how to bring up their children; moreover, the early corruption of youth now is such a general complaint that the problem must be addressed, and proposals must be made to improve the situation.

Muhlenberg: 1764 in Philadelphia

This large city is full of young people of all nationalities; they are allowed to do anything and have no discipline. The laws are much too lenient.

Jean Jacques Rousseau: 1712-1778
The psychic becoming adult is in a state of crisis. The child is moody and has a strong disapproval of parental authority, and no longer will be governed. In this period, a child no longer is easily approachable for adults; he/she is unreasonable, rebellious, briefly uneducable. However, it must be kept in mind that all of this is of the greatest significance; a child becomes adult; after this crisis, nothing human is any longer strange to him/her.

Garbers: 1958
During the few years following World War II we run across a certain phenomenon in each country with a modern form of society. Many youth, whose appearance is very conspicuous, saunter around the streets. They gaze at the passer-by with a facial expression of boredom and extreme emptiness. Their look is vulgar, world-wise and foreign to youth.

A. Mitscherlich: 1965
Pedagogues, parents, justices, and clerics all make dubious attempts to serve the child and youth to break through their obstinacy to really come into contact with them. How little they succeed in entering their secret, closed world; the cleft is too great with the almost revengeful contempt of the youth, as carrier of the decline.

Today: antithetic pronouncements about the youth:
    The youth is: sick – healthy
                    alienated – involved
                    arrogant – modest
                    immoral – devout
                    selfish – generous
                    cynical – idealistic
                    pathological – healthy rejection of a sick
                                        society.

Thus, each time, anew, has its grievances about youth.

*   There is uncertainty in the establishment of interhuman relationships – a life in multiplicity. Amidst *social lability, a person does not know his/her own place and that of others.* The youth will *be of his/her time* and *for the future.* He/she chooses informal interpersonal relationships in a society characterized by formal matter of fact relationships. As a *group,* the youth is *aware* of itself. There arises a general, unspecific, anonymous, soulless, anarchistic aggression against everybody and everything. The uncultivated youth live in a formless world. Youths are involved in *exchanging* the position of the child with that of the adult. He/she is on the way to progressive independence and responsibility, and experiments with rights and obligations in the anticipation of a future position in society. He/she experiences increasing freedom, an expiring relationship of authority, growing acquisition of culture and an increasing insight into the world around and beyond him/her.

The contemporary youth problem can be seen in terms of the youths' intense struggles and searches:

6.2 The struggle for self-affirmation[1]

Today youth come forth with the accusation that the older generation views them as a troublesome and passive mass which must be organized and dominated rather than educated and guided, and which can be used or misused to further promote this on the traditional beaten path. "They will educate us to the same traditional, surpassed manner of thinking!" Youth demand an educating which is not a subjection to unacceptable, indefensible, obsolete traditions and organizations, but is a *guiding,* i.e., a stimulating forming to a genuinely useable insight into the modern world, to a personal being oneself and to a dignified living and working together with the older generation.

 This accusation of youth is characteristic of the period of youth where, at the beginning of puberty, pride and rebelliousness are expressions of the youths' natural inclination and striving for self-affirmation, and of the youths' power to become and to be him/herself. An educator who breaks this pride breaks the youths' power to self-affirmation: an educator who gives free play to this makes him/herself guilty of a serious neglect in character.

Youth always stand anew against the opposition of the side of the adults, astonished and confused, painfully struck and without understanding against their inclination for self-affirmation. From them, it is expected that they think and act independently, but as soon as they try to do this, they are opposed, made ridiculous and suspect, interpreted incorrectly or threatened (that his/her independence will be taken away from him/her).[2]

He/she is entangled in a struggle (often with appall, rage and deterioration) for self-affirmation essentially is a struggle between the generations. He/she says "no" to the traditional and obsolete ways of thinking, values, norms and customs which the adults try to present to him/her. This struggle between the generations includes young people and adults mutually viewing each other as "troublesome masses," and each questions the self-affirmation, life position and experiential horizon of the other. In our society, this struggle is intensified because the generations in it have not acquired the fundamental rules necessary for fellow human association with and guidance of the other and do not know a real, concerned respect for fellow persons (inadequately socialized as a characteristic of society – see 4.3.8). Thus, youths, in their longing for self-affirmation and in their wanting-to-themselves-be-someone, are not understood, respected and guided.

The youths' protest and struggle for self-affirmation can take the following forms:

(i) The struggle for a position in society:[3]
It is a modern social phenomenon that the older generation retains their posts and positions in society much longer than ever before because of an increased life expectancy in our society. The social and occupational life are overfilled, and there is no place for the thoroughly prepared and highly qualified youth-in-advance. Many parents and grandparents find it good that their children are kept dependent, docile and obedient. This convenient solution is unaccountable pedagogically because the parents do not make themselves superfluous for the sake of the youth becoming independent, which always is the primary task of educating. Youth must be supported to acquire their own standpoint in society, and a

place must be made for them.[4] A tension arises in the youth between their early becoming mature and the fact that, for a long time, they are not allowed to enter adulthood and must long remain "youth growing up". Then they affirm themselves in aggressive and excessive ways.

In addition, there is a "problem of space," in the literal sense of the word – the problems of overpopulation and a shortage of housing. The individual drowns in a gigantic mass, receives increasingly less value, and finds his/her own position in a mass society with continually greater difficulty. Amidst a lack of space, the child and youth are provided no place. Increasingly more terrain is forbidden to them; their movements literally are kept in check (inadequate socialization and inadequate social-societal orientation). Their accusation is directed against a massive socio-cultural problem situation, which not even many adults can handle, and they struggle for a position and room to move in contemporary society.

(ii) The struggle against the institutions of adults:[5]
The protest of youth also is directed against normative social institutions of the adult lifeworld: organizations (parties, groupings, associations, churches), traditions and bureaucratic administrations, with their unconditional norms and limitations, which have become inflexible and hostile to life and no longer meet the fundamental needs of people and, thus, no longer are experienced as meaningful and useful. The youth manifest an anti-institutional mentality (anti-establishment) and strive for independence and are skeptical about and negative toward a society which obstructs such strivings.

Youth establish their own organizations and institutions in protest of the institutions of adults which often fail in their aims (family, marriage, school, church, etc.) and contend that not all young people in the family and school find the safety and recognition that, as persons, they have a need. Within these forms of youth communities, often there are their own group norms, values, traditions solidarity and even group discipline is maintained.

"In the struggle against the institutions and norms of adults there is not a lack of norms and the normative because human existence always is normative. According to the yardsticks of the adults, the

life of youth indeed can be mal-normative but never without norms," according to Botha.[6]

(iii) The struggle against the over-organized obsolete life:[7]
The accusation of the critical, protesting youth has further reference to the great influence of social institutions by which adults will "organize" young people as if they are nothing more than passive objects. Youth are against the overdone, organized nature of modern life, e.g., in large educative institutions (masses of pupils and students) and in the vocational world. Also, nature has lost its sense and has become misused by people. Humans and nature are delivered to technique and organization, and they are implemented only for the sake of their useful function. Being human is narrowed and threatened by the rampancy of all sorts of institutional administrative organizations which are spiritually barren and soul numbing.

With this, educators (parents and teachers) give little or no useful help to youth in being able to deal with the problems of modern, technological life (life-alienating educating and teaching). When youth answer the demands society poses with uncommon "reactions", adults find this to be stupid and understand it incorrectly, because they wrongly compares this with other historical or social situations; or youth are punished without being educated to be able to assimilate the new situation.

Educating has remained at a standstill in "the good old times," and does not help youths to give form to their lives in the practical circumstances of our modern time and the technical-social future which already has begun. The young person who is socially-societally disoriented, and who in this confusing life, attempts to demolish, often in wild, purposeless and meaningless outbursts of a radical negativism, this incomprehensible, institutionalized machine world – beatniks, teddy boys, etc.[8]

(iv) The struggle against the untruthful life:[9]
The young person is very indignant about the disparity between the morals which adults proclaim and the cult of pretense in which they live, in practice—the two faces of the adult who attempts to hide his/her mischief, unreasonableness, deceptions and sexual

perversions behind a veil of virtue. Delinquent youth gangs pull this mask of society off because, without masks, they openly and brutally imitate the life of the adults; they imitate adultery in attacks, the political and economic power struggle in knife and gun fights in the street; engage in exploiting and terrorizing the weaker in their own little world. They interpret the struggle which the adults carry out behind their facade of untruths with moral theories, authority, organizations and institutional means of power against them, as expressions of the struggle of power of everyone against everyone, and they carry on their own aggressive, radical struggle and draw attention to the fact that they are made adult early and are delivered to their fate. Their rebelliousness, however, is a call for help which resounds out of despair, anxiety and distress. The rebellious youth knows no real home, and openly chooses violence and cruelty above the insulting lack of trust and the emptiness of the parental house, where he/she does not give or find love.

The *youth problem*, along with the population growth, overpopulation, the lack of space and all the life circumstances of our technical culture, is a "new social problem" which will not be solved easily because its origin must be sought in our modern culture. Thus, the coming generations of youth also must deal with this problem.

6.3 What youth are seeking

Muchow[10] attempted to design a "typology of youth" and apply it to describe specific, always valid, typical-ideal, fundamental features of youth. He states the following as characteristics: *becoming adult is not yet complete; sexual maturity* is reached, but not yet its physical, personal and cultural functioning; the social status of adulthood (establishing a family) is not yet reached; youth has a *social openness,* i.e., he/she is not yet "bound," and does not yet carry responsibility—he/she still experiments socially; he/she still is uncertain about *values;* he/she seeks an *identity* and a *task* in life; he/she *orients* him/herself in imitation of or in opposition to the forms of phenomena of his/her time, according to which he/she also then directs his/her own personal unfolding; he/she searches intensely for *social bonding;* he/she always wants to "do

185

something", prefers "something exceptional"; he/she must and wants to *become independent.*

However, youth tries to realize his/her becoming adult in a society which diverts him/her from him/herself, from his/her own essence and from the totality of his/her own being human, from an unfolding of spiritual and character independence. He/she reaches sexual maturity before he/she has acquired the psychic ability to build a loving connection; he/she becomes adult in association with machines, occupational techniques and money before he/she can work on his/her own individuality, and before he/she has the ability to make decisions on his/her own responsibility.[11]

The period of youth thus is characterized by an intense and profound (but often thwarted) *searching* by youth:

6.3.1 Search for sense

Prosperity creates a spirit of boredom and meaninglessness in youth such that answering vital questions of life, sense and identity become difficult. He/she is in search of sense and truth and will/must discover this sense in communicating with fellow persons, and especially with his/her educators. The sense of his/her own life• especially is communicated to him/her via intimate (educative) communication.

Dreyfus (in English):[12]
- "Youth wants meaning through intimacy with other people."
- "Youth is concerned with interpersonal communication and relatedness, action and involvement, and less concerned with conformity to existing social mores."

Many youth traffic in an existential vacuum and experience a *lack of sense.* There is an intense search for sense: What is life about?

• See the following views:
- Freud (Psychoanalysis): sexual impulses are the root of human behavior (will to pleasure)
- Adler (Individual psychology): the striving for power is the root of human behavior (will to power)
- Frankl (Existential analysis): sense and meaning are the root of human behavior; a person strives for the meaningful; you are responsib le for your unique existence.

Where do I fit in? A youth will/must discover his/her unique sense. The youth questions society. Today's youth are better informed, more outspoken, better educated, more aware, more active, less tradition-bound and less satisfied (with empty words and promises) than ever before.   They are more sophisticated than ever in their function of criticizing, protesting and changing. They are concerned about the sense of society, material differences, values, identity, religion, morality, politics, marriage, family, educating, careers, the "system" and interpersonal relations (intimacy).

Youth escape this lack of sense and meaninglessness in the use of drugs, in communal living together, in a "new morality" with slogans such as "God is oral, "Do your own thing, "Make love, not war", in dance, sexuality, "dropping out", in passivity or activism, in suicide – escapes, however which intensify rather than illuminate their experience of lack of sense, uncertainty, anxiety and alienation.

"More and more young people around the world are being driven to what Montaigne once called 'la chef des champs' – suicide. (Literally, the key to the fields, or way of escape)."[13] (in English).

According to Traas[14], in France alone, after the suppression of the student riots in 1968, 20,000 cases of suicide occurred. According to the World Health Organization, suicide in the age-group 15-24 years from 1965 to 1973 increased as noted below in the following countries:

Finland	128%
West Germany	13%
Japan	22%
United States	71%

6.3.2 Search for intimacy

The great problem with which most young people have had to battle is an *enormous absence of communication.* This holds for communication with *parents* as well as with *each other.* And this means that there also is *uncertainty, loneliness* and *passivity.*[13]

Intense organization means business-like and inadequate affective-social bonding, the continual outward contact of many with many. Amidst this superficial communication in society, youths experience loneliness. Persons have so many contacts that it is difficult to find anyone who has acquired meaning for his/her life. (In world literature, the motif of loneliness, of the infinitely long pain of loneliness appears). Youths have a "hunger for co-existentiality", they seek intense, intimate communication with another because intimacy offers

- security
- an opportunity to discover meaning
- someone who means something for you
- fulfillment of a person's basic social need (co-existentiality).

There is a *search* for and a *fear* of intimacy. Youth respond to this thwarted and frustrated search with a desperate flight into intimacy (in sexuality or superficial familiarity)—the rationale is that sexual association is the most intimate form of intimacy, and that it ought to satisfy this/her search. Because sexuality occurred without spiritual communication or commitment, a youth experiences that "something is missing", along with feelings of emptiness, boredom, shame, guilt, disillusionment—because this extreme form of intimacy is not fulfilling.

Thus, for youth, sexuality is a substitute for intimacy. Because of inadequate interpersonal communication, youth are so alienated that they fear *any* relationship, find their refuge in sexuality as the only non-threatening way in which they can associate with fellow humans intimately. Regular physical contact without spiritual involvement, then, means that the act of love becomes the *negation* of intimacy.

Intimacy is a *feeling* and not an *action.* You can act intimately without feeling intimacy and you can feel intimate without acting so. With the flight into sexuality, those involved act intimately without feeling intimacy—they can remain "emotional strangers" for each other. They then realize a pseudo-intimacy (intimacy without commitment), or an instant-intimacy, such as is often also realized with group-techniques where one learns to act intimately without

feeling so. Genuine intimacy takes *time* and *co-experiencing* (being together) to develop and cannot be forced. "Intimate" dance attitudes and relationships among youth at discotheques, dance functions and little parties also only are the appearance of intimate interpersonal contact. Even in a long-term educative living together, it is possible that genuine educative communication never is realized: "She's leaving home after living alone for so many years." (Beattles, in English).

Youth often fear intimacy because of

- the possible pain of separating
- the question if it will last
- the fact that he/she has no practice at it
- the doubt that it really can be.

With the rejection of intimacy during his/her personal unfolding, a child experiences

- I am rejected
- they do not love me
- they can't have love for me
- I cannot have love for
- to want to give or receive love is wrong
- all forms of intimacy are wrong.

Compare the following concepts: "hurting for contact", "touch-starved", "contact-hunger". Then guilt, shame and fear arise with a search for intimacy. "If this is not bad, why don't they say so?" This leads to withdrawal and contact avoidance. Interpersonal relations then are not an overwhelmingly threatening possibility.

Youth often seek sexual contact in compulsive ways because:

- it is less contact
- it is short-lived enjoyment
- it is an illusion of sexuality and love
- it is social recognition and acceptance of age-mates (irrespective of the sex partner).

The youths' rebellion often is a search for and a questioning of intimacy. Dreyfus[16] (in English): "Youth is angry with the missing parents for having cheated them, for not offering the closeness and intimacy which would have prepared them for intimacy with others – cheating on an emotional level."

Toffler[17] (in English) connects youths' search for intimacy with the "transience factor" in society:

> "Once the transience factor is recognized as a cause of alienation, some of the superficially puzzling behaviour of young people become comprehensible. Many of them, for example, regard sex as a quick way to 'get to know someone'. Instead of viewing sexual intercourse as something that follows a long process of relationship-building, they see it, rightly or not, as a shortcut to deeper human understanding.

> The same wish to accelerate friendship helps explain the fascination with such psychological techniques as 'sensitivity training', 'T-grouping', so-called 'touchie-feelie' or non-verbal games, and the whole group-dynamics phenomenon in general. Their enthusiasm for communal living, too, expresses the *underlying sense of loneliness and inability to 'open up' with others.*

> All these activities throw participants into intimate psychological contact without lengthy preparation, often without advance acquaintanceship. In many cases, the relationships are short-lived by design, the purpose of the game being to intensify affective relationships despite the temporariness of the situation. By speeding the turnover of people in our lives, we allow less time for trust to develop, less time for friendships to ripen. Thus, we witness a search for ways to cut through the polite 'public' behariour directly to the sharing of intimacy."

The distressful complaint of youth: "The problem is in the fact that there seldom or ever are persons, genuine people who we genuinely encounter; that, in general, we encounter so little genuineness and honesty in the world, and what is a hopeless tragedy, in church.

Everything is determined, normed, each activity we must perform is specified because others do not run the machine. This does not amount to this being life-genuine if done effectively. We only function, but don't live."[18]

Couwenberg:[19] This world phenomenon is an intense feeling of loneliness, a disconcerting inner emptiness, but at the same time also deep need for love and understanding.

Deficiencies in educating that give rise to this state: inadequate guidance, authority, understanding, communication, genuineness, etc. An *extended period of educating* and a *complicated society* also interact with each other.

This awareness of loneliness by youth is a world phenomenon. Many youths are confused and depressed by feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, impotence, and lack of hope. They are aware of themselves and their impotent life urges and feelings, often no longer with advice, in the technical and organized waste of a modern mass-society with its strange and colossal phenomena. Rowdiness, looseness, skepticism, flight into early marriage, etc. are typical "flight-reactions" of a cut loose, lonely youth; they protest a society without love which rules by matter of fact and utility in which everyone must be beside themselves; they reject and loathe a dehumanized society.[20]

6.3.3 Search for identity

A person finds him/herself (his/her own identity) in communication with fellow persons. Inadequate communication in our time (e.g., the generation gap) means inadequate identity acquisition by youth, a world without certainty and foothold, and the events of discovering self and purpose which miscarry.

Factors such as changes in the family, the school and in society, inadequate educative accompaniment with identity acquisition, massification, contact inflation, authority crisis, a vacuum in beliefs, alienation, norm crisis, etc. impede the adequate realization of the essences of identity acquisition (confidence, communication, identification, self-image, discovery of sense, etc.) and lead to

identity acquisition (identity crisis) by youth which, for them in their personal lives, mean they are without identity in drifting about and searching life that they never possess a fundamental confidence about it, inadequately communicate with their fellow persons and fall into loneliness, their existence is experienced as senseless and their achievements in life are influenced.

6.3.4 Search for broadening awareness

Youth feel that the everyday, senseless, routine life and routine experiencing do not satisfy them and that there must be more sense to life than this. He/she wants to broaden his/her field of experiencing (awareness)—youths' search for broadening awareness. With them, there is an intentional search for:

- new forms of awareness (life and experience)
- creativity
- psychic experience
- new forms of interpersonal communication.

This search of youth is manifested in phenomena such as the following: interest in Eastern philosophy, drug use, "flower power", hippies, "underground", "soul", pop-fests, "love-ins", "happenings", anarchy, politics, strange art, transcendental meditation, group techniques such as "sensitivity training" and "encounter groups", impermissible sexuality, etc.

6.3.5 Search for change

Because their material needs are satisfied in a prosperous society, youth strive for higher aims of societal change and personal unfolding, and they are directed to experimenting, new experiences, creating, renewal of and immediate change in these regards. Hippies, radicals and activists are, as a small representation of Western mass-youth, the "style-setters", and "pace-setters" which society will recognize, criticize and change, and who are seeking a new identity and lifestyle.

The youth are sensitive to questions of life and society—for the baseline and structure of society and culture, for the actual (here-

and-now), the new and the relevant. They stand open to life in all its expressions; they can easily empathize with another's situation; they are not yet absorbed by the firm bindings and responsibilities in society. They strive for

- a change in people's values away from material to social needs
- a change in governing aod political structures
- racial equality (world youth)
- change from an ordered society; they hold a "revolutionary dissatisfaction" with the existing order.

Everybody is aware that society must be change drastically, but *how* this must occur is a complex question which is not easy to answer. An inability to change society leads, in an unfavorable sense, to an improved idealism in youth; in an unfavorable sense it leads to

- irrational, undirected aggression
- defeatism
- conformism.

In this connection, a distinction is made between the great, passive majority of youth and the small aware elite who protest strongly (anti-war, anti-establishment, anti-pollution, anti-discrimination, etc.), and who, through *action* and *publicity,* seek political influence. With change, youth will *find their own place in society* which is not subordinate to the position of the "established adults".

Extreme expressions of this protest against the existing societal order, and a striving for its total overthrow (which is continually exploited by the Communists), are the terrorist acts of youth groups such as the Baader-Meinhof-bende in Germany and the Red Youth in the Netherlands.

Also, the massive student-actions of the 1960's are a manifestation of this. From 1 January to 15 June 1968, at least 221 protest demonstrations occurred at 101 universities and colleges in America in which approximately 90,000 students and other youths participated, especially Hippies. In the academic year of 1969-1970, approximately 9,000 protest demonstrations of various types at roughly two-thirds of the colleges and universities in the U.S.A.[21]

With these revolts, students and Hippies, under the lead of New Left radicals, conspired to create a climate of tension between the generations. Their radical cultural criticism was directed to the total abolishment of society. This was an attack on tradition, on the establishment-generation and on the authority-structure of society by means of demonstrations, "sit-ins", "teach-ins" and "love-ins". Intervention by the state (police and soldiers) had reinforced solidarity within generations and increased conflict between them.[22]

The New Left radicals wanted to abolish the so-called suppressive society through revolution; not change or improve, but totally abolish—a radical, anarchistic standpoint of revolution for the sake of revolution, with strong Neo-Marxist undertones. Education is one of the most powerful means for attaining this aim. The New Left educational philosophy makes the *emancipation* of youth absolute and proclaims an *anti-authoritarian education.* Human being is viewed as good by nature, but he/she is in the capitalistic and bureaucratic prosperous society, so contaminated that he/she traffics in total spiritual bankruptcy and misery. Even so, humans are so conditioned that they are not aware of this spiritual chaos in which they traffic and, therefore, for their rescue, they have a need for the help of a small, elitist minority. The latter, with their Neo-Marxist doctrine of salvation, must open their eyes so they can see the corruptness of contemporary society so they actually can try to fundamentally abolish it.[23]

The educative aim of the New Left is *personal* and *societal.* The personal must be in the service of society. The emancipated person must be able to make relative the contents of values and of beliefs which hold in society. The sexuality (free sexual association) is the most effective means to anti-authoritarian educating, which then also are seized by the revolting students as a confrontation-means against the older generation.[24]

An extreme permissiveness and excessive freedom, thus, are advocated for youth. For example, in one of their publications in America, the New Left states the following (in English): "What's needed is a generation of people who are freaky, crazy, irrational, sexy, angry, irreligious, childish and mad; people who burn high

school and college degrees; people who say: To hell with your goals; people who lure youth with music, pot and acid; people who break with the status-roll-title-consumer game; people who have nothing material to lose but their flesh." Thus, a spirit of permissiveness especially holds regarding three matters, i.e., sexuality, drugs and authority.[25]

6.3.6 Search for an élan

Youths seek something they can surrender themselves to, body and soul. The contemporary image of adulthood does not satisfy youth; it includes nothing daring or adventuresome; everything is ordered and ruled, a comfortable bourgeois life of security. The adult gives him/her little or nothing which rises above his/her own interests. The daring of the *tasks* and *surrender* are no longer in order. The *élan* is missing—the demanding personal input. Adulthood is addressed to the comfortable—also in educating. No demands are set regarding laws, personal responsibility, and the gravity of existence. Psychologizing education leads to a fear of acts of conscience and the complicated.

Boredom is experienced regarding advertising, making money and moral weakness. Youth seek out a true, open, genuine, spiritually rich adult to make his/her life mean something. Then, values lose their direction–giving power for youths since they are made relative, minimized and nihilated.

Youth want to be addressed personally. They despise platitudes and clichés. They seek conversation with someone who has something important to say (view of world and of life). They need personal input; they are not satisfied with a comfortable, provided for existence; they seek opportunity for personal input; they seek daring, adventure, fulfillment. Often, adults suppress their lust for daring and smother their idealism ("This is foolish to expect; seek money and security.")[26]

6.3.7 Search for authentic religious experiences

Youth search for genuineness and truth regarding religion, spirituality and morality. They have a particular interest in and

sensitivity regarding religion. The Church, religious norms, and organized religion address youths, but to a continually lesser degree. This is one of the most disturbed types of communication between parents and youth. From the popularity, e.g., of the Jesus Movement and similar ones, evidence the youths' need and search regarding authentic religious experiences.

Youth question the religious forms of adults and become involved in phenomena such as astrology, occultism, Eastern religions, existential philosophy, drugs, Yoga, humanism, the "new morality", etc. They do not discover the sense of religion and reject formal religions in general because they

- are irrelevant to them
- do not fulfill their needs
- bind and limit them
- contain hypocrisies.

They look for answers to the here-and-now, while religion is directed to the hereafter, they seek action, but in church must listen to a sermon; they are directed to the matter of interhuman relationships while, in religion the concern is with one's relationship to God; in religious matters they want to choose for themselves, but a choice is made for them by the adults.

Youth are religiously aware and concerned, and seek a Power greater than being human; they seek love and involvement. Where the previous generation declared that God is dead, contemporary youths claim: "God is everywhere."

In the "new morality," youth question the religious prescriptions (values and norms) about sexuality and "they do their own thing" by becoming a "swinger" or a "swopper".

6.4 Pop music

"Pop music is a phenomenon with which the 'modern' (post-wars) Western youth associate. Too often pop music is judged sharply without it being properly analyzed, understood or placed in context. Prejudgments, weak arguments and even irresponsible flippancy are

plentiful when pop music is brought up. There is no doubt that pop music is difficult to pin down or even delimit, is almost indefinable and offers a variety of possible interpretations," according to Botha.[27]

Contemporary adults show a strong disapproval of pop music and pop culture in general because they view it as alien to their own culture and a Christian life view, and because for youths it includes the possibility for and the intensification of their problems with identity acquisition. They disapprove of the intensity of its secularization, and of the activities around the phenomenon of pop music and the life of pop artists—sexuality, drugs, mass-hysteria, licentiousness, self-aggrandizement, etc.

Botha[28] emphasizes the following four aspects of the phenomenon of pop music:

- Counter-culture: Pop culture is the counter-culture or sub-culture of the extreme or radical, alienated youth for whom cultural patterns of the establishment are unacceptable. Pop music is one of the ways in which youth give expression to their opposition against society with its materialism, hypocrisy, bureaucracies, lack of communication (impersonality), emptiness, etc. Pop music conveys the spirit of pop culture as a counterculture. A New world without war, pollution and hypocrisy must be created. Pop music carries the revolutionary ideas of the counterculture which screams for change and a new world.
- The erotic and sexuality: Youths "react" bodily to pop music and with vital enjoyment and this then also is used to exploit their sexuality on the level of not being bonded and of perversity. During pop festivals being half-naked and physical contact are general phenomena, while pop songs reflect a sigh for vital "love".
- The Jesus romantic: A "Rock opera" such as "Jesus Christ Superstar" essentially is a pop music interpretation of Christ. Tenfold of youth escape (religion) in this stream of pop music in which Jesus' being human is decontextualized, his/her actions are linked to the counter-culture (He has Him treated

as an outcast), and He becomes romanticized as a "typical Hippie-type".

- Need for communication: The famous Woodstock Pop Festival was a large "happening" that especially demonstrated the need of contemporary youth for communication and being together. About 400,000 youth demonstrated mutual understanding, calm, love and violent criticism of society by their gathering. Music, drugs, revolutionary messages, free (disorganized, non-programmed) communication and contact free of prejudgment was a great attempt to reform the world because "the world needs a big wash, a big scrub-down".

Thus, youths literally and figuratively turned pop music into their feelings to scream them out: on the one hand, their aggression against society, and on the other hand, their intense feelings of distress, anxiety and despair, or of enthusiasm and ecstatic happiness. A certain author refers to pop music, as it is performed in its most extreme form at pop festivals, on TV, etc., as "an escape from an obsessed crowd of idlers in a cathedral that require no effort." (This typifying expresses precious little understanding for the need of youth). Pop music also can be seen as a possibility which, thankfully, is seized by many young persons "to live out" their truncated libidos and to demonstrate in spectacular ways their radical rejection of contemporary society.[29]

Bad conditions in society can be "read" from pop music, from them being irrepressibly "lived out" in dance and from the raw screams that are appreciated as real songs. The youth are astonished by the question of whether it can be called "beautiful": it does not have to do with "beautiful" but with "genuine" and "honest". The raucous, frantically sung is attractive for the youth; it is "art" with which they can be involved.[30] Pop music is experienced by youth as a contagious, erotic, exciting expression of their own life rhythm, and as a full of anticipation, valuable point of access to a personal life which is detached from the organized world of adults.

Pop music is a passionate protest of the fact that the personality of a person is kept in check and against standardizing and making superficial an authentic life in our organized world. Music is a dwelling place for humanity and spirituality in the struggle against

a non-musical world which has been ruined by material utility and conventional norms.[31]

In addition to recent decadent, depraved and degenerate pop music phenomena such as filthy, suggestive songs, "porno pop" and "topless rock 'n roll", one of the most genuine forms of worldwide youth alienation and one of the most deviant caricatures of a "sick" society certainly is the extreme pop cultist and nihilistic phenomenon which is known as the Punk Rock[*] syndrome (from approximately 1975). Unemployed masses of youth[**] in England, Europe, the U.S.A. and elsewhere strike the established society in vicious ways with the accusation that society is charged with the responsibility for their lot. They escape into bizarre (exaggerated, unusual, strange) and eccentric cults which, in extremely superficial ways, in degenerate behavior, clothing, language and music give expression to their radical rejection of the establishment. These cults thrive in a society characterized by permissiveness, disdain for fellow persons and their property, sexual degeneration, misdeeds, violence, etc.

Thousands of youths deal with an identity crisis, social-societal disorientation, despair, lack of belief, lack of sense and a future perspective, and an escape into these cults that proclaim the following slogans: "Life is horrid. The world is in a mess. We didn't make this, and we can't change it. Therefore, we spit on it!"

These are cults of frustration, discontentment, boredom, hatred and loathing. The names chosen for pop groups and pop singers attest to this: Johnny Rotten, The Sex Pistols, The Stinky Toys, The Dead Boys, The Germs, The Damned, etc. Conspicuous in the appearance of these youth is colored hair (pink, purple, red), bizarre garb, pins through ears, noses and cheeks, chins, trinkets, ornaments, tattoos, swastikas, etc. Their behavior includes vandalism, lack of sense, depravity, obscenity, debauchery, meanness and "pornographic aggression"—attempts to shock and disgust society. For example, one of their pop songs sounds like the following:

---

[*] *Punk* means: "nonsense", "trash", "rubbish".
[**] 40-445% of the unemployed in England and Europe are under the age of 25 years.

"I am an anti-Christ
I am an anarchist
Don't know what I want
But I know how to get it
I want to destroy passersby
Cause I want to bring anarchy to the U.K."

Pop fests were held with atonal, primitive and strident, shrill music and with slogans such as "You have no future" and "We want to feel our Punk power in our music." Punk Rock stands for hatred and non-life; it is an opposition to everything; it is "anti" the whole world. It values anti-social actions such as anarchy, terrorism, drug use and trafficking, youth riots and groups such as Baader-Meinhof and Rooi Leer. "We will shock and disgust the self-satisfied, parochial, consumer society." Charges are directed against the consumer society, contamination, excesses and the shortcomings of "the system". This cult easily took root in a country such as the U.S.A. where a large part of it youth are prosperous, aimless and apathetic.

It is difficult to evaluate the pop music phenomenon other than negatively and disapprovingly from a sociopedagogical perspective. Nevertheless, not all pop music must be viewed as symptomatic of the counterculture. Negative and counter cultural tendencies do not necessarily arise in all pop music. Even so, pop music is a phenomenon that does not leave contemporary youth unharmed in their becoming adult, and this presents the adults with a particular educative task. They must not isolate youths from pop music but selectively confront them with it, guide them in their judging and interpreting of it so that they can distinguish its positive and negative tendencies and independently take a position toward it. Pop music can be beneficial in positive ways by putting it in acceptable forms and filling it with positive content, e.g., by religious singing groups.[32]

6.5 Mass trends

The word "mass" refers to an *undifferentiated group/crowd.* Inadequate communication and identification with educators lead to *massification.* The "mass[ified]" person has a loss in individuality

and responsibility—thus a loss of personality. He unconsciously identifies him/herself with an impersonal, undifferentiated mass that cannot make decisions in freedom and with responsibility. There is a lack in bonding, spiritual values and religion.

Compare the concepts mass youth, societally violent youth, immature youth, derailed youth, the skeptical generation that continually signifies *problem behavior* and *protest* in society.

The problem of mass youth is found everywhere in the world:

England:	Teddies, Edwardians
France:	Zazous
U.S.A.:	Beatniks
Netherlands:	Nozems, provos, super nozems
Germany:	Halbstarken
Austria:	Schlurfs
Russia:	Stilyagi
South Africa:	Eendsterte, shielas (Shanana!)
International:	Hippies (LSD, free love, flowers) and the Punk Rock syndrome.

The first medicine for these unfettered youth is an adequate and harmonious family life. These boys and girls are underfed. Underfed in heart-vitamins! The feeling of a nest is not in their awakening and unfolding. They do not know the security of a home. They have never experienced a real family sphere. They take to the street to seek there what is not to be found, i.e., intimacy (Koop).

The following are the most conspicuous *characteristics of mass youth*[33]

- lack of bonding (to family, school, work, church, youth associations, society)
- lack of awareness of social norms
- lack of personality
- lack of responsibility
- lack of independence
- lack of confidence

- lack of worthiness (feelings of inferiority)
- lack of values (social, cultural and religious values are thrown overboard)
- societally uncultivated
- excessive, conspicuous, defiant (behavior and clothing)
- lonely
- doubt about the meaning of life
- organizational illusiveness – they cannot acquire a *grasp* of the rules and norms of organized social life; they are insusceptible to the higher strivings of the culture. " Illusiveness" means society is not able to form these young people to full-fledged humans.

The following are three conspicuous *categories*[34] of mass youth that are distinguished:

(i)   Student-activists: Worldwide they see themselves as champions for political and social change and for the social injustices in society. From the universities they propagate new social-societal alternatives and old social structures, traditions and value-systems arre attacked. The authority of the state and university are rejected and undermined. It especially is revolutionary groups u8nder the influence of the left show a radicalism, that work via active protests and demonstrations ("campus war") that announce their own ethic and sense of justice and that demonstrate their own points of social struggle.[35] (Also see 6.3.5).

(ii)   Hippies: Also they are resistant to the traditional society and culture, church and religion, family life, customs, political structure and state authority. However, their behavior is not aggressive and violent. Their views are: don't be involved, rejecting by ignoring and withdrawing. They are more passive-pessimistic for a cultural revolution than activists and they especially are directed to enriching their own subjective experiences. They refuse to participate in the "rat race" of society. No calling or Christian virtues are practiced by them. They form a counter-culture—a Hippy cult with an counter-ethic. Withdrawal from society means for them

> a falling into non-activity, drugs and sexuality—a
> nihilistic protest coulture.[36]

(iii)   Jesus-movement: These youths acquire no satisfaction from th counter-culture and are in search of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They also are in reaction against society with its materialism and loneliness, technique, enslavement, dehumanizing, etc. They also are not satisfied with existing church institutes that, according to them, are too binding, empty and hollow, and not spontaneous enough. They seek more emotionality and spirituality. They work through

- outward signs (index finger pointing to heaven)
- slogans: "Jesus is my lord", "Smile, God loves you", "Jesus people".
- Gospel writings
- communal ways of living (Jesus colonies)
- a new discipline, without sex and LSD
- songs (religious, pop music)
- Bible study, prayer, Jesus toys
- Gospel evidence.[37]

These youth-movement categories arise in societies that are *gerontocratic*, i.e., where the older generation possesses a disproportionate part of the economic and political power and status and where the influence of religion, ideology and family ties mainly are designed to strengthen the control of the older generation. The existence of a *gerontocratic* order of things is not only a condition for the rise of a mass youth but also of the feeling – especially by yout6h – that the older generation has failed. The parents have not succeeded in solving the prevailing problems of society and therefore a part of the youth feel that the time has come to solve these problems in their own way while another part of them sinks into a kind of defeatism of conformism. Thus, youth groups are either violently progressive or extremely reactionary. Hence, mass youth have arisen as a "reaction" to the problematic nature of society, among which inadequate educative communication also counts, as an attempt to solve, to look for new ways of defining attending to the real problems of society, an act of desperation in a situation without prospect.[38]

6.6 Youth as position of transition[39]

A society within which persons have a short life expectancy does not provide the luxury of considering the time of youth to be a between-phase. Youths' position of transition (between child-being and adulthood) in society can be described as follows:

- a position of in-between
- a position of transition
- on the way (to adulthood)
- position – changing
- terrain of practice
- re-orientation regarding values, norms, expectations
- threshold of adulthood
- involved in acquiring the full independence and responsibility of adults
- experiment socially-societally
- gradually and increasingly discard the limitedness of the status of childhood
- marginal position
- transition from primary (family, etc.) to secondary (organizations) ties
- on the margin of society (often as an outsider)
- astonishment and indignation about the "achievement" of adults lead to protest, rejection and problem behavior.

This position of transition in our society has acquired a meaningful prolongation and recognition. Also it does not last equally long for all youths after intellectual development is completed at approximately 16 years of age.

- The *child* not only has a particular time of life (0 – 12 years) and a particular psycho-somatic structure, he also has his *own social position* and specific *rights and obligations* (social role);
- The *youth* experiences himself as on the way from the position of a child to that of an adult;
- The *adult* not only has a particular time of life and a particular psycho-social structure, he/she also has his/her

own social position and specific *rights and obligations* (social role).

   However, the youth is uncertain about his social position and social role. In a complex society the transition from childhood to adulthood is gradual—the longer the period of transition, the more intense the uncertainty of his/her position, role and behavioral uncertainty. Is the time of transition a pointless waiting-room period? No, it provides full opportunity for developing and personal enriching to a balanced adulthood.

6.7 The structure of the youth phase[40]

The youth phase shows the following structure with respect to the influence of various spheres or sectors on youths:

- the *family* is the primary group with personal and intensive relationships. A child is born two times in the family, i.e., biologically as well as socially. In the period of youth the influence of the family on the youth decreases.
- the *society* is a complex totality with many groupings. The youth must be linked up with it and its influence increases.
- *the youth's own domain,* his/her own subculture and age-mates have an increasing influence on him/her. His/her exploration of them means for him/herself-discovery and self-confirmation.
- the *mass media* is the fourth sector. Youth establish relationships with each other around the mass media and borrow their values, norms and behavioral patterns from it. The mass media is directed to youth--nearly half of the population is 25 years or younger.

The daily life of youth thus is a reciprocating participation in the four sectors.

6.8 Generation gap

The concept "generation gap" receives its content (of conflict and tension) in the context of social dynamics (quick social change where the younger come and the older go). This dynamic event of societal differentiation gives rise to sharp conflict between adult life

and the life of youth and creates a crisis and uncertainty in the relationship between generations.

In this context, compare the interesting concept of Pinder: *the un-simultaneous of the simultaneous.* For example: 1980 is a different period in the life of each generation (youth succeed in matriculating; aged retire). Youthsand adults go through the same objective realities, live in the same world, but everything has a different *meaning* for the youth. Generations live at the same time but *experience* their time differently. Youth must link into a society which the older generation is ruling. Communication in the adult/youth relationship is problematic. Both exclaim: "They indeed will not understand. Indeed, they don't listen. We don't agree with them." Different motivations, interests, experiential contents, direction-giving powers, etc. thus create psychic distance and conflict.

Each phase of life is a struggle (adulthood = happiness, tedium, finiteness, imperfection). With respect to youth, the struggle is accepted and emphasized because of

- the overinterpretation of superficial signs of nonconformity, especially of "deviant" behavior
- the sensationalism of the mass media
- the overemphasis of the biological determinants of sexuality (which primarily is influenced by social conditioning)
- "self-fulfilling prophecy": the "deviant" behavior you expect occurs.

Youth seek contact with adults who can carry on a conversation, show understanding, are democratic, who fully accept them—they seek openness, sincerity, accompaniment, trust, being-with, existing together.

In addition, the pronouncements of the following three authors about the generation gap are meaningful:

Dreyfus:[41] Only when the adolescent feels that he/she ought to be free, the parent experiences the strongest feeling of responsibility which he/she must control and socialize his/her child for his/her

entry into society. Fast cultural change alienates the adolescent from his/her parents' way of life; differing experiential content brings conflict between youths and their parents.

Botha:[42] Parent and child use the idea of generation gap to promote their own advantage: the parent takes shelter behind it to flee his/her educative responsibility; youth use it as justification for their own weak and unrestrained behavior. The generation conflict is a world phenomenon which is produced by contact inflation and the unhypnotic nature of society. Youth do not readily allow themselves to be prescribed to by adults because their experience of life is antiquated in a fast-changing world. Self-confident accompaniment by an educator is all the more difficult because he/she experiences him/herself as partially alienated from and uncertain in a technological society. The influence of society can *radically or extremely alienate* parent and youth *from each other.*

Monks and Hensinkveld:[43] In the adult-youth relationship, it is difficult to remain close to each other and to remain ready to listen to each other, also amidst youths' struggle to emancipate themselves.

6.9 Youth and subculture

We cannot speak of "the youth" without nuances. "Youth" is a relative concept—it can describe a person from 12/13 to 25 years of age. Because of a complex societal structure, higher demands of preparation, and a long period of study, the actual period of youth has become drawn out and extended. Youths have all kinds of group norms and lifestyles which can be coupled with the form of multiplicity of society. For example, the following can be distinguished:

city youth	rural youth
large city youth	small city youth
students	employed youth
younger youths (teens)	older youth (twenties)

In addition: members of a youth movement, the young politician, mass youth, drug addicts, working youth, protesting students, church youth, etc.

A further differentiation of youth categories occurs in terms of the two dimensions of productive/consumptive and conformist/rebel:

- *The productive conformist* is active in society in positive ways; he/she shows a positive acceptance of prevailing norms, as well as trust in the adults. He/she is ready to maintain and develop the societal goods and is further disciplined, helpful, sober, industrious and ready to contribute.
- *The productive rebel* or activist rejects society but contributes to the ideal of a new society; he/she shows a lively idealism and proceeds to action, protest and demonstration.
- *The consumptive conformist* forms the largest part of youth, the "silent majority" which conforms to the norms of the society. This type of youth experiences a neutral relationship to adults. He/she is not moved by ideals or problems (passive and social apathy). He/she is matter of fact directed to consumption and proceeds undisturbed with enjoying the high prosperity of society.
- *The consumptive rebel* rejects society and its norms but posits nothing in their place. He/she rebels against and despises society, and escapes into consumption, e.g., the Hippie and the drug addict.[44]

Each individual youth experiences his/her youth in his/her own, unique, personal way, and is a member of various youth groups which, to a greater or lesser degree, are antagonistic toward or critical of each other and society. "The youth" is not a social grouping which forms a unity in itself, and "the youth," thus, must not be viewed in a superficial, misleading and denunciatory ways as a uniform and inferior group in society. The time of youth is a living and experiencing period within which large individual differences appear. "The youth" is neither good nor bad.

6.10 Youth alienation

The following are some manifestations of youth alienation:

- Autonomy in values, behavior, appearance, e.g., Vietnam.
- Demand relevance in teaching (against lecturing, against authority).
- Opposition against the military.
- Identification with the oppressed (minority groups).
- Personalistic-communalistic orientation.
- Ambivalence regarding history (e.g., because of justification of socials neglect).
- Existential; attitude (now-generation).
- Drug use or misuse.

Youth alienation can be ascribed to:

- the difference in experiences of adults and youth
- lack of clarity by adults and youth regarding the decrease of educative authority
- differences between adults and youths on the psychic and social levels, e.g., youths' imagining in contrast to adults' experiencing (psychic difference); the adults' supervision in contrast to youths' striving for independence (social difference)
- the parent-youth crisis is realized in a complex of personal, cultural, social, family and psychological factors
- the youth complain about a meaningless life, about the demands to achieve academically, about the problematic relationship with the opposite gender (problematic sexuality) and about the authority of adults.

Especially *social change* gives rise to youth alienation: its tempo requires continual reorientation; established patterns of living are undermined (insecurity, unpredictability, anxiety, doubt); poverty prevails next to abundance; the economy is directed to production and not to human prosperity; there is the possibility of military annihilation; confused future orientation –"Future shock" – the shock of perplexing social change; the individual is confused and flooded by the demands of quick social change.

6.11 The ideological attack on the spirit of Western youth

The contemporary youth problematic is intensified by a communistic attack on the spirit and culture of Western man, of which youth are the main target because: who has the youth has the future. It is a cultural cold war or communistic infiltration of the Western Culture –a spiritual attack which must dismantle the youth such that a military attack will be unnecessary. This attack is too systematic, methodical, finely and brilliantly planned, and its seduction and influencing are too subtle, specialized and inconspicuous that it can be ascribed to nothing other than a worldwide communistic conspiracy. In this attack, youth are brought into rebellion against authority, against the existing order and against the ethical-valuable, i.e., youth are exploited for political and ideological gains in negative and destructive ways.

Areas in which this planned attack occur are the following:

- psychedelic sex (pop sex)
- psychedelic narcotics (pop trip)
- youth revolution(to fill the vacuum from the generation gap)
- educating (the New Left philosophy of education)
- rebellion against authority (family, church, state, anti-political, anti-militarism)
- arts (empty and senseless)
- destruction of moral values and norms.

This attack occurs by means of sexuality, drugs, music, revolting-promulgating, educational philosophy, dismantling authority, "modern" art, signs and symbols*, the content of plays, writings, literary works, recordings, slogans, T-shirts, decals, movies, pornography, advertisements, meaningless, degenerate "pop art", emptiness, an attack on church and religion, etc.

The aim is to create meaningless youth mass (Hippie-mass, pop festival mass) that is foul, unrestrained, without principle, without authority, immoral and without motivation, sense of morality, amidst oover-deafening pop music, free sex and drugs so that an enslaved youth without morals or pugnacity (defenseless, soulless,

---

* "body language", hand, finger and tongue signs, cobblers, broken cross, signs, numbeer symbols (e.g., 69, 88), etc.

limitless) will not be able to resist a war or attack. Compare American youth who could not win the war in Vietnam.

Slogans with which the attack is communicated are the following:

Pot is legal
Love and peace
Ban the bomb
We don't want to fight
Make love, not war
Human rights
Do your own thing and let me do my thing
Live together and love together
The pigs (police and soldiers)
The hatred people (state and church)
The uglies (parents)
Sex is the new sacrament
Unisex
Imagine there's no heaven, no hell, no country, no religion
Free sex
I use grass
Mind your own business
Free life and free love (sex)
The new generation
Ego is the only trip
God is everywhere
LSD is God
We are the straight people
Underground music, progressive music, soul music

6.12 Sexuality

The ways in which youths experience their sexuality (confusion, discomfort, guilt, etc.) not only are a psychic matter but are strongly influenced by social factors, e.g., the opinions of educators, age mates and society. Youth find themselves in a society which has undergone a sexual revolution, and which is characterized by moral degeneration and a falling into a wholesale sexuality with a nude culture. Educationists and psychologists can approach the problematic of youth sexuality scientifically, and the mass media

can communicate to youth a superficial, illusive and charming image of sexuality, but each individual youth must deal with sexuality in terms of the reality of their own body and feelings. Inadequate communication, lack of love and warmth, dehumanization, isolation, alienation, etc. contribute to making the youths' sexuality a pressing and actual problematic. A search for intimacy, also in sexual associations and in loving relationships is an attempt to eliminate this feeling of alienation. Hence, there is an increase in premarital sexual association and early marriage among youths.

Physical attractiveness in our society is "on sale" and has become very profitable. Sexual attractiveness is very expensive. Sexuality in our society has become absolutized and consequently is devoid of its deepest sense and fulfillment. Sexuality is not adequately integrated into a person's total life existence, and it becomes held as "something apart". With the increase in free time, freedom and money, sexuality in our society has become a commodity. Educating to sexual responsibility is inadequate.

Youth do not have an opportunity to explore and adventure outwardly and proceed to an "inner" exploration—of one's own body and sexuality. Some reasons youths "use" sexuality are the following:

- Sex for the sake of physical pleasure
- Sex as a way of communicating
- Sex as a search for new experiences
- Sex as evidence of 'maturity"
- Sex to conform with age mates
- Sex to provoke parents
- Sex to challenge society
- Sex to escape boredom
- Sex to escape psychic tension
- Sex as reward and punishment.[45]

According to Pistorius,[46] the following factors give rise to the distorted image and misuse of sexuality:

- Absolutizing the erotic in modern society

- Deferred adolescence: The societal demand of sexual abstinence holds for youth long after becoming biologically and sexually full-grown. In addition, today a child attains sexual maturity earlier than ever before and is bombarded with a violent and subtle awakening of sexuality by art, music, dance, advertisements, clothing, etc.
- Devaluation of the spiritual: In our culture sexuality is over-emphasized, impoverished and the spiritual moment is taken away. Only the erotic moment has remained. Sexuality becomes degraded to a mere biological urge.
- Apparent solutions: These end in self-satisfaction, romantic, idealized infatuation, intimate caressing, homosexuality, quasi-marriage, etc. Abstinence is proposed as inferior and unnatural.
- Superficial contact: In sexuality, this has to do only with physical contact and, therefore, it quickly becomes boring and the result is marital unfaithfulness, divorce, polygamy, etc.
- Earlier marriage: Youth enter marriage before they are ready for it in all respects

Many questions and problems of sexuality remain unanswered for contemporary youths. There is a quick and far-reaching modification of sexual norms and practices—and also serious uncertainty—regarding contraception, extra-marital affairs, divorce, homosexuality and deviant sexual behavior. Marriage has undergone devaluation and youth experiment with living together and sexual practices.

With hypocrisy and superficiality, norms are presented to youth which are not to be maintained (compare "Rich man, poor man").

The problem of youth sexuality is closely related to the problems of identity and personality of youths, in general, with the fact that youth want to be accepted by their age mates, and they will realize intimate contact with others.

A young person quickly discovers that sexuality devoid of *real interpersonal communication* is not satisfying and quickly becomes boring. He/she then is thrown back on him/herself and discovers his/her own loneliness.

Thus, the problem of sexuality is intensified by youths' lack of communication with parents, by the undesirable influence of society and by the hypocrisy they experience, in this regard, in the older generation.

6.13 Early "apparent" adulthood[47]

In our time and in our society, youths alarmingly quckly become "adult", but which is problematic only in some areas. Since about 1800, young people were viewed as adult at the beginning of puberty and were dealt with as such. At 15/16 years, youth could marry, begin university study[*], or choose a vocation. Today, however, youths must go through a much longer waiting and formative time between childhood and adulthood. Because of the high demands of a highly developed and complex economic-technical culture, a young person can only begin university studies at 18 or 19 years of age, and that he/she only completes when he/she is 24, 25 or even 30 years old. This phenomenon of youth is the result of an impediment in the natural event of self-development. Youths experience serious problems with their entry into adult life.

In our time, youth marry early in a society which is almost exclusively directed to material prosperity and security, to the mastery of technique, to the enjoyment of life and to a commercialized existence. They are influenced in one-sided ways by the material demands of society. In this area, however, in many cases, youths have no limits imposed on them and their experiences are not realized on a psychic-spiritual level. This leads to the phenomenon of attaining less than adulthood, of "immature" adulthood and "over-mature" youthfulness. Youth do not have a chance to develop to *psychic-spiritual adulthood and freedom* and to adequately integrate as a mature adult into the total situation of modern life. He/she attains an early grasp of the material and technical but shows a psychic-spiritual disability. Early linking up

---

[*] It is interesting that Felix Platter (born in 1536) already began his studies in medicine when he was only 15 years old.

with [society] no longer makes an individual more adult. This is a partial early-adulthood or an apparent/seeming adulthood.

In this context, Seidmann[48] offers the following pronouncement: Few adults are ready to make the effort needed to build up one's own existence which does not remain limited to material security, and to the satisfaction of primitive needs and to bring about a genuine loving intimacy in a personal relationship. Youths have few examples of a genuine adult attitude toward life. Through the mass media, youths are made familiar with no pedagogically responsible knowledge reserved for almost all aspects of life of an adult. Thus, he/she lives in the paradoxical situation of an advantage, not withstanding his/her backwardness. Prosperity, sexual precocity, and a lack of deeply human psychic-spiritual freedom make the period of youth, and the attainment of full-fledged adulthood problematic.

6.14 Synthesis

Wherein should a solution to the contemporary problem of youth be found? The elimination and prevention of youth problems mainly is in an adequate family life together, and in adequate family educating, where especially trust, understanding and sympathetic, authoritative guidance must be realized. Viewed sociopedagogically, the demands placed on educator and youth are to adequately realize sociopedagogical essences, i.e., educating *to* living together, socialization, social-societal orientation, identity acquisition and *communicating educatively*, because the problem of youth primarily is a problem of *educative communication.* The generation gap essentially is a communication gap and, *more than ever before, educating is a task of communication.* Youth must become oriented with respect to norms and values and with respect to society; they must be educated to a *Christian conviction to life [for South African Afrikaner youth].*

Educative communication means that parent and youth must learn to *know* and *encounter* each other in their depths as persons. The essential demand of the *reality and identity* of the other must be acknowledged (acknowledging communication). Parent and youth must communicate as of equal status and dignity. Conflict must be

resolved through conversation in an intimacy and warmth within which each can be themselves. This involves *knowing* and *acknowledging* the other *and oneself.* The other must not be reduced to him/herself, also in an educative relationship. A youth's identity is defined by the extent to which he/she can distance him/herself from the judgment and influence of another. He/she must determine his/her own behavior with self-confidence and self-respect: he/she must live instead of being lived. He/she must acquire his/her own identity in adequate communication with the other. Educating is for equipping a child and youth for the adventure of freedom, and this must show a balance between authority and indulgence. The adult must not *prescribe* how a youth must live; he/she must help him/her to find this out for *him/herself.* Educative communication means for child and youth *to be persons*; this includes making demands, providing guidance, real interest, and the serious adoption of each other. The independence of a youth must be optimally realized. The educator is accountable for the incorrect use of power during the period of youth. In the language of the Bible, communication means *love.* But then, this must not be love without conflict.[49]

References

[1]Seidmann, P.: *Moderne Jeugde,* Nederlandse Boekhandel, Antwerp,
        1967, pp. 96-135.
[2]Seidmann, P.: op cit., p. 99.
[3]Seidmann, P.: op cit., pp. 107-111.
[4]Botha, T. R.: *Die sosiale lewe van die kind in opvoeding,* op cit.,
        pp. 101-102.
[5]Seidmann, P.: op cit., pp. 111-116.
[6]Botha, T. R.: op cit., p. 103.
[7]Seidmann, P.: op cit., pp. 116-119.
[8]Seidmann, P.: op cit., p. 119
[9]Seidmann, P.: op cit., pp. 120-123.
[10]Muchow, H. H.: as cited by: Seidmann, P.: op cit., pp 37 and 38.
[11]Seidmannn, P.: op cit., p. 94.
[12]Dreyfus, E. A.: *Youth: search for meaning,* Charles E. Merrill,
        Columbus, Ohio, 1972, p. 2.
[13]As cited by: Kirstein, C. L.: op cit., p. 183.
[14]Traas, M.: *Opvoeden tot Samen Leven,* p. 54.
[15]Traas, M.: op cit., p. 69.
[16]Dreyfus, E. A.: op cit., p. 34.
[17]Toffler, A.: *Future Shock,* op cit., pp. 375 and 376.
[18]Couwenberg, S. W.: *De Vereenzaming van de Moderne mens,*
        op cit., pp. 54 and 55.
[19]Couwenberg, S. W.: op cit., p. 55.

[20]Couwenberg, S. W.: op cit., pp. 54-56.
[21]Gouws, S. J. L.: *Studente-opstande in pedagogiese perspektief,*
       R..A.U., Johannesburg, 1973, p. 2.
[22]Gouws, S. J. L.; op cit., pp. 2 and 3.
[23]Gouws, S. J. L.: op cit., pp. 4-8.
[24]*Ibid.*
[25]Duvenhage, S. C. W.: "*'n Ontleding van die feitelike jeugsituasie",*
       in: *Opvoeding, Norme, Jeugverset,* S.A. Academy of Science
       and Art, Pretoria, pp. 67 and 68.
[26]Perquin, N.: *Pedagogische Psychologie,* Romen & Sons, Roermond,
       1968, pp. 125-130.
[27]Botha, T.R.: op cit., p. 110.
[28]Botha, T. R.: op cit., pp. 111-113.
[29]Couwenberg, S. W.: op cit., p. 56.
[30]Gielen, J. J.: *Het sociale in opvoeding en Opvoedkunde,* p. 60.
[31]Seidmann, P.: op cit., p. 128.
[32]See: Botha, T. R.: op cit., pp. 114 and 115.
[33]Nel, B. F.: *'n Modern-pedagogiese benadering van jeugprobleme,*
       pp. 123-131.
[34]Duvenhage, S. C.: op cit., pp. 70-76.
[35]Duvenhage, S. C.: op cit., pp. 73 and 74.
[36]Duvenhage, S. C.: op cit., pp. 74 and 75.
[37]Duvenhage, S. C.: op cit., pp. 75 and 76.
[38]Kirstein, C. L.: op cit., pp. 169-170.
[39]Jonkergouw, T. A. J. M.: *Werk-en-de-jeugd,* Samson, Alphen,
       1971, pp. 93-99.
[40]See: Jonkergouw, T.A. J. M.: op cit., pp. 106-109.
[41]Dreyfus, E. A.: *Adolescence,* C. E. Merrill, Columbus, Ohio,
       1976, p. 66.
[42]Botha, T. R.: op cit., pp. 99 and 100.
[43]Monks, F. J. and Heusinkveld, H. G.: "De mythe van de
       generatiekloof", in: *Psychologen over het kind,* No. III,
       H. D. Tjeenk Willink, Groningen, 1973, pp. 195-208.
[44]See: Jonkergouw, T. A. J. M.: op cit., pp. 114-118.
[45]Dreyfus, E. A.: op cit., p. 39.
[46]Pistorius, P.: *Kind in ons midde,* pp. 173-178.
[47]Seidmann, P.: op cit, pp. 65-70, 88-90.
[48]Seidmann, P.: op cit., pp. 89 and 90.
[49]See: Traas, M.: op cit., pp 76-124.