ADOLESCENT IMAGES OF THE FUTURE AND THE 'IDEOLOGY OF SCHOOLING'

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis addresses questions of both the methodology and the substantive content of 'cultural reproduction' studies. At the methodological level, the thesis examines the use of 'images of the future' as a tool for discovering respondents' 'knowledge.' Substantively, the thesis examines the 'ideology of schooling' as it is created/recreated by Grade 10 students in a small town in northwestern Ontario.

Unlike many other 'cultural reproduction' studies, this study uses both boys and girls as subjects, although substantial differences in their ideas were not found.

The data chapter records student reactions to possible schools of the future. Overall, the students are not found to have ideas about future schools that are different from those in the current system, and appear to support that system. The analysis attempts to explain this apparent lack of 'resistance' to schooling. Student views of 'human nature', of the relationship between school and work, and reactions to 'counter-school' influences appear as potential explanations.

Advances in theory, feminist methodology, and the use of science fiction in developing 'images of the future' are discussed as areas of further research and practice.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In its beginning, this thesis was to be about the future. It was to be about the possibilities for the future of education as they appeared to adolescents. It was to be about that because I was unsatisfied that the studies of cultural reproduction and resistance that have been done give us a good method of identifying what people know, and what of that knowledge represents 'reproduction' and what 'resistance.' It was to be about the future too because as a feminist I was interested in the images other feminists have created, especially in science fiction, because it is only in the future that a world of equality for women might exist (Eichler, 1981). I was also interested in knowing how and whether these feminist utopias are reaching adolescents. The thesis was to be about the future, too, because as a sociology student I have become aware that sociology as a discipline has its origins in a desire to create a better future for society (Manuel, 1962), and many have begun to criticize the discipline for taking a greater

interest in social control than social action in recent years (Finkelstein, 1981). Chapter 2 reviews literature which touches on some of these issues.

Now, however, this seems more like another 'cultural reproduction' study, without the benefit of long-term, in-depth ethnographic data. The main reason for this is that the methodology that was developed, after two pretests and months of reading did not elicit very much in the way of adolescent opinions about the future. This may or may not have been a problem caused by the methodology, as the thesis will attempt to show. Chapter 3 describes the methodology which was developed, and how the study was carried out.

This study, then, did not find out very much about the future, or what adolescents think about it. What it did elicit were descriptions of what the kids think about school now. It appears, if the methodology was not completely askew, that adolescents do not have much in the way of an image of the future. The data also suggest that the reason they don't have an image of the future is that their experience in the present constructs their knowledge in such a way that they cannot see the future as any different from the present.

The result is that the thesis ends up being about what I have come to call the 'ideology of schooling'. Without getting

into the vast debates about what 'ideology' really means, I simply consider the 'ideology of schooling' to refer to those ideas about what schooling in our society is like, what it is for, and what it is supposed to do that are current--hegemonic--in our society. To some extent, this 'ideology' is conjecture on my part, since I cannot be sure that the data I collected represent the most popular, dominant ideas about schooling. Particularly because the data were collected in a small town in northwestern Ontario I cannot even begin to suggest that it they represent what all adolescents, or all adolescents living in small towns, or even all adolescents in that small town really think. What does begin to emerge is that the constructions that adolescents have about school, about their own human nature, and the nature of our society form a very strong frame within which it would be difficult to conceive of alternatives. 'The future', for the kids in my sample, seems very much like the present. Chapter 4 presents in detail the data that was collected.

In Chapter 5, I endeavour to analyse some of the trends which appeared in the data. I compare these ideas to those of others who have attempted to examine student culture and ideologies; to understand how school is 'known' by adolescents.

Still, I wanted to write a thesis about the future and

about what kind of utopian ideas might exist in our society. It is not very satisfactory, obviously, to say that the answer to the question of what adolescents think about the future is 'Nothing.' It would also be untrue, because they do have ideas about the future, but these ideas appear constrained by their experience in the present. There are, however, some reasons to think that this will, or at least could, change, and there are some ways that this may be encouraged. Chapter 6 will try to suggest some of these.

At the most basic level, perhaps this thesis is not about 'cultural reproduction' or 'the future', or adolescence, or education, or social science methodology. It may just be about what seventy-nine students in Port Prudence had to say when presented with all-too-brief descriptions of schools which might exist in the year 2222. Fortunately, what they had to say is, I think, very interesting all by itself. Consequently the reader may, if s/he wishes, make something else altogether out of the data. So if all else fails, this is what I have done: got some adolescents to talk about what they think about school.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND LITERATURE

In CAPITAL VOLUME I, Marx shows that any production process must be continuous--it must be reproduced. In the capitalist mode of production, Marx goes on to say, this includes "...the production and reproduction of the capitalist's most indispensable means of production: the worker (1977:718)." This means that the individual worker must be fed, clothed and provided with enough time to sleep so that s/he can return to work each day. It also means that a new generation of workers must be reproduced (1). Further, capitalist reproduction requires the reproduction of the working class: workers must be unable to accumulate enough wealth to become capitalists themselves, and therefore must continue to sell their labour power. "The reproduction of the working class implies at the same time the transmission and accumulation of skills from one generation to another (Marx, 1977:719)."

In what have been called 'advanced capitalist nations' the education system has almost completely taken over the transmission of skills necessary for entry into the capitalist labour market. Education's role in the reproduction of capitalism must therefore be examined and explained. That

schools socialize and sort students into various job categories has long been part of the popular, liberal doctrine about education. A large body of Marxist literature, perhaps best articulated in Bowles and Gintis' SCHOOLING IN CAPITALIST AMERICA (1976) sought to turn that notion on its head and show that this was done for the benefit of capital, not the individual.

Other propositions by Marx need to be explained in the light of twentieth-century developments and articulated with an analysis of education. One is the notion, elaborated (with help from Engels) in THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY (1976), that the ideas and consciousness of a society are dependent on material practices. They speak of "...the form of intercourse connected with and created by this mode of production (Marx and Engels, 1976:61)." The extent of this 'connection' and the manner in which the mode of production 'creates' ideas and consciousness has been the subject of much debate among Marxists, along with countless efforts to provide a concise definition of 'ideology' in a Marxist sense (2).

A formulation by Marx which has spawned a related body of work is the notion, most clearly articulated in the MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY that the proletariat will--in fact must--reach a point where "...war breaks out into open

revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat (Marx and Engels, 1977:118-119)." In most of the western world this revolution has not happened, nor does it appear ready to happen. In searching to understand why, Marxists have again turned to the question of the meaning of 'ideology' and 'consciousness' and attempted to demonstrate their function in society and the mechanisms by which they operate.

These questions have led to considerations of the relationship between 'base' and 'superstructure' (Althusser, 1971) and of 'hegemony' (Gramsci, 1971). From Althusser has been taken the notion of education as an 'ideological state apparatus (1971:121)' and from Gramsci the notion of hegemony as "...something which is truly total...which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent and which, as Gramsci put it, even constitutes the limit of common sense for most people under its sway...(Williams, 1976a:204)." For Gramsci, too, education needed to be understood as an agent of hegemony.

These theoretical problems and postulates constitute a kind of frame within which much exploration in the sociology of education has taken place. I will now consider some parts of that literature which have the most bearing on this thesis.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the 'new sociology of education' was being explored in Britain. Led primarily by Michael F.D. Young, sociologists began "...treating the knowledge ("transmitted" in education) as neither absolute, nor arbitrary, but as 'available sets of meanings', which in any context do not merely 'emerge', but are collectively 'given' (Young, 1971:3)." While the 'new sociology' per se has been extensively criticised (see, e.g. Bernbaum, 1977), it does seem to have spawned an extensive body of work in which:

> We are learning to identify the structures, and the relations of production, not just within the economic sphere but in the symbolic, and to recognize the existence of cultural as opposed to economic capital, of educational and symbolic property. By so doing we are moving closer to an understanding of how 'forms of consciousness' are created and re-created across generations (Dale, 1976:2).

In the United States, Michael Apple undertook an analysis of curricula as one of the "prevalent (and I would add alienating) structural arrangements-- the basic ways institutions, people, and modes of production, distribution, and consumption are organized and controlled--[which] dominate cultural life (1979:2)." Others looked at the reproduction of patriarchal relations (e.g. Kelly and Nihlen, 1982), at parent-state relations (e.g. Shaw, 1981), at forms of communication (e.g.

Bernstein, 1971) and other aspects of the organization of society. All of this enabled Apple to say in 1982: "There can be no longer any doubt that schools do seem to be institutions of economic and cultural reproduction (1982:1)."

As the examination of 'cultural reproduction' continued, it became more and more clear that what needed to be identified were the actual practices by which this reproduction occurred. At the same time, concern was being expressed that the notion of 'reproduction' as it was being used left little room for considerations of human agency in the formation of society, knowledge or experience. Studies had been focussing on what was being transmitted (and how) but not on what was being received. To the extent that what is transmitted is different from what is received, methods which "...can allow a degree of the activity, creativity and human agency within the object of study to come through into the analysis and the reader's experience (Willis, 1977:3)" are required. Ethnographic accounts seemed called for, so that culture could be viewed "...at least in part as the product of collective human praxis (Willis, 1977:4)." Here we will examine three such accounts, those by Willis (1977), Corrigan (1979) and Everhart (1983).

Because these studies provide a number of insights into students' culture that might be reflected in the Port Prudence group, they will be discussed in greater detail than the previously-mentioned works have been. However, it should be remembered that, besides the great difference in method between these extended participant observation studies and my more superficial methodology, some difference also exist in the nature of the groups studies. Willis, Corrigan and Everhart all looked at adolescent, working class males; Willis and Corrigan in England, and Everhart in the United States. The data on which their studies were based were collected in the mid-197Øs. My study was conducted among middle- and working-class boys and girls in small town northwestern Ontario.

Paul Willis' LEARNING TO LABOUR is the first-published of the three. With his purpose to explain (as the subtitle indicates) "How working class kids get working class jobs", Willis discusses class reproduction at the micro level as having "...simultaneously both a local, institutional, logic and a larger class logic (1977:6Ø)." Both are essential to the reproduction of the whole. In school and in the development of the 'counter-school culture', Willis says we see "...mediated class conflict and.. class reproduction" as well as "...a circle of unintended consequences which act finally to reproduce

not only a regional culture but the class culture and also the structure of society itself (1977:60)." One of these 'unintended consequences' is that, by rejecting school, working class kids appear to voluntarily select manual, semi-skilled or skilled work. This selection is one of education's "...main though misrecognised objectives (1977:178)."

A major contribution Willis makes to the discussion of the contradictory nature of cultural reproduction is his discussion of 'penetrations'. "'Penetration' is meant to designate impulses within a cultural form towards the penetration of the conditions of its members and their position within the social whole but in a way which is not centred, essentialist or individualist (1977:119)." Willis thinks that working class kids 'penetrate' the 'teaching paradigm' which sees "...teaching as a fair exchange--most basically of knowledge for respect, of guidance for control (1977:64)." 'The lads' do not consider the 'knowledge' offered in school to be worth contributing their part in the exchange.

A second 'penetration' involves the notion that education can lead to success in the workplace for those who compete most successfully. When working class kids compete and fail, this is seen as evidence that:

> The middle class enjoys its privilege not by virtue of inheritance or birth, but by virtue of an apparently proven greater competence and merit. The refusal to compete, implicit in the counter-school culture, is therefore in this sense a radical act: it refuses to collude in its own educational suppression (1977:128).

Related to this, Willis sees a 'penetration' by the working class of "...the difference between individual and group logics...(1977:128)." Working class individuals are, he feels, aware that mobility is only meaningful on an individual level. In other words, they understand that while it is possible that any given working class boy might move up to the middle class, this will never happen to the working class as a whole. This 'penetration' is made in spite of the fact that in school "...those attitudes needed for individual success are presented as necessary in general (1977:129)." The importance of 'individualism' in advanced capitalist societies is a point to which we will return.

Willis makes a clear distinction between 'the lads' (the boys he is studying, who constitute the 'counter-school culture') and the 'school conformists', called 'ear'oles' by 'the lads'. There is no suggestion that 'the lads' constitute the majority of school students, although they are the focus of Willis' work. For reasons which will become clear in Chapter 4, a discussion of Willis' comments about the 'ear'oles' is

relevant here.

The school conformists do not just believe in school structures, but have a real investment in them,

> [...]and in exchange for some loss in autonomy expect the official guardians to keep the holy rules-- often above and beyond their actual call to duty. What is freely sacrificed by the faithful must be taken from the unfaithful (1977:22).

In consenting to what Willis calls the 'basic teaching paradigm' mentioned earlier, where deference and respect are exchanged for knowledge, they have "...invested something of their own identities in the formal aims of education and support of the school institution (1977:13)." The counter-school culture, then, not only disrupts the smooth operation of a process which they consider important, but is experienced as a direct personal affront--perhaps even a threat--to the 'ear'oles.

Paul Corrigan's 'Smash Street Kids' (1979) led him to many conclusions similar to those reached by Willis. Interestingly, Corrigan did not distinguish between the 'conformists' and the 'counter-school culture'. In fact he found similar attitudes expressed by students at two schools which, on the outside, seemed quite different. Thus, "...the whole message that the research ends up saying is that school is school for these boys, and it is the structure of perceived compulsion that makes it

such an oppressive experience (1979:15)." Related to this, Corrigan makes an important observation on the relation of school 'values' to the boys. "There seemed to be no real acceptance of school values by a lot of the boys AT ANY TIME. In fact, the whole emphasis on 'values' as a guide for action seemed wrong. The boys' actions were not created by such consistent things as 'values'; the crucial factor to explain classroom interaction seemed to be much more to do with the power differential between teachers and pupils (1979:46)." Corrigan's observations on the significance of compulsion and the power of sanctions to control behaviour run throughout his report; it is this, not their desire to learn nor a sense of morality that brings kids to school, he concludes. Another reason given by some kids for coming to school is that it is boring at home, especially during the holidays (1979:48). Here we must consider the ways that kids' inablility to make meaningful experiences for themselves is both cultivated by, and supports school structures.

The one rationale for attending school that Corrigan found did seem acceptable to the boys was: "If you behave yourself, you are more likely to work hard; if you work hard, you are more likely to do well at school; if you do well at school, you will get good qualifications and a good reference; if you get a good

reference, you will get a good job; if you get a good job, then you are likely to get lots of money (1979:50)." Corrigan shows how this causal chain is turned back on itself "...as a carrot-and-stick principle to get better behaviour in school (1979:84)." In other words, teachers reinforce the idea that if a student wants high wages s/he should behave well. This seems quite different from Willis' notion of the 'basic teaching paradigm': it is not 'knowledge' that is exchanged for good behaviour, but, ultimately, money. As my data will show, it is the 'qualifications' part of the causal chain that the students focus on; but 'qualifications', too, are quite different from 'knowledge.'

Another important addition or modification to Willis' 'basic teaching paradigm' Corrigan offers is to show how the values and behaviours implicit in the paradigm become imbedded in the students' consciousnesses through the generalizing of lessons, so that:

> [...]rather than simply teaching the boy the rule of respecting the teacher, it is better to get him to believe that all figures of authority, who wear collars and ties, are worthy of respect--rather than teaching him to be quiet in class, you must teach him that it is rude to speak unless spoken to; rather than teaching him that he must get to school by 9 o'clock, you teach him that he must always regulate his life punctually (1979:66).

This may in fact be an important clue to why schools are so 'successful' in their aims of preparing children to function in, and to accept, the society as it is: school demands are made to appear as the demands of life.

Corrigan does not talk about 'penetrations.' He does, however, speak of 'resistance' and 'subordinate consciousness.' First, Corrigan says that the working class boys resist school because its "...techniques, form and content" are "BASED UPON A DIFFERENT WAY OF SEEING THE WORLD" from that which the boys develop in their experience (1979:67). At the same time, Corrigan concludes that the boys have a 'subordinate consiousness.' This is an important concept, as Corrigan develops it, meaning "...that they do not, and I believe by themselves cannot, formulate any conception of an alternative education system, of alternative uses of the school and spare time and, most obviously, of alternative forms of work when they leave school (1979:147-148)." Exploring whether or not this is true, of course, has been the purpose of my research. I hope to be able to expand on the reasons for this 'subordinate consciousness' in later chapters.

Like the two studies just discussed, Everhart's (1983) research into the culture of student life in schools "...confirms the presence of a separate student culture--one

poised at odds with the adult culture in the school (1983:74)." Everhart points to ways in which students separate 'work' and 'non-work' activities so that 'work' is defined according to compulsion by the teacher. This supports Corrigan's opinion that it is the issue of compulsion that is most important to the students. Also, students in Everhart's research tended to classify teachers based on the extent to which the teacher controlled the students' labour.

Everhart also made the interesting observation that "...classroom demands and the instructional process affected students and their life in school to a lesser degree than we might normally expect (or even hope for) (1983:76)." He discusses how students carried on their own agendas in spite of the presence of adults, and at the same time managed to give the required (albeit minimal) attention to their school work. In an exercise similar to one carried out by Willis, Everhart would ask students the five most important things they remembered about the previous day. "These lists confirmed the fact that even though students spent six-and-a-half hours in school, ostensibly for instructional purposes, instruction did not remain uppermost in their minds on a day-to-day basis (1983:80)." Social interaction, or what students called 'goofing off' was more important. The students Everhart talked

to indicated that their relationships with other students formed their main reason for coming to school. Like Corrigan, Everhart concluded that it was not only a small counter-school culture that resisted school, but that "...even among the more 'mainstream' students, resistance to the regularities of organized school life are common and that oppositional forms to formal organizational procedures arise (1983:57)." The main contribution of the book is to provide a description of these 'oppositional forms'. Everhart notes, however, as did Willis, that "[d]eviations and aberrations are often as contributory toward fulfillment of this general pattern [of the social structure] as they are towards its alteration (Everhart, 1983:23)."

From the standpoint taken in these three ethnographies, the ideas, values and beliefs we have as we enter and participate in the education system constitute in practice part of the process of maintaining the hegemony of the dominant class. A brief discussion of some of the dimensions of this dominant ideology is appropriate here.

Robin Blackburn, in "A Brief Guide to Bourgeois Ideology"

(1969) identifies, among others, the characteristics of 'technological determinism' and 'bourgeois fatalism' as elements of the way we come to think. 'Technological determinism' involves the assumption that social organization is unavoidably determined by the nature of technology (Blackburn, 1969:176). This is an idea to which we will return, since the area of 'futures' research and teaching is especially dominated by 'technological determinism.'

'Bourgeois fatalism', to Blackburn, is closely connected to bureaucracy, particularly the Weberian conception of it. In this conception, "man-made rules [appear] as if they had some impersonal necessity (Blackburn, 1969:179)." The net result of these and other aspects of what Blackburn calls the 'bourgeois ideology' is that it "...endeavours to suppress the idea that any preferable alternative does or could exist", and that "...existing social institutions cannot be transcended (1969:163)." As one of our 'social institutions', then, schooling should be seen to be approached with the same determinism and fatalism which would help to reproduce the system as it is. This will be an important point as we examine how adolescents see some alternative schools.

Of course, as the work of Dorothy Smith (1974) and a long tradition of others--some of whom have been discussed--has

shown, 'ideology' is not something that can so easily be put in a box and labelled; we must learn to see it as a practice which is constantly being created and recreated. Nonetheless, discussions such as Blackburn's do help to establish some parameters in which to operate, and ideas to investigate. At this point, it is my purpose simply to review some of the literature which attempts to describe our ideology, to the extent that such description is possible.

Marx's analysis of 'commodity fetishism' (1977:165) helps to clarify the origins of some of the fatalism with which we have learned to approach social life. As Dorothy Smith has said, this analysis "...shows precisely how the presence of the subject is separated from the thing so that commodity appears as 'agent' (1974:47)." Clearly, if we are not the 'agent', we cannot expect to effect change.

For the most part, discussions of the 'dominant ideology' include variations of the doctrine of liberalism which for Raymond Williams is "...a doctrine of certain necessary kinds of freedom but also, and essentially, a doctrine of possessive individualism (1976b:150)." 'Individualism', in turn, is "...a theory not only of abstract individuals but of the primacy of individual states and interests (Williams, 1976b:136)." This breeds notions of 'free will' and 'free choice', and a belief

that we live in a meritocratic system. This last is particularly salient in a discussion of the ideologies surrounding eudcation, and will be discussed later.

A belief in 'free will' tends to mean that we are seen as being in control of our own lives, and are thus to blame if the future does not meet our expectations (Nichols and Beynon, 1977: 187). At the same time, it seems we have freely chosen the state and other authority structures under which we live,and thus we defer to them. Law, in particular is seen not as good but as inevitable (Quinney, 1978:40). As discussed earlier, Corrigan (1979) saw the rule of law and authority as the reason for the students' compliance with the school.

Willis (1977) talked of the conflict between individual interests as encouraged in the school and class interests. He also noted the way the 'ear'oles' expected the teachers to force 'the lads' to toe the line. Here then, in the legalistic mentality and deference to authority we have discussed, we begin to see why, in spite of the individualism considered dominant in our society, "...the alternative to collective action is not [seen as] individual action--workers do not have the power--but an appeal to those in authority to sort something out (Nichols and Armstrong, 1976:209)."

Thus, there are some specific manifestations of these

dominant ideological trends which can be seen in education. As Edgar Friedenberg (1967:41-42) notes, one of these is

> the assumption that the state has the right to compel adolescents to spend six or seven hours a day, five days a week, thirty-six or so weeks a year, in a specific place, under the charge of a particular group of persons in whose selection they have no voice, performing tasks about which they have no choice, without remuneration and subject to specialized regulations and sanctions that are applicable to no one else in the community nor to them except in this place.

A similar theme was taken up by Jenny Shaw (1981) who discusses how parents, too, do not question the right of the sate to act IN LOCO PARENTIS, although this creates some confusion for them. This confusion arises primarily because of "...the considerable uncertainty...over whose responsibility it was to see that a child actually went to school (1981:259)." As the question was tossed back and forth in what Shaw calls the 'circle of blame' (1981:260), the child is considered without any responsibility for his/her own actions or education.

Related to this are the assumptions about human (primarily child) nature which are considered to be true in the organization of the education system. As P.S. Wilson describes it, from a reading of Britain's "Plowden Report", "...this is what a child's 'nature' is--to be a mere focus for the

interaction of genetic and environmental forces or 'spurs' whose 'meaning' is constructed entirely for him by others (his 'setting') and whose 'regular sequence' of development must remain therefore for ever firmly outside his control. His own consciousness of what is happening to him is irrelevant. As he grows, he merely 'internalizes' the external 'controls'. (1976:162)." (3) In this way, children become 'nonentities' and we treat them "...as no more than a focus of external forces, passive objects incapable of becoming anything for themselves (Wilson, 1976: 162)."

Clearly, this is not what educators think (or profess to think) they are doing when they seek out expert advice about general laws of child development. Nonetheless, if Wilson is right, and if these effects do filter into the students' experience, we should expect to find them passive, with a belief in 'expert'--or even 'adult'--advice and guidance and the conviction that they are developing (or 'being developed') according to some 'natural' laws. This may be the educational version of Blackburn's 'bourgeois fatalism.'

As was mentioned, one of the key aspects of liberal, democratic ideology common in our society is the notion of 'meritocracy', where 'ability' determines an individual's success. While this idea prevails throughout the society, it is

especially salient in education because "The education system is seen as providing a ladder and an avenue for mobility...and becomes the key mechanism of social selection, to the benefit of both society and the individual (Dale, 1976:2)." This radiates out in several directions: individuals are seen to earn (merit) whatever success they attain; conversely, any lack of success is the result of individual failure; a heirarchy of individuals is formed in this way.

Another aspect of the ideology which has begun to take the appearance of 'natural' is the connection between school and work. This relationship is, of course, not 'natural' but socially and historically constructed. In fact, in Durkheim's day (at least in Durkheim's opinion), levels of enrollment in school were an indication of a 'quest for knowledge', not a desire for a job (Durkheim, 1951:162-163). The elements of the social and historical construction of the relationship between education and preparation for work have to some extent been illuminated by the work of revisionist historians such as Joel Spring (1972), David Tyack (1974), Alison Prentice (1977) and others, but much remains to be done in this area. For the purposes of this study we will want to look at how the school-work connection appears to the students.

Not only the past, but 'the future' as well requires examination as a social and historical construction which perpetuates the set of beliefs and practices we have been discussing. The 'sociology of the future' as it has been explored (at least in North America) has been deeply imbedded in what Smith (1974) calls the 'ideological practice of sociology.' There appear to be two main trends in this literature: one which concentrates on prediction or forecasting and one which can best be described as concerning 'images of the future.' The first is subject to the kind of 'technological determinism' mentioned earlier, where "...what can be, will be done (Miles, 1978:76)." As John H. Goldthorpe (1971) says, researchers in this school accept that technical knowledge equals power in our society, that 'normal' development means the perpetuation of the meritocracy. Ian Miles complains that there is in the literature an "...emphasis on only one type of future society, the "postindustrial" idealization of North American society (1978:67)."

Writers in the 'images of the future' school appear to work from an entirely different standpoint. They believe that "...the emerging future will be more in keeping with our goals if we actively strive to realize them than if we merely predict the extent to which they may materialize (Huber, 1974:38)."

Unfortunately, work in this area makes little attempt to grapple with actual questions of the extent to which human agency plays a role in the 'creation' of society. In its most vulgar form, the views of this group can be expressed like this:

> Our desires play a major role in shaping the ideas that we have about the future...daydreams can help us discover what it is that we want and thus they may play an important role in helping us to make good decisions...A daydream can become an anchor that we can throw out into the future and use to pull our thoughts forward (Cornish, 1977:104).

Whether anything other than our thoughts is brought forward in this way is certainly questionable. Such a presentation of the importance of 'images of the future' does, however, indicate the ways in which this school is as committed to the status quo as the 'forecasters'. (4) For the belief in unrestrained technical development is not as fundamental to the dominant forms of thought we have been discussing as the belief that we choose and create the world in which that development takes place. We may be 'pulled forward' with our thoughts, but the direction has really already been determined. What is more, through the investigation of methods for increasing public involvement in the development of 'images of the future', sociologists are providing "...manipulative tools for legitimating the status quo

through pseudoparticipation (Miles, 1978:81)." Perhaps it is just as well that the 'forecasters' school of future studies dominates the field in North America.

The effect of any of this on the group of students who will be asked to "Imagine that the year is 2222" remains to be seen. This discussion is meant to establish both that there is a dominant view of the future as there is of anything else, and that the management of the ways we think about the future is part of the legitimation and perpetuation of the 'dominant ideology.'

While we can discuss the management of our future images, and assume that the suppression of imagination is essential to the legitimation of capitalism (Hearn, 1975:223), when dealing with adolescents one faces the problem of distinguishing between what has been suppressed and what has not yet developed. For its ideas about the development of conceptions of the future, I turned to psychology. For psychologists, 'the future' seems to exist as a topic to be studied in relation to something called 'future time perspective' or 'time orientation.' (5) For Melvin Wallace whose methods for measuring 'future time perspective' were much used by others, what was being measured was "...the

timing and ordering of personalized future events (1956:240)." It is the 'personalizing' of the object of study which limits the use of these studies here. 'The future' in psychology comes to mean 'tomorrow', 'next week', 'when you grow up' or 'in your lifetime', all of which are much shorter than 'the future' as it is used in my study.

The literature on cognitive development is of equally little use. "...Piaget claimed that children understood time and speed simultaneously, at roughly age seven (Siegler, 1983:265)," said one author, but here 'time' apparently refers to 'lapsed time.' Huber (1978:206) says that for psychologists such as Lewin, Allport, Erickson and Piaget, pre-adolescents have no image of the future except fantasy. This is an obviously ideological notion, since the separation of 'fact' from 'fancy' cannot really be achieved, particularly with reference to the future. Nonetheless the difference between the child and adolescent in terms of 'future orientation' have led psychologists to hypothesize that a high degree of orientation toward the future is correlated with maladjustment in children but not adolescents, and that "...normal children are less future oriented than are normal adolescents (Klineberg, 1967:186)." Terms like 'normal' and 'maladjustment' are clearly problematical, at least for the sociologist. (6) Further, what

is being studied as 'development' are the characteristics children demonstrate, influenced by society, school, and so on. These in turn have been influenced by psychology's 'findings' in a complex circle. They do not necessarily represent anything immutable about child development at all (7).

In fairness, recognizing all this is not completely beyond the ability of the psychologists themselves. Klineberg shows a glimmer of recognition of these problems when he says: "One interesting issue is the extent to which modern testing and anxious parents can succeed in forcing a more sober and realistic view of the future on children at an increasingly early age...(1967:192)."

This chapter has outlined the basic theoretical and methodological framework of this thesis, as well as some of the substantive literature that is relevant to it. This thesis takes from the literature reviewed a set of ideas and problems, and tries to explore them in different ways. It is by necessity quite tentative. The debates about theory and method will not by solved here, if in fact they can ever be resolved. The basic questions the thesis attempts to address are: What do people (in this case, adolescents) know? How do they know what they know?

How can the sociologist know what people know? Can projecting into 'the future' make it easier to answer these questions? At a more basic level (since the above questions will not be definitively answered), the thesis asks: What do adolescents 'know' about school and the process of schooling? What aspects of it do they consider unchanging and unchangeable? Does this reflect a 'reproduction of the dominant ideology', or something quite different?

To find some ideas about how these questions might be answered, I went to Port Prudence, a small town in northwestern Ontario, to meet some Grade 1Ø students and ask a lot of questions.

FOOTNOTES

1

As many feminists have pointed out (see, e.g. O'Brien 1981), this is precisely where Marxism fails: the male worker needs to reproduce himself, but there is little discussion of how this will occur and what the part is in the reproduction of capital which is played by the bearers of children, the keepers of homes, etc.

For a sampling of the various elements of this debate, see, e.g. Kellner (1978); Mannheim (1936); Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1978); Lichtheim (1967); Lichtman (1975); Althusser (1971); Williams (1976a).

Of course, Wilson's comments could equally well apply to female students, which may have been his/her intention, although it is not specified.

4

This is a loosely-identified group of writers, including Huber, Cornish, Bell and Mau, 1971; Jungk and Galtung 1969; and others. While they tend to cite one another's work, they do not necessarily identify themselves as a school or with each other in any way at all. The categorization of the 'schools' is my own creation. Others have categorized futurists in other ways--see, e.g. Hannigan, 1980; Keller, 1972; Haas, 1980.

See, e.g. Wallace (1956), Teahan (1958), Davids and Sidman (1962), Klineberg (1967, 1968).

While it is beyond the scope of this study to do an in-depth analysis of this psychological literature, I want to note the ideological dimensions of this work and the need for further study.

I have already mentioned P.S. Wilson's (1976) article which challenges the whole notion of 'child development.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The research design for this study was developed after two pretests. In the first an intensive, four-day video and theatre workshop was held with 'the future' as the main theme. Advertised for ten- to twelve-year-olds, the workshop was poorly attended, with only four children, all girls. More seriously, in terms of eliciting data about 'children's images of the future', these girls had very little conception of the future at all. They could talk about computers, and conceive of robots and creatures from the movie "Star Wars", but little else; they also had very few opinions about a future full of such things.

Several potential explanations for this could be advanced. These children may have a lack of creativity, may have been discouraged from thinking about the future, or simply may not have reached that stage of cognitive development which would allow for the expression of complex thought. Methods used during the workshop may not have been adequate to the task of drawing out the children's ideas. Any or all of these might be peculiar to these children or common amongst youngsters their age. As discussed in Chapter 2, a search of the psychological literature on cognitive development and 'time orientation' was

not fruitful. Nonetheless, unequipped to deal with the argument that ten- to twelve-year-olds are simply not 'developed' enough to conceptualize the future, it was decided to work with older children for the purposes of this study.

Another decision about the research design resulted from the success of one of the exercises carried out at the workshop. The children were presented with six scenarios of the future and asked to choose the two they thought would be the best and the two they liked the least, and to explain their choices. While the results were in no way conclusive, the exercise did invoke the most interesting ideas and discussion of the four-day workshop.

From this, then, developed the second pretest, in which a questionnaire very much like the final one was administered to one hundred first-year sociology students. In the development of this questionnaire, the topic was narrowed from 'the future' in general to 'educational futures', partly to better accord with my own interests, partly because 'the future' is much too broad a concept for a study of this sort, and partly because the nature of the forced-choice tests I was developing required a choice between like items, and did not allow for elaborately-developed scenarios of the future.

The results obtained in this pretest were used principally

to improve the wording and organization of the questionnaire. Some more central changes were made, but these will be discussed when the final design is explained.

The main body of the test consisted of three separate exercises, each with the same format. A short narrative beginning 'Imagine that...' or 'Assume that...' set the stage, and was then followed by nine alternative 'answers'. The instructions were repeated before each exercise, but were essentially the same for each, with only slight word changes to fit the appropriate exercise. Basically, the instructions were: 'Read all nine items thoughtfully. Then, select the three which you feel represent the best answers, and from these three select the very best. Repeat for the three worst answers and the very worst of these.' (For actual wording, see Appendix.)

These instructions were taken almost word for word from those used by Edgar Friedenberg (1967). In his study, the exercises were given one at a time to one student at a time, and the nine potential 'answers' were printed on cards which students sorted into piles. My method here, while an attempt to mass-administer a similar kind of test, owes much to the work of Friedenberg, although the content of the exercises I used is quite different.

The three exercises were designed to discover respondents'

'knowledge' about the future by asking them to react, in written and verbal form, to descriptions of future schools. These schools were designed to bring to mind various elements of the future and of education. Respondents were also asked to consider some problems and solutions that might be encountered with these alternative schools. It was expected that, through this approach, students would clarify and express those elements of both 'the future' and 'school' most important to them.

In the first exercise, respondents were asked to:

IMAGINE THAT THE YEAR IS 2222. KYM IS 14 YEARS OLD. 'SCHOOL' HAS CHANGED QUITE A BIT OVER THE YEARS, AND STUDENTS CAN CHOOSE FROM NINE DIFFERENT KINDS OF SCHOOLS. KYM IS A LOT LIKE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS IN SOME WAYS, BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO IMAGINE HOW THE WORLD MIGHT CHANGE BETWEEN NOW AND THE YEAR 2222.

Instructions followed, and the nine choices of schools. Items appeared in different order on different questionnaires to eliminate any effect the order of presentation might have, a problem which would not have existed so much with Friedenberg's cards. The items for this exercise are reprinted here, with a brief explanation of their origin and the rationale behind putting them in the exercise. In subsequent chapters,

the schools will simply be referred to by name.

ORDINARY SCHOOL:

ORDINARY SCHOOL IS REALLY A LOT LIKE SCHOOLS WERE IN 1984. BELLS RING, AND STUDENTS MOVE FROM ONE SUBJECT TO ANOTHER AT CERTAIN TIMES EACH DAY. ALL THE STUDENTS WHO ARE IN THE SAME CLASS THAT PERIOD LEARN THE SAME THINGS, AT THE SAME TIME. MANY, MANY STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME.

This item should require no explanation.

COMPUTER SCHOOL:

AT COMPUTER SCHOOL, STUDENTS LEARN EVERYTHING FROM A COMPUTER. THEY ALL GO TO SCHOOL TOGETHER, AND THERE'S A COMPUTER TERMINAL ON EVERY DESK. THEY CAN TAKE AS LONG AS THEY NEED ON EACH LESSON, BUT WHEN THEY ARE DONE, THE COMPUTER DECIDES ON THE NEXT LESSON--THE STUDENTS HAVE NO CHOICE. THE COMPUTERS ARE PROGRAMMED TO PROVIDE A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION, AND THEY ARE KEPT UP WITH THE NEWEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

This was considered to represent the most popular version of what a school of the future might be like. Since television first was introduced as a 'teaching aid' in schools, debate has raged about the place of technology in schools, and the possible depersonalizing effects.

WORK SCHOOL:

STUDENTS AT WORK SCHOOL LEARN BY WORKING AS APPRENTICES WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE AT THEIR JOBS. THEY SPEND TIME WITH BIOLOGISTS, SHOEMAKERS, BAKERS, WAITERS, --EVERY KIND OF JOB THAT EXISTS IN THE YEAR 2222. THROUGH WORKING AND TALKING TO THE OTHERS WHO WORK AT THE VARIOUS JOBS, STUDENTS GAIN MANY SKILLS AND MUCH KNOWLEDGE. STUDENTS GET HELP ORGANIZING THEIR WORK/STUDY PLAN, BUT IT IS MAINLY UP TO THEM TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WILL DO AND WHEN.

This is a version of another trend in education today: toward work placements, volunteer experience programs, etc. The earlier version of this item was overwhelmingly selected as the best by the respondents in the pre-test. Their written comments, however, suggested that most were perceiving it as very much like 'ORDINARY SCHOOL', but with a work placement component. Certainly, it was seen as being firmly in the control of someone who was not the student, an interpretation different from that originally intended. The wording was consequently changed to suggest a greater degree of choice on the part of the student at Work School.

HOME SCHOOL:

AT HOME SCHOOL, STUDENTS STAY AT HOME AND LEARN USING THEIR COMPUTERS. A STUDENT JUST ASKS THE COMPUTER FOR THE NEXT LESSON

IN WHATEVER SUBJECT SHE OR HE WANTS TO WORK ON. THE COMPUTER CORRECTS THE WORK WHEN THE STUDENT IS DONE, AND DOES ALL THE THINGS THAT HUMAN TEACHERS NOW DO. THE STUDENT MOVES ON TO A DIFFERENT SUBJECT, OR HAS A BREAK, WHENEVER HE OR SHE WANTS TO.

This item attempts to combine elements in a different way, more than anything to help both the respondents and myself to clarify the reasons for the responses given. Student control over pacing and scheduling are here combined with computers in a way which further exaggerates their potential for isolating students from each other and from human teachers.

FREE SCHOOL:

THE JOB OF THE TEACHERS AT FREE SCHOOL IS TO TEACH THE STUDENTS WHATEVER THEY WANT TO LEARN. THERE ARE LOTS OF 'EDUCATIONAL' TOYS AND OTHER OBJECTS AROUND, AND THE STUDENTS CAN BASICALLY DO WHAT THEY WANT ALL THE TIME. IT IS HOPED THAT MOST STUDENTS WILL WANT TO LEARN, AND THE TEACHERS AT FREE SCHOOL BELIEVE THAT STUDENTS CAN LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER AND ON THEIR OWN-- IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR THE TEACHER TO BE CONTINUALLY 'INSTRUCTING' THE STUDENTS.

This was intended to represent the kinds of 'free school' made popular in the 1960s but little heard of today.

WEB SCHOOL:

WEB SCHOOL REALLY ISN'T A SCHOOL AT ALL, BUT A PERSON CAN STILL LEARN A LOT. WHENEVER A STUDENT HAS AN IDEA ABOUT SOMETHING SHE OR HE WOULD LIKE TO LEARN ABOUT, HE OR SHE GOES TO WEB AND PUNCHES THE INFORMATION INTO A COMPUTER. THE COMPUTER THEN TELLS THE STUDENT WHO ELSE IS INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING THE TOPIC OR HELPING THE STUDENT LEARN THE SKILL OR SUBJECT. ONCE MATCHED, THESE GROUPS OR PAIRS OF PEOPLE THEN MAKE THEIR OWN PLANS FOR GETTING TOGETHER. STUDENTS CAN MAKE AS MANY SUCH ARRANGEMENTS AS THEY WISH.

This school is drawn from Ivan Illich's (1970) idea of 'learning webs'.

EARTH SCHOOL:

HERE STUDENTS LEARN THE BASICS OF MAINTAINING A FOOD SUPPLY FOR THE COMMUNITY. WHILE SCIENCE MIGHT HAVE THE POWER TO CREATE FOOD FROM CHEMICALS, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD OLD-FASHIONED FARMING. OF COURSE, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES ARE APPLIED WHERE APPROPRIATE. STUDENTS ALSO LEARN THE BASIS OF THE ECOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES WHICH GUARANTEE THE SURVIVAL OF THE WORLD, AND ITS CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AS A SANE AND HUMANE PLACE FOR HUMAN HABITATION.

Concern for the future of our environment is a fairly

widespread notion. This description owes much to science fiction, particularly Marge Piercy's WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME (1976).

MIND SCHOOL:

MIND SCHOOL DEMONSTRATES THAT HUMANS HAVE GREAT POWER TO LEARN, AND EVEN TO SEE INTO THE PAST AND THE FUTURE, OR MAKE THINGS MOVE WITH THEIR MINDS. THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL IS TO TEACH STUDENTS TO USE THE FULL CAPACITIES OF THEIR MINDS. THIS RESULTS IN GREATLY IMPROVED CAPACITY FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVITY.

From THE AQUARIAN CONSPIRACY (Ferguson, 1980), to 'right-brain' research to media popularization of psychic and extra-sensory experience, the notion that there are vast areas of undeveloped human potential has been making its way into the consciousness of some segments of society. This particular description arises from the science fiction work of Elizabeth A. Lynn (1980).

SOCIAL SCHOOL:

SINCE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF SCHOOL HAS ALWAYS BEEN SOCIALIZING AND LEARNING HOW TO GET ALONG WITH ONE'S PEERS, SOCIAL SCHOOL TEACHES SUCH THINGS AS HOW TO WIN FRIENDS, HOW TO BE POPULAR, HOW TO BE A GOOD SPORT, HOW TO DRESS FOR SUCCESS, ETC. THERE ARE ALSO LESSONS IN SOLVING PROBLEMS, LIKE ARGUMENTS

WITH FRIENDS, PROBLEMS WITH PARENTS, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. STUDENTS AT SOCIAL SCHOOL ARE KEPT ABREAST OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN POPULAR MUSIC, SPORTS, DANCING AND OTHER TOPICS IMPORTANT TO TEEN-AGERS. NO 'ACADEMIC' SUBJECTS ARE CONSIDERED NECESSARY.

This item did not appear in the pre-test. In its place was 'Single-Sex School' which, as the name implies, would provide separate schooling for boys and girls. The idea that this might be desirable, at least for girls, has been expressed by some feminists (see, e.g. Sarah, Scott and Spender, 198Ø). The arguments for this kind of schooling were not familiar to the pretest group. Their reaction was so consistently and vehemently negative that it both became meaningless and meant (since students only commented on the 'very best' and 'very worst' selections) that many other items with a generally negative reaction were never commented upon.

SOCIAL SCHOOL, put in its place, was inspired by Everhart's review of the literature which shows the importance of the social aspect of schools (1983:1Ø-12). Also, from a slightly different standpoint, it has been argued by many that what students learn are behaviours, values and attitudes consistent with life in a given social and cultural milieu. Clearly, 'social' and 'cultural' so used imply more than being popular

and understanding popular music, but one could argue that the same kinds of attitudes could be learned, that this is in fact close to what school is really like, without the guise of 'academia'.

This was the major part of the study. Exercises 2 and 3 were designed to encourage respondents to consider the situation in greater depth and to amplify their comments.

In Exercise 2, the students were instructed: "Assume that Kym picked the same school as you marked B#1 [very best]. After 6 weeks, however, Kym found she or he no longer liked the school, and stopped going." Nine possible 'Explanations' for why Kym would do this then followed, and students were given the same instructions as in Exercise 1. These items were much briefer than the descriptions of the schools, and were intended to get at some more general values that the students held about school, by seeing what their first ideas were about potential problems in alternative schools.

The introduction to Exercise 3 read: "Assume that your #1B [very best] Explanation is correct. The purpose of this exercise is to find a solution for Kym." This exercise had a similar purpose to that in Exercise 2. The responses presented

to the students were not very complicated, and so will be reprinted here with no commentary; their purpose will become more evident when the data are presented. After each item, a variable name will appear in brackets; the item will be referred to in subsequent chapters by this name.

EXERCISE 2: EXPLANATIONS:

KYM'S TEACHERS ARE PROBABLY NOT TRYING HARD ENOUGH TO MAKE THE WORK INTERESTING, OR PERHAPS THEY ARE JUST NOT VERY GOOD TEACHERS. (TEACHER)

KYM'S PROBLEM IS THAT SHE OR HE DOESN'T REALIZE ALL THE ADVANTAGES HE OR SHE HAS AT THIS SCHOOL. IF SHE OR HE HAD BEEN ALIVE IN 1984, HE OR SHE WOULD KNOW HOW MUCH BETTER IT IS BEING ABLE TO GO TO THIS SCHOOL. (SEEADVANTAGES)

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH SCHOOL IS THAT SCHOOLWORK IS JUST PLAIN HARD WORK. ALL THESE NEW KINDS OF SCHOOLS WILL NEVER CHANGE THIS FACT. (HARDWORK)

KYM CHOSE THIS SCHOOL. IT IS NOT VERY REALISTIC TO EXPECT 14-YEAR-OLDS TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION

UNSUPERVISED. KYM PROBABLY CHOSE THE WRONG KIND OF SCHOOL FOR HIM/HER. (BADCHOICE)

KYM PROBABLY HAS BETTER THINGS TO DO. THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO GET AN EDUCATION. (BETTERTODO)

THERE IS NOT LIKELY VERY MUCH CHANCE TO INTERACT WITH OTHER STUDENTS AT THIS KIND OF SCHOOL, AND KYM IS PROBABLY LONELY. (INTERACT)

THIS IS ONE OF THE SCHOOLS WHERE THERE ISN'T ANYONE TO COMPETE WITH. NO STUDENT CAN KEEP UP THEIR INTEREST WITHOUT COMPETITION. (COMPETE)

PROBABLY KYM'S PARENTS AREN'T HOME TO SUPERVISE, AND AREN'T AWARE OF THE SKIPPING. IF THEY WERE, THEY WOULD STRAIGHTEN KYM OUT. (PARENTS)

THIS KIND OF SCHOOL IS REALLY ONLY FUN AT THE BEGINNING. AFTER THE NOVELTY WEARS OFF, STUDENTS ARE NO LONGER CHALLENGED AND WILL BECOME BORED SPENDING ALL DAY ON THIS. (NOVELTY)

EXERCISE 3: SOLUTIONS:

KYM OBVIOUSLY HAS A SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM AND SHOULD SEE A COUNSELLOR OR PSYCHIATRIST. THEY WILL HELP KYM COPE. (PSYCHO)

KYM WILL JUST HAVE TO LEARN THAT SCHOOL IS NOT FOR SOCIALIZING, NOR FOR HAVING A GOOD TIME, BUT FOR WORK. THIS IS THE BEST AVAILABLE OPTION FOR KYM AND SHE OR HE IS CRAZY TO RUIN A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY. (BESTOPTION)

LEARNING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE'S OWN EDUCATION IS AN IMPORTANT LESSON. IN FACT, THIS MAY BE THE MOST VALUABLE THING ONE COULD EVER LEARN AT SCHOOL. EVERYONE SHOULD TRY TO ENCOURAGE KYM THE BEST THEY CAN, UNTIL KYM LEARNS THIS IMPORTANT LESSON. (RESPONSIBILITY)

KYM'S PARENTS SHOULD GIVE HIM/HER A GOOD TALKING TO AND MAKE SURE HE OR SHE CONTINUES TO ATTEND SCHOOL AND WORK HARD. (PARENTSTALK)

GIVEN TIME, KYM WILL GET TIRED OF DOING NOTHING, AND GO BACK TO SCHOOL. EVERYONE SHOULD JUST LEAVE KYM ALONE FOR NOW. (TIME)

KYM SHOULD SWITCH CLASSES SO THAT MORE OF HIS/HER FRIENDS ARE WORKING TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME, SO IT WON'T BE SO LONELY. (NEWCLASS)

KYM SHOULD TRANSFER TO ANOTHER SCHOOL. (NEWSCHOOL)

A SPECIAL PROGRAM SHOULD BE INSTITUTED FOR KYM TO FIT HIS/HER NEEDS. A GROUP OF EXPERTS, WITH TESTS AND SUCH, SHOULD BE ABLE TO DESIGN THE PERFECT PROGRAM FOR KYM. (SPECIALPROGRAM)

EVERY SCHOOL SHOULD PROVIDE TRAINING FOR ALL TEACHERS IN HOW TO MOTIVATE THEIR STUDENTS. (MOTIVATE)

When the design was finally completed, these questionnaires, in the form of a five-page computer printout were given to seventy-nine Grade Ten students at Port Prudence Regional High School on two different days in May, 1984. Port Prudence (not its real name) is a small northwestern Ontario town with a population of approximately 9,000. Port Prudence services a large surrounding district of farming communities and Indian Reserves, with a further 10,000 inhabitants. The main industry is a large paper mill, but tourism is also important and its proximity to the Canada-U.S. border makes Port Prudence a centre for government offices, such as customs.

People in Port Prudence consider it a 'rich town'. 1981 Census figures show the average family income as $27,954, forty-eight dollars below the provincial average (Government of Canada, 1981). In the past few years, when the rest of Canada has been experiencing an economic downturn Port Prudence reportedly has not. Port Prudence is a conservative town, with little cosmopolitan influence.

Teachers and others consider Port Prudence's youth to be 'spoiled'. The girls' main ambition, they say, is to get married. The boys have always been confident they will get a job in the mill and usually do not look beyond. Years ago the

'town fathers' made an agreement with the mill's owners that the mill would not hire anyone with less than a Grade 12 education, in an attempt to keep the kids in school. Nonetheless, there is a great drop-out rate at the age of sixteen or after Grade 10. Many of the mill's current management have 'come up through the ranks' as it were, and are sent to get their University degree after being hired as managers. This is somewhat different from the general trend in the country which seems to indicate that a University degree is becoming a minimum standard for entry into any white-collar job.

Port Prudence District High School serves the town and surrounding district. Built in 1921, there was a 'new wing' added in the early 1950s. When school enrollments were high in the 1960s, a new school for Grade 9 was built on the far side of town, and continues to operate, although enrollment is down at both schools. The high school has seven to eight hundred students in Grades 10 to 13, many of whom are bussed for as much as one hour each way.

The seventy-nine students who responded to the questionnaire were in four different classes of two male teachers in the school. These included a four-year bookkeeping class and a five-year history class both taught by one teacher, and the four- and five-year geography classes of another

teacher. The administration of the questionnaire was agreed to by the teachers and was done during class time. The students were told rather than asked to participate. For the most part, however, the students appeared to approach the questionnaire willingly and seriously, and spent the better part of an hour completing it. A small group of students, most of whom found themselves in a class taught by both teachers, agreed to be interviewed in groups of three and four; these interviews were taped and form part of the data which will be presented here. In the interviews the students were asked to elaborate on some of the ideas they had expressed in the questionnaire.

Besides the three parts of the questionnaire already discussed, there was a section requesting some background information. As well as the usual questions of age, sex, grade and father's occupation, students were asked five other questions. One, they were asked for their mother's occupation, although the sociological literature on 'socio-economic status' does not seem to have worked out a way of including both spouses' occupations in SES calculations (1). Students were also asked to indicate whether their marks were mostly A, B, C D or F, whether they considered themselves to be Excellent, Good, Average or Poor students and when they planned to finish their education (after Grade 12, Grade 13, College, University

or 'Other'). These questions were meant to help establish which students were the more 'successful' in school terms. Lastly, they were asked to list the school activities in which they were involved. This was expected to help give an indication of the students' commitment to and participation in the 'life' of the school. Much of the literature on adolescents and school (for a review, see Everhart, 1983:10-12) stresses the importance of the social arena in shaping students' experience of schooling; social life at school is clearly enhanced by participation in extra-curricular activities.

Background variables and the respondents' rankings of the various items were coded for use in statistical analysis. However, the data thus provided were used only to indicate trends and the relative position of the various items ranked. The verbal and written explanations for the choices made will constitute the heart of the analysis herein.

Fathers' and mothers' occupations were categorized using Pineo, Porter and McRoberts' (1977) classification scheme, with the addition of two categories: 'homemaker', and 'deceased, workers' compensation, unemployed, disabled, etc.' Some answers gave insufficient detail to allow for classification: for example, answers which said, "works for..." or "something to do

with..." These were assigned to an 'unknown' category. This resulted in nineteen values of these two variables, of which three (self-employed professionals, farmers, farm labourers) were never used. These values were then collapsed during the analysis to make four categories, due to the small sample size. The four categories used were: Professional/Managerial (including semi-professionals), Technical/Supervisory, Skilled and Semi-Skilled and Unskilled/Homemaker/Unemployed, etc. (2) (Those which had been classified as 'unknown' were omitted from this.)

The categories which were used for the purposes of coding the other background variables were all dictated by the nature of the question, and are self-evident in the questionnaire. The only other exception to this is the variable 'grade.' All the respondents were in Grade 10, but this variable was used to record students as in either the five-year or four-year program. This is somewhat problematic. Some students take courses at different levels. Changes to the secondary school requirements have in other centres rendered the terms 'four-year' and 'five-year' obsolete. In Port Prudence, however, they were terms which were still used, at least by the two teachers involved, and differences in the teachers' expectations of the two groups were apparent. As will be

discussed in the next chapter, this separation of four- and five-year students came to be the most significant one in identifying patterns in the data.

Despite the statistical analysis that was carried out, and despite the fact that most of the data were collected on written 'questionnaires' the methodology is considered to be qualitative, not quantitative. While there is not the depth or duration of contact that would be desirable, the data as it will be presented in Chapter 4 attempts to introduce the reader to some real people and the ideas they come up with in attempts to answer the quesitons put to them. The attempt is to examine the construction of these students' 'knowledge', not statistically-significant relationships.

FOOTNOTES

Social science's inability to deal with its own sexism was not considered an excuse for perpetuating it.

2

It was with great hesitation that 'homemaker' was classified with 'unskilled'. Other examples of the devaluation of women's skill are already included in the Pineo et.al. schema, just as they are in the government classification of occupations. None of the classification systems I could find were considered very satisfactory. No attempt is made in the SES literature to deal with two-income families, or families with four or more parents and step-parents, possibly all employed. The only questions students raised while completing the questionnaire concerned situations such as these. Further, in a town like Port Prudence, where "only paper-makers have cottages (a mill manager, private conversation, 1984)", where management does not have a university education, and where Grade 12 was made an essential requirement for any job because of the agreement with the 'town fathers', many of these classifications appear questionable.

Chapter 4: Presentation of the Data

The data will be presented in four sections corresponding to the four sections of the questionnaire: Background Variables, Schools, Explanations, Solutions. Throughout, data will be presented from both the whole group of respondents and various subgroups which were analyzed.

I. BACKGROUND VARIABLES

The group of seventy-nine grade ten students was made up of thirty-four girls and forty-five boys. Eighty-nine percent were either fifteen or sixteen years old, the usual age for students in this grade. Six students were seventeen, and three were eighteen years old; seven of these nine were boys. Thirty-five students (forty-four percent) were in the four-year program; this includes all of the seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds. Sixty-three percent of students in the four-year program were boys. The forty-four five-year students were divided evenly between boys and girls.

Fathers' occupations were almost evenly divided amongst the four categories, although slightly weighted toward the lower end. Thirty-three fathers were in either 'Professional/ Managerial' or 'Technical/Supervisory' occupations, and

forty-two were in the categories 'Skilled and Semi-Skilled', or 'Unskilled, Unemployed, etc. (Four students did not provide enough information to allow for categorization of fathers' occupation.) Some differences are apparent in the level of fathers' occupation between students in the four- and five-year programs, with fathers of students in the five-year program averaging a full point higher on a four-point scale. The nine seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds show an even lower mean score for fathers' occupation (See Table I).

Sixty-five percent of all students' mothers were in the fourth category, which, in their case, consisted primarily of 'homemakers'. The other thirty-five percent, employed outside the home, tended to be at the same occupational level as their husbands, occasionally below, rarely above.

Students had a reasonably high opinion of themselves as students: fifty-four percent called themselves 'good' students and another forty-one percent considered themselves 'average'. Less than four percent selected either 'excellent' or 'poor' as descriptions of themselves as students. Marks were reported in a similar fashion: forty-six percent said theirs were mostly 'B's, and thirty-eight percent mostly 'C's. Nine students claimed to get mostly 'A's, and three said their marks were 'D's. Asked whether they considered themselves to be

'excellent', 'good', 'average' or 'poor' students, the rankings for the most part parallelled the marks: students who reported their marks as 'B' called themselves 'good' students; those whose marks were 'C' said they were 'average' students, etc.

Table I: Distribution of Fathers' Occupations

Occupation	overall		five-year		four-year		age 17-18	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Professional/ Managerial	15	19.Ø	15	34.1				
Technical/ Supervisory	18	22.8	9	2Ø.5		25.7		
Skilled/Semi-Skilled	21	26.6	11	25.Ø	1Ø	28.6		33.3
Unskilled/ Unemployed, etc.	21	26.6	6	13.6	15	42.9		66.7
Mean **	2.64		2.2Ø		3.18		3.67	

Percentages may not add up to 1ØØ due to missing values.

** Where 1= Professional/Manageral; 4= Unskilled/Unemployed, etc.

Girls' marks tended to be slightly higher than boys', but this was not reflected in a higher opinion of themselves as students. Five-year students had both higher marks and a higher

estimation of themselves as students than students in the four-year program. Students with fathers in the lower occupational groups report lower marks but not lower opinions of themselves; the seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds have both the lowest marks and the lowest opinions of themselves of all the subgroups.

Forty-eight percent of the students indicated plans to go to University, twenty-one percent each to College or to finish at Grade 12; only ten percent think they will stop after Grade 13. The teachers report a high number of drop-outs at the age of sixteen or on completion of Grade 10. Since this survey was done near the end of the school year, a certain amount of this attrition would have already taken place; there is also a group who would have been skipping that day. At any rate, none of the students indicated in the category 'Other' that they intended to quit after Grade 10, although the absence of this as an optional response may have biased some answers and must be considered a flaw in the study.

Eighty-seven percent of students with fathers in the highest occupational group indicated plans to go to University, and the rest to College; students with fathers in the lowest group were more evenly divided amongst the four possible responses to the question of when they planned to finish their

education. Logically, the five-year students were most likely to select 'University' and those in the four-year program to choose 'College' or 'Grade 12.' There is also a slight tendency for those who plan to go to University or College to report themselves as better students than those who plan to finish in Grade 12 or 13.

Students were asked to list the school activities they were involved in: forty-one percent listed none (or did not respond). Of the remaining fifty-nine percent, nearly half listed more than one activity. These included sports teams, band, school plays, school clean-up, etc. Seventy-five percent of those who plan to finish at Grade 12 were not involved in any school activities, whereas more than sixty per cent of students who plan to continue beyond Grade 12 were involved in at least one extracurricular activity; this of course means that five-year students were more involved in activities than students in the four-year program.

There is no intention at this time to suggest a causal relationship between these variables. However, a pattern emerges that links five-year students with higher marks, higher opinions of themselves as students, parents with higher occupational status, greater involvement in school activities, and plans to continue their education to a higher level.

Four-year students, on the other hand, are associated with the reverse of all these things. (1)

II. SCHOOLS

In the section following, data collected about the various schools presented to the students for their consideration and comments will be reported. Major themes which begin to emerge will be noted, but discussion will for the most part be reserved for Chapter 5. The intent here is to present the data; this is necessarily bulky, because of their nature. There are, however, some very interesting student comments among the data and I want to repeat them here so that the reader can get a sense of what these students think. Very little statistical data will be used.

Table II presents a breakdown of the number of students who placed each school in the five possible positions, and the mean score for each school. Overall, based on mean scores, WORK SCHOOL was liked the best, followed by ORDINARY and COMPUTER schools. Least liked was FREE SCHOOL, followed by WEB and SOCIAL. MIND, HOME and EARTH schools were left in the middle, with mean scores close to 3; in the case of MIND and EARTH, these selections were left in the middle by more than half of the respondents, suggesting that they failed to evoke much

reaction. Such was not the case for HOME SCHOOL, however: as the item whose distribution had the highest standard deviation, this appears to have generated the most varied response.

Table II: Student Selections of Schools

(in descending order of priority)

Name of School	Best	Good	Neutral	Poor	Worst	Mean*
Work	18	29	28	4	Ø	3.77
Ordinary	16	32	23	7	1	3.7Ø
Computer	16	29	23	9	2	3.61
Mind	7	14	35	18	5	3.ØØ
Home	11	14	22	26	6	2.98
Earth	1	16	43	13	6	2.91
Social	5	9	21	24	2Ø	2.43
Web	Ø	6	24	37	12	2.3Ø
Free	3	9	19	23	25	2.27
Pure chance**	9	17	27	17	9	

The mean was calculated by assigning a score of 5 to each 'best' selection, 4 for each 'good' selection, 3 for 'neutral', 2 for 'poor' and 1 for 'worst'. Thus means above 3 can be considered favourable, below 3 indicates a negative reaction overall.

**

'Pure chance' is calculated according to Friedenberg's (1967) formula: Sample size divided by nine, times the number of items that can be chosen (i.e. 1 'best', 2 'good', 3 'neutral', etc.)

Because of the variety of combinations of rankings which

result in a given mean (as suggested by the difference between HOME SCHOOL and MIND or EARTH, above), other ways of determining the most and least popular schools were examined. In particular, this involved looking at the frequency with which schools were selected as the very best or rejected as the very worst. Where this changes the ranking of an item, this will be noted in the discussion below. Where relevant, differences in the subgroups (such as males/females; 5-year/4-year; high/low fathers' occupation; etc.) will also be noted. This data, along with the comments about each 'school' will now be reported, one school at a time.

WORK SCHOOL: This school was by any standard the most favoured. It had the highest mean score, the most 'best' selections, and was never selected as the worst school. In all the subgroups analysed, WORK SCHOOL remained in the top three. Students planning to go to university and those with fathers in the upper two occupational groups gave this the lowest ranking of any of the groups, but it was still the third favourite. WORK SCHOOL received its highest mean score from the group whose fathers had occupations in the bottom two groups. Its popularity seems mostly due to the accepted connection between school and work:

> "...If the students want to learn, they should get to know what they need from those who have made it. The students can receive practical advice and the know-how to do what they always wanted."
>
> "People are getting direct training for necessary services (John)."
>
> "I feel if I were like Kym I would wish to go to this school because you would be doing what you wanted and would be learning something that is useful to yourself (Sean)."
>
> "This is good 'cause it gives you on-the-job training for whatever you want to be."

Some students thought of a few problems with this school.

> "Well, what if you decided that you didn't wanna be a baker or a waiter after a year; then you wasted that year (Liz)."
>
> "Somebody just starts out in grade nine, maybe they wouldn't be too sure what they wanted to do, but, like, after someone's, maybe by the time they get to grade eleven or twelve, they're pretty sure what they wanna go into, so they can start narrowing down their field of study more. But at first it wouldn't be any good, because then it would take you too long to decide, and then you'd be just wasting your time (Julie)."

Time is of the essence; it should not be wasted. 'Training' was also an important concept, even though Liz and Julie, at least, are in a five-year 'arts and science' program which has preparation for university as its clearly-stated goal. While the data for WORK SCHOOL showed a not-surprising preference for this school on the part of those most likely to be doing the kinds of jobs educators usually think of when they talk about vocational training, these five-year students also see their education in terms of 'training'. Their friend Jane says that

in school now "you get training in a lot of areas." Of what, one is inclined to wonder, does this 'training' consist? Is the study of 'history' 'training'? We will return to this.

ORDINARY SCHOOL: This school was ranked second overall, and was in the top three rankings of all subgroups. The biggest differences in the ranking of ORDINARY SCHOOL were between the four- and five-year groups. For the five-year students, this was the best school, with a mean of 3.91. Students who ranked this school among the best consequently had all the characteristics of the five-year group: high fathers' occupational levels, plans to go to university, active in school activities and high opinions of themselves as students. Marks did not seem to make much difference, but sex did: girls liked ORDINARY SCHOOL better than boys. This is the first of several pieces of evidence that, in general, the girls tended to prefer the most conservative responses. This is not terribly surprising, given what we have come to know about girls and schooling: that they tend to do better in school, at least in the lower grades, that they are more passive, and that schooling is more like their current experience of the world than it is for boys (see, e.g. Spender and Sarah, 1980; Deem, 1978).

Even the group with the lowest score for ORDINARY SCHOOL

(the seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds) had a mean score of 3.11 which indicates a rather neutral reaction--there was little opposition to ORDINARY SCHOOL. The general attitude was:

> "It works well now. Why shouldn't it work the same in the future, even if things have changed (Anna)?"

For several students, ORDINARY SCHOOL rose in stature by comparison to some of the alternatives, especially COMPUTER SCHOOL:

> "I don't think that computers should take the place of humans...(Linda)."

> "Listening to teachers is alot more fun than listening to a computer. Also, if you had school at home it could get very boring and you would not have many friends (Kelly-Lynn)."

As was mentioned in Chapter 3, versions of COMPUTER SCHOOL are practically the only modifications to current schooling that have been given an airing in recent public debate. Students may then have reacted not to the descriptions of schools in the questionnaire but to the only 'alternative' they considered even remotely possible. As we will see, COMPUTER and WORK schools are as 'far out' as most of the students seem to want to get. While the majority seemed to accept ORDINARY SCHOOL as functional ('it works, we learn the basics'), a few even claimed to like school:

> "Your school days are the best. I enjoy school how it is and I don't think it would be better another way (Joanne)."

COMPUTER SCHOOL: "Computers are the future" asserted one student, explaining her choice of this, the third-ranked school, as the best. The students' belief in a prominent role for computers in the future, together with its entertainment value, provided most of the appeal of this school. A third element of the school's popularity, not entirely convincing to those of us accustomed to questioning 'what counts as knowledge', is the prospect of faster learning of up-to-date information.

> "I like this idea because I personally often find myself wondering about a certain subject but often I cannot find any interesting or up-to-date information. This will also avoid propaganda (at least a bit) because the computers can be fed the facts and not have their personal opinions or their own interpretations of the information."

Not good enough to be great, COMPUTER SCHOOL ranked third fairly consistently among all subgroups studied, with a slightly greater popularity amongst males and those with fathers in the top two occupational groups. Although it had as many 'best' rankings as ORDINARY SCHOOL, it had more opponents. The basic reason for the negative feelings, as noted during the discussion on ORDINARY SCHOOL seemed to be the lack of human teachers:

> "...computers can't explain, say, grade ten math, because it doesn't think like humans."

MIND SCHOOL: As mentioned earlier, this school earned its place in the middle by being ignored: Forty-four percent of respondents considered MIND SCHOOL to be neither one of the

three best nor the three worst. The school was much more popular among five-year students. Other background variables that correspond with five-year students were also associated with a high ranking of this school.

The comments in favour of this school did not give much idea about why it was liked, beyond the notion, suggested in the description the students were given, of enabling the use of the full capacity of the mind. Those who disliked it gave its lack of 'usefulness' as the main reason; one young man felt that:

"It will turn the world into magicians."

HOME SCHOOL: The standard deviation for the distribution of the ratings of HOME SCHOOL was the highest for all schools, indicating strong and varied reactions. While it had a mean score close to neutral (2.98), few people actually had a neutral reaction, and while eleven people thought this school was the best, six thought it the worst. One's ranking of HOME SCHOOL seemed to relate to one's answers to one or both of the following questions: Is having other people around a help or a hindrance? Would students work unsupervised? Students who favoured the school said:

"I can concentrate better at home."

"This is the appropriate school because you are more capable of learning when you are in a surrounding of which you feel comfortable and you don't have to be cool or front

(Linda)."

> "...a student could learn at their own pace. People who are very serious about school could be done quicker than those who aren't. There would also be a much more relaxed atmosphere when working at home (Jane)."

Those who didn't like the school, like Liz, claimed:

> "I don't think it's a good idea at all. I can't see any motivation...I'd be too lazy; I'd just watch T.V. (Liz)."

> "HOME SCHOOL is not a good idea because it does not involve communicating with other people which is an important life skill. School should not only teach facts and exam skills, but how to live successfully in the work world (Julie)."

One girl summed it up:

> "The student wouldn't work very hard. They also wouldn't meet many people."

Four-year students seemed to like this school better than five-year. This may have been partly due to the fact that the four-year students were less involved in school activities outside class and therefore would not miss the social aspects of school as much.

'Time' appears important again here. 'Serious students' are being held back by 'slower kids' and want to get on with it faster. Yet other 'serious students', like Liz, say that students have no motivation of their own when it comes to learning. This is the first of a set of 'views of human nature' we will look at in Chapter Five.

EARTH SCHOOL: Since this is the school that generated the least reaction, there is little information about students' responses. The six students who ranked this the worst, five of whom were males and all of whom were in the four-year program, considered EARTH SCHOOL to be "boring", "uneducational", "a big waste". For one boy "...the EARTH SCHOOL is a good idea but it doesn't interest me in the least." A few recognised survival as an issue, but for the most part, the students just "...wouldn't wanna be a farmer."

SOCIAL SCHOOL: This is the school which varied the most across the subgroups, ranging from fifth place (four-year) to ninth place (five-year). The five-year group's reaction was so negative that the mean score was only 1.98. Sixty-eight percent of the girls and only forty-seven percent of the boys reacted negatively to this school; seventy percent of those who did not like SOCIAL SCHOOL had plans to go to university. These characteristics (five-year, female, plans to go to university) are also those of the people who ranked ORDINARY SCHOOL high, indicating a strong inverse relationship between those two schools: sixty-two percent of those ranking ORDINARY SCHOOL high gave SOCIAL SCHOOL a low score, and fifty percent of those who rejected ORDINARY SCHOOL gave SOCIAL SCHOOL a high score.

Comments from those who rejected SOCIAL SCHOOL focussed on the absence of academics and the lack of preparation for work:

> "This would be the worst because it doesn't give the student an opportunity to learn academic subjects. A person's life and future doesn't depend only upon if you are popular or not. Academic classes are what students need."
>
> "...you don't learn anything that could help you in a career except sports. It would only show you how to cope with peers. It's mainly a free ride. It would be a useless school if you wanted a career (Sean)."
>
> "...here people are not learning any academic courses. That is what school is all about. A school like this may be fun but it wouldn't be educational (Sue)."

As suggested by the data from WORK SCHOOL, the formula 'education = academic subjects = preparation for work' will become a common theme. Here too appears the notion of 'things you need to know.'

"Who decides what you need to know?" I asked Jane.

"The school board."

"Is that the way it should be, do you think?"

"Yeah".

Other comments focussed on a general societal stupidity which would apparently result from this school. It is unclear whether this stupidity is inherent in what would be taught or the absence of those all-important 'academic subjects', or 'things you need to know.'

> "This school is really bad. If the school were like this we would all be stupid. You cannot run a country if you do not know what it is about. Socializing is not of great importance if you do not know anything (Cathy)."
>
> "...because a person can not learn anything of great use that might benefit society. The person's mind would be a waste filled with trivial nonsense (Charles)."
>
> "Teaching kids just to be sociable is very stupid. They may look nice and act nice but they would not know anything. This school might be okay for people who want to become the Queen or something, but that's all (Kelly-Lynn)."
>
> "No brain would be needed. People would be stupid. Nobody would know how to work."

Even those who liked the school often suggested that there should be some 'academic' or 'compulsory' subjects taught.

One is inclined to wonder if the students actually believe they personally are being 'trained' to 'run the country', or that they could 'be the Queen'. 'Academic subjects' seemed to constitute (in the students' minds) 'preparation (or 'training') for work', but it is still unclear how the students saw this to operate.

There were also a number of more moderate comments, suggesting that socializing is something students learn anyway, or will have time to do after they get out of school.

> "This is the worst because being sociable and popular are not the most important things in life. I still learn to be sociable in 'ordinary school' (Liz)."

Those who selected SOCIAL SCHOOL as the best choice, said

they liked socializing, or felt they needed to learn "to get along with people they work with". One had a fairly practical reason, "...if your friends are around at least you will go." Here 'going to school' becomes important in and of itself, irrespective of what one might expect to learn or be 'trained' to do.

WEB SCHOOL: There was very little disagreement about WEB SCHOOL: the students did not like it. No one selected it as the best school, and only six considered it 'good'; sixty-two percent said it was one of the three worst schools. The comments about this school, though few in number, are quite revealing, and express two attitudes which become increasingly important to this study. First, according to these students, teen-agers won't work on their own:

> "I would not choose this school because it would make the students lazy and the quality of learning would go down."

This is a clearer statement of the 'no motivation' problem mentioned earlier.

> "Students may spend alot of time goofing off in a system like this. No adult control (Nancy)."

According to Everhart (1983), students spend most of their time 'goofing off' anyway. These students did not deny that 'goofing off' goes on; rather, their comments are significant because

they suggest that 'goofing off' is a problem rather than an important part of school life, as Everhart seems to believe.

The second problem with WEB school, it was said, was that students cannot and/or should not choose their own topics for study:

> "The students would only have a few ideas, then they wouldn't learn much."
>
> "...the student might type anything in."
>
> "The student will learn about the wrong things."
>
> "...students would not learn certain things concerning life's past and its necessities, they would not learn the responsibility of attending school and that could lead to them being irresponsible all their life (jobs, etc.) (Linda)."

There are, after all, 'things you need to know.' Again it is difficult to see how the students defined these 'things'; one would think that going to school for the purpose of learning to go to school would, if they thought about it, hardly seem sufficient even to the students.

It is interesting that WEB SCHOOL tended to be the most popular choice for worst school among those who favoured HOME SCHOOL, which (at least in the intent of the study's designer) has both the qualities of relatively unsupervised work and independent choice of topics for study. These negative attitudes towards their own abilities to think and work and make decisions constitute another aspect of their views of human

nature which will need further examination later. In addition, we must consider the ways in which the students express in these comments not only a dislike of the idea of a school like WEB but a perception of it as a potential danger, or a threat. This is suggested by comments such as 'the student will learn the wrong things'.

FREE SCHOOL: Although there were three people who liked this school the best, overall, FREE SCHOOL ranked last. It was never ranked higher than eighth place in any subgroup, and its mean was consistently below 2.5.

The reasons for this dislike of FREE SCHOOL were much like those for WEB SCHOOL. The students' comments summed up the trends that have been noted in the previous discussions, with a particular emphasis on the hopelessness of human nature. They feared that

> "...students wouldn't learn anything and they would get lazy. They may as well not go to school at all. It would be a waste of time and money (Gail)."
>
> "Kids can't be left to make decisions themselves." "No discipline from teachers here. No clear-cut educational standards. No real emphasis on work (Nancy)."
>
> "People can't do this because they may choose not to learn any skill, then they will be living off other people (Karen)."
>
> "The students would fool around too much and get no education (Bob)."

> "The average person is not going to learn or work if he can get away with it."
>
> "Human nature will be the downfall. The freedom and choice given is great, but if given this much leeway, education will appear optional and unimportant. Students should be given a few more restrictions, but still given all the wonderful options and choices."

Two of those who liked FREE SCHOOL gave 'doing what you want' as the reason. One liked it because

> "...you are taught what you are most interested in, but it would not be appropriate for everyone because it would require discipline. It would best suit older students (Julie)."
>
> Only one student felt that "...most people want to learn..."

The ideas that students must be forced to go to school and learn and that they are incapable of making good decisions emerge more clearly in the comments on the students' selections in the 'Explanations' and 'Solutions' for Kym's non-participation in the school that s/he had chosen. They are, however, somewhat contradicted in the comments on YOUR SCHOOL.

YOUR SCHOOL: Fifteen to twenty percent of the students wrote something in the spaces marked YOUR SCHOOL, YOUR EXPLANATION, YOUR SOLUTION. The instructions had indicated that they should write something here if they had an idea for a school, explanation, solution, but it seemed to have more to do with

whether or not they felt motivated enough, or interested enough in the study to spend time filling in this part. Some students had spent so much time thinking about the other questions they did not have time to write something here. In general, these sections were filled in more by five-year than four-year students.

Comments in the space allowed for YOUR SCHOOL mostly described a school which would represent a combination of the nine schools the students had read about. A few, particularly from the four-year program group, discussed the freedom to smoke or the availability of more sports. In apparent contradiction to other comments, especially from the five-year students, respondents tended to suggest that students should be free to come and go as they please. I discussed this with Liz and Julie, who, like others, considered this the major change that should be made to ORDINARY SCHOOL. Their comments made this apparent contradiction somewhat easier to understand.

> Julie: ...there's just some times I don't feel like going to school, right, and like they're so strict, you always have to go to school, and you have to be there all the time, all the time. They treat you like you're in prison or something. If you don't feel like going to school once in a while then you should be responsible to keep up, but, you know...there's some times you just don't feel like doing some things. They're too strict.
>
> Susan: So, if you had ORDINARY SCHOOL but you could decide when you wanted to go it would be OK?

Julie: Well, within limits. Some people would never go.

Liz: Everything is geared toward the student who just goes to pass time, like, to make them go. Whereas, like I want to go, so that I can have a better life for myself.

These students thus seem to reconcile the more unpleasant aspects of their school experience by seeing them as made necessary by the less committed students. This separation of 'good' and 'bad' students--those who 'want to go' and those who must be 'made to go'--may constitute an important reinforcement of the school structure for the better students, and will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

III. EXPLANATIONS

In Exercise 2, Kym is said to have stopped going to the school most favoured for him or her by the respondent. Respondents were then asked to rank nine Explanations for this. Here, the data from Exercise 2 will be presented, with the Explanations being referred to by variable name. (Refer to pp. 44-45 for a list of the Explanations and their variable names.)

In general, the Explanations (Exercise 2) had much higher standard deviations than the Schools, mean scores much closer

together, and were ranked very differently by different subgroups, indicating much less agreement about their appropriateness. Two exceptions to this were SEEADVANTAGES, which was nearly always ranked first, and BETTERTODO, which was always last, and usually by a substantial margin. Basically, there tended to be two kinds of responses: to an item as good or bad in itself, or on the basis of its relation to the particular school they had chosen in Exercise 1. For example: one student rated INTERACT as the best explanation because s/he felt that it is important to have friends around; another marked it the worst because s/he felt that at ORDINARY SCHOOL (the one s/he selected as the best) the student would have friends around and so loneliness is a highly unlikely explanation. Examples like this may account for large parts of the disparity in rankings, because--as we will see--there is not a great deal of difference in the attitudes expressed in the responses. For a breakdown of how the various Explanations were ranked, see Table III.

Table III: Student Selections of Explanations

(in descending order of priority)

Explanation	Best	Good	Neutral	Poor	Worst	Mean
SeeAdvantages	14	22	34	7	2	3.49
Compete	11	19	27	20	2	3.22
Novelty	13	22	18	19	7	3.19
Badchoice	11	20	27	14	7	3.18
Hardwork	10	12	32	15	10	2.96
Parents	5	21	26	20	7	2.96
Teacher	11	14	22	23	9	2.94
Interact	3	19	32	17	8	2.90
BetterToDo	1	7	23	21	27	2.17
Pure Chance	[a]	17	27	17	9	

SEEADVANTAGES: Forty-three percent of the students ignored this item, but few disliked it, and so it ended up the highest-ranked Explanation, with a mean of 3.49. In their comments, students sounded much like older folks, who are famous for saying, "When I was your age..." They were sure that life in 1984 will appear harsh compared to 2222:

> "If Kym had gone to school now she would realize how much easier the other school is."
>
> "...because in 1984 the school would have been stricter."
>
> "She is very lucky to pick this school; you shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth."

For others, it didn't matter whether it was 1984 or 2222,

> "Kids never really know how lucky they are or how much they could learn if they tried (Joanne)."
>
> "Because Kym is just 14 years old she probably doesn't realize how lucky or fortunate she is, and she doesn't know the value of an education maybe (Gail)."

BETTERTODO: 'The value of an education' was the main theme in comments on the most disliked explanation--that Kym might have something better to do. Students were unequivocal about this:

> "...school is really the only way to get a proper education (Anna),"
>
> "...there is nothing better than getting an education."

Some gave reasons for school's importance, and these reflected the relationship we have already seen: school equals jobs.

> "There is no other way to get a good education except by going to school. Unless you want to be a waitress or a truckdriver all your life (Kelly-Lynn)."
>
> "You have to go to school and get an education or you will probably not find a job."
>
> "Learning academically is the only way to get ahead in this world and Kym has to think of her future (Gail)."

Charles sounded like he was reading from the Hall-Dennis (1968) report:

> "What better things could she have to do than to better herself and broaden her horizons?".

Liz acknowledged,

> "Sure, there are better things to do but none are more helpful."

"Helpful in what way?" I asked.

"More fun, but not as beneficial...for your future."

While the rejection of BETTERTODO was consistent, it was stronger among students in the five-year program, and those who liked COMPUTER and ORDINARY schools. The only person to rank ORDINARY SCHOOL as the worst school--an eighteen-year-old male--was also the only one to rank BETTERTODO the best explanation.

COMPETE: This was the second-ranked explanation. Students in the five-year program, students with fathers in the top two occupational groups, and those who ranked ORDINARY SCHOOL high (who, again, are all the same people, for the most part) did not rank it nearly so high as other groups. The group who ranked ORDINARY SCHOOL as the very best gave COMPETE an eighth-place ranking. Because COMPETE was only considered the worst by two people (although many more considered it a poor explanation), there was very little indication of why it was rejected. Again, the possibility exists that most simply realized that 'lack of competition' was not a situation that would exist in an ORDINARY SCHOOL, not that it was unimportant. Those who did comment said,

"I feel you should do things for you to learn that you can do it so that you can grow in maturity."

> "...because you don't need competition to remain interested."

For many others, however, competition was necessary:

> "...without competition not many people try."
>
> "Competition is uplifting. It keeps you on your toes at all times."
>
> "You need competion to keep you interested...

For some, competition seemed confused or equated with interaction ("When you work you kinda want to work with someone else") and with goals ("It helps when you're striving for some kind of goal").

NOVELTY: NOVELTY was third in order of preference of the Explanations. The general attitude of those who selected this was summed up by one student:

> "...anything, no matter how good it is, becomes boring after awhile."

This item was most popular among those who had selected COMPUTER SCHOOL as the best school, while those who had chosen ORDINARY as the best school didn't think it was a very good explanation. Liz selected this as the worst Explanation because

> "I picked Ordinary School and it's <u>not</u> fun at the beginning; it can hardly get worse."

For the most part, however, students who chose this as the worst

Explanation seemed to think it was just not a very good excuse. Half of those who rejected NOVELTY as an explanation agreed that "most schools usually get boring", they just didn't think that was reason for quitting.

> "School isn't meant to be all fun. You have to learn to survive in the world."
>
> "No school will be fun through the whole year. She should try and make some effort."

Only two, both of whom had selected ORDINARY SCHOOL as the best and were in the five-year program, disagreed with this general trend:

> "The novelty wouldn't wear off because here at school (now) it doesn't."
>
> "Students are not bored in classes if the teachers keep them busy and teach them new things every day. Students want to learn new things (Cathy)."

BADCHOICE: Overall BADCHOICE had the fourth highest mean score, and also ranked fourth when the number of 'best' or 'worst' scores was considered. COMPETE, BADCHOICE, and NOVELTY all had mean scores within .Ø4 of each other.

Those who didn't like BADCHOICE were very clear that

> "Kym is old enough to make good decisions for herself (Nancy)",

while those who picked this as the best explanation generally felt that:

> "Fourteen is a very young age to make a decision about her life in the future."

Several of these were students who had chosen WORK SCHOOL and seemed to think that, in choosing this school, Kym had made a lifelong decision about a career, and that this is very serious business.

> "It would be hard to expect a fourteen-year old to jump into an apprentice job. She's still growing and needs to have fun and be with other people (Karen)."

Thus, it seems, students began to undermine the concern they had shown in their choice of school with 'getting on with the job' by suggesting that, really, they were still too young. This is, of course, not an unreasonable suggestion for them to make, but if those who chose WORK SCHOOL as the best then rejected it, this gives further prominence to ORDINARY SCHOOL--no one who had selected it thought that BADCHOICE was a likely explanation.

HARDWORK: HARDWORK and PARENTS were tied for fifth place, with TEACHER only .Ø2 behind. As was the case with NOVELTY, the disagreement between those who placed it 'best' and 'worst' was not over whether or not school is hard work, but whether the fact that school is hard work is a good enough reason for a student stopping school. Thus, the 'best' and 'worst' comments became indistinguishable:

> "Nothing is ever going to change the fact that to succeed

> in school or anywhere else you must work hard, because not everything comes easy to everyone (Julie--best)."
>
> "A student will always have to work hard at whatever they do, whether it be at school or at a job." (worst)

Only Joanne felt that school work isn't hard.

> "It is only as hard as you make it out to be. If you want to learn and if you try hard school won't get harder it will get easier."

Either way, the message was that it is up to the student to catch up to the world and accept it the way it is. We called this 'bourgeois fatalism' in Chapter 2. What this is beginning to seem to mean is that students, in spite of their apparent support of the system as it is, do not really like school, they simply accept its inevitability. What is also noticeable is the rarity of talking about <u>learning</u> when schooling is discussed.

Liz, Julie and Jane discussed this with me:

> Liz: It's work. You have to do work to get good marks.
>
> Susan: And what do good marks get you?
>
> Julie: It gets you into university so you can get a job.
>
> Liz: And self-satisfaction.
>
> Julie: So if you're not going to work, you're not going to do very well.
>
> Jane: No matter what school you go to, you're gonna have to learn, whether you want to or not.

Here Jane makes the switch from working to learning, almost

without noticing it. Certainly 'learning' retains the sense of compulsion that 'working' has in this discussion.

PARENTS: Tying with HARDWORK for fifth place, this item was rated quite differently by the various subgroups. For the group who chose ORDINARY as the best school, this was tied with SEEADVANTAGES for the best explanation; for the seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds, this was the worst explanation. The item PARENTS had a higher standing among girls, five-year students, and those with plans to go to university. Unfortunately, only fifteen percent of the students placed this explanation in either the 'best' or 'worst' categories, and so there are very few comments explaining its acceptance or rejection. The comments that were obtained are all different, ranging from:

> "Maybe Kym does not feel wanted because her parents are always gone, and this is just a way to get their attention, so they will care about her",

to:

> "Parents don't have to know what's going on",

to:

> "The school should keep her from skipping",

and everything in between. The explanation PARENTS contributes little to our understanding of what this group thinks.

TEACHER: Although TEACHER was generally not considered a good

explanation (ranked seventh overall), it was the explanation with the highest standard deviation, having more of both 'worst' and 'best' selections than most of the items. The group who selected ORDINARY SCHOOL as the best were particularly likely to rank TEACHER high: it rises to third place among this group. 'Boring' was a very frequent word in the students' comments on this item:

> "Sometimes, because the teachers teach the same subject for so long, it becomes very boring. They are like stale pop that has lost its fizz."

Those opposed to this as an explanation struck three main chords: First, some of them seemed to feel that interest in school is the students' responsibility not the teachers'.

> "It's not the teacher's fault that you can't or don't want to work, it's yours."
>
> "Can't blame one's weaknesses on others (Nancy)."

A second group had the attitude that 'we must learn to take the good with the bad'.

> "There will always be teachers you don't like, but basically that should be expected. There will always be some people and things less interesting than others (Julie)."

A third group felt that the system will (or does) care for us.

> "If the teachers weren't [good teachers who were trying hard] they'd be fired."
>
> "If the teachers were not teaching their students, they

wouldn't be teachers (Bob)."

Here again we see evidence of the 'fatalism' discussed in Chapter Two.

INTERACT: INTERACT had the second lowest mean score, but it was really more often ignored than disliked. Those who rejected it did so on the grounds that there is a chance to interact at their chosen school, not that the lack of interaction might cause problems; in fact Nancy, the one student who made a comment about this being a good explanation said:

"Being lonely can make you seek out people elsewhere."

As was mentioned in the discussion on COMPETE, competition is in some people's minds equated with interaction; this may contribute to the neglect of this item. Whatever the reasons, INTERACT provides us with little insight into the question at hand, and will not be discussed further.

YOUR EXPLANATION: Nancy felt that

"Kym is a bright person and finds no challenge in this type of school [i.e. COMPUTER SCHOOL]."

The other thirteen people who offered an explanation here were much more pessimistic about Kym's abilities.

"She just doesn't want to learn and make anything of herself."

"The person may not have the mental capacity to go to that school."

"Kym probably cannot motivate herself to work."

"She may have got involved with drugs and had to quit school."

These responses seem to make clearer the tendency to blame the student noted earlier.

IV. SOLUTIONS

Table IV: Student Selections of Solutions
(in descending order of priority)

Solution	Best	Good	Neutral	Poor	Worst	Mean
Responsibility	23	33	15	7	1	3.89
SpecialProgram	15	23	2Ø	15	6	3.33
Motivate	9	15	42	12	1	3.24
Bestoption	1Ø	24	24	12	9	3.18
Newclass	8	9	41	16	5	2.99
Parentstalk	5	17	37	12	8	2.99
Newschool	3	13	36	18	9	2.79
Time	2	7	24	3Ø	16	2.25
Psycho	2	8	21	3Ø	18	2.32
Pure Chance	9	17	27	17	9	

RESPONSIBILITY: This was the unchallenged favourite among all subgroups, with extremely high mean scores. One boy ranked this as the worst Solution but did not say why. For those who commented on their approval of this idea, it was mainly an opportunity to reaffirm the ideas expressed in their comments on the Schools. The main one was 'education is important.' Why?

> "Kym will realize that to get a job to support yourself you need an education. If people tell this to Kym and encourage her she may realize the importance of an education (Kelly-Lynn)."

An orientation toward the future, in the sense of successfully getting a job, and a kind of fatalism again emerge; one student summed it up:

> "Kym needs to realize an education is important despite how

boring it may be."

SPECIAL PROGRAM: Although it managed to rank second overall, SPECIALPROGRAM was a contentious item, with the highest standard deviation among the Solutions. This Solution was generally more popular among that group that has already been identified as the most 'successful' in school terms: those who were in the five-year program, with fathers in higher occupational groups, who were more involved in school activities, and who thought of themselves as good students. For the small group of seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds (seemingly the least 'successful' in school terms), SPECIALPROGRAM was the very worst solution. We will need to examine this further, because these 'special programs' are most often said to benefit the least successful students.

Those who were in favour of this course of action felt that the experts would make a program which was "interesting", "the best for his/her personal needs", "well-rounded". They felt that "it would be a program she likes", would "avoid time wasting and also confusion", "be made for her level, her speed, everything", and it "should help build up and secure talents."

MOTIVATE: Unlike SPECIALPROGRAM, MOTIVATE was ignored by more than fifty-three per cent of the students and had the lowest

standard deviation among the Solutions. As was expected, the group that gave this item high marks had, for the most part, also done so with TEACHER, although there were some who seemed to feel that teachers could benefit from this extra training in spite of their not being to blame for students' failures. They felt it would make the teachers less 'boring', more 'interesting.' In all, however, this item contributes little to the study.

BESTOPTION: Placing fourth overall, BESTOPTION generated lots of reaction, all of which focussed on the phrase "...school is not for socializing, nor for having a good time, but for work." Those who were in favour of this Solution said things like:

> "...school is like a job and if you fool around in school you might do it at work and get fired."

On the other side were those who felt that,

> "School is not just for hard work, there should be some fun and interesting things involved."
>
> "School has to be some fun or it's not worth attending (Nancy)."

Four-year students and those with lower marks were slightly more likely to suggest that school was for work, not fun. The formula 'School= Work + Fun' seems to be the domain of those who do well. This is somewhat different from what Willis (1977),

for example, found.

NEWCLASS: This item was ignored by over half (52%) of the students. Its mean score was just slightly below 'neutral', and it tied with PARENTSTALK for fifth place. The group that selected ORDINARY as the best school disapproved of this solution slightly more than others, while four-year students were more likely to favour it. Reasons for the disapproval of NEWCLASS centred around the fact that this was to be a new class with Kym's friends in it, and friends were seen to detract from the real business of school. This idea was already noted in the reactions to HOME SCHOOL.

> "If friends work together they often do not get as much done or learn as much as if they worked alone."
>
> "With a lot of friends in one class they tend to talk about other things rather than school work. Kym should make new friends in her classes who will help her in that subject (Cathy)."

Those who liked this Solution saw friends as people to discuss problems with (not necessarily school problems) and to compete with:

> "...maybe she is lonely and needs someone to talk to."
>
> "It might make her work harder because her friends might be getting better grades and then she would want to improve, have a competition between themselves."

PARENTSTALK: Another mostly-ignored item, PARENTSTALK was favoured by four-year students, those who liked ORDINARY SHOOL, and, surprisingly, the seventeen- and eighteen-year olds. Four- and five-year students ranked this item in the opposite way from the way they ranked PARENTS in the Explanations. In this case, however, a different set of five-year students from those who had called PARENTS the best Explanation are suggesting that they do not like to be forced to do things:

> "You should not pressure a fourteen-year-old child like that," said a fifteen-year-old (child?), "because it could have an adverse affect."
>
> "Because he will be doing it against his will he will not want to work."

The suggestion is however, as we have seen, that students should learn to want what the school offers.

NEWSCHOOL: Port Prudence students seem to think that it is better to put up with things than to make a change. The responses to this item (mostly negative) indicated very clearly that not liking school was considered Kym's problem (and Kym's 'fault'), not the school's. Further, they do not believe that the situation would be better at another school unless Kym changed her attitude.

> "Kym shouldn't transfer because when s/he finds s/he doesn't like this school s/he will transfer again and again

> and move from school to school, until s/he has no where else to go (Joanne)."
>
> "Moving to another school is only running from her/his problem. Wherever s/he goes there is going to be hard work (Charles)."

PSYCHO and TIME:

These were the eighth- and ninth-place choices of all subgoups, except the seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds where they were tied for eighth place, leaving last spot for SPECIALPROGRAM. PSYCHO was least liked among the five-year students, and TIME among the four-year group. Students reject TIME because, they felt, Kym would probably not choose to return to school and that, they were sure, would be wrong.

> "If everyone leaves her alone, she probably never will want to go back to school; she'll ruin her whole life with no education."
>
> "Nobody gets tired of doing nothing; she will just quit and do something else."

Liz thought that

> "...she wouldn't come back. She'd probably get a job or something."

This is somewhat confusing, since school's only purpose, according to these students, seems to be enabling students to get a job!

Although--as we saw with the item NEWSCHOOL--students felt that problems at school are personal, not systemic, students

strongly rejected the suggestion that Kym should see a psychiatrist. Students reacted strongly against the words 'psychological problem', which to them meant that Kym was "crazy" or "flipping her lid." It would seem that school psychologists are more common and accepted in American schools, where both Everhart (1983) and Friedenberg (1967) found a ready acceptance of the psychologist in solving students' problems. While one or two students suggested that it might be the school or teacher's fault that Kym is uninterested, a greater percentage of those who suggested something other than a 'mental problem' as the cause of Kym's behaviour said that:

> "She's probably just lazy",

or

> "she just isn't quite smart enough for that level."

Kym should get with it:

> "If she can't cope with school, how's she going to cope with life?"

asked John.

YOUR SOLUTION: There were few suggestions here that were not included in the Solutions the students had been offered in the questionnaire. A few suggested that Kym talk to a guidance counsellor, and Liz made it clear that this was quite different from talking to a psychiatrist, as the exercise had suggested.

One student suggested that a change be made to the school, and this was similar to the suggestions in YOUR SCHOOL:

> "Allow for more freedom in the school and Kym won't get so easily bored with it."

FOOTNOTES

It should be noted here that the choice of the variable 'program' (5-year/4-year) was one which was dictated by the data. Given the choice, I would have preferred to centre the categorization of the data around other variables, particularly 'gender'. As data is wont to do, however, it did not co-operate. The patterns which emerged tended to group around 'program' rather than 'gender.' Certainly this is not to suggest that 'the revolution' has been won, nor that boys and girls are now for the most part alike, although there may be some hope to be gleaned from this finding.

Where gender does appear relevant, note will be made of this, and I will attempt to discuss what little variation by sex I did find. However, I want to assure the reader of feminist leaning that this is not another study of 'boys' education', as Dale Spender would say (1984), except to the extent that the education to which girls have been subjected and which they appear to support has been male-defined. This, we have come to know, is in fact what education is like for girls and thus I am well aware that, while I am quoting girls at least as often as boys, they have, nonetheless been already silenced in the school system.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

I. Countering the Counter-School Culture

At the most fundamental level, the data show that those most involved in school, doing the best, and most likely to continue their education--in other words, those with the most to lose from questioning the education system--are least likely to want change. This is to be expected, and fits with Willis' (1977) discussion of the way the 'ear'oles' demanded obedience to the rules of the school (1). These students, as apparently the most committed to the dominant ideology, also reflect Blackburn's (1969) suggestion that within this ideology alternatives cannot be conceived. Perhaps, too, they are evidence of Klineberg's (1967) prediction that adolescents may have a more sober and realistic view of the future foisted upon them by psychology and concerned parents.

Any or all of these may be true; still, the data suggest that the resistance to school that Willis (1977), Corrigan (1979) and Everhart (1983) emphasized is not experienced by these seventy-nine students in Port Prudence. There are several possible explanations for this: The students who might have provided this evidence were expressing their resistance by 'skipping' or had already quit school; the students were

concerned to answer what they thought I wanted to hear; or Port Prudence, being a conservative, relatively isolated and wealthy town, does not have a contingent of noticeably-disaffected youth. Indeed Livingstone et. al. in the FOURTH OISE SURVEY showed northern Ontario residents and people living in very small rural communities as tending to express greater satisfaction with school than their more urban, southern counterparts in Ontario (1983:5). Perhaps the sample in this study are all 'ear'oles.' Certainly they appear to have a 'subordinate consciousness' (Corrigan, 1979:147).

It is also possible that too much has been made by others of the 'resistance' of the 'counter-school culture'. Jock Young (1983) has discussed the problems of 'sub-cultural theory'. They are, he suggests, that we tend to over-rationalize our subjects, and to suggest a greater degree of coherence about the world than may actually exist in the subjects' knowledge and experience. In many ways this is preferable to research which has left subjects' knowledge and experience out of the picture altogether, but if we are to really understand the sub-culture and its potential effects on the society, we must guard against the problems Young suggests. In examining the data I have collected, I have begun to think that we cannot study the 'counter-school culture' without exploring the existence of what

might be called a 'counter-counter-school culture.'

Repressive measures are, in our society, everywhere the common response to threats to the authority structure and the status quo (Quinney, 1978:65). These measures, however repressive or gentle they may appear, may serve to generate more commitment and willingness to accept contradictions on the part of the 'counter-counter-school culture'. I would like to suggest some of these measures, and the reactions they generate.

The practice of 'streaming', common throughout school systems in advanced capitalist countries, can be examined in this light. Besides enforcing a process of selection for the labour market as many have suggested (see, e.g. Pincus, 1978), this practice has the effect of narrowing the range in which students compete for success and thus increasing the number who attain it. Instead of refusing to compete as Willis (1977:128) suggests 'the lads' do, students learn to strive for a kind of 'success suitable to one's station.' Being highly successful within a limited range of ambition is more acceptable in our society than failing at goals considered 'too ambitious.' And students <u>are</u> successful. While not detracting from the confidence of those in the highest stream that theirs is a superior ability, streaming may serve to counter counter-school

sentiment by making successful those who would otherwise not be. An idea is thus generated which seems to assert: 'Nothing I'm good at can be that bad.'

'Goofing off', that activity that Everhart (1983) considers so essential to school life appears to generate a different reaction from the Port Prudence group. They have no doubt that 'goofing off' is common, and even tempting, but it is something which they feel they should be kept from doing. Thus even while in the process of 'goofing off', students may still affirm the values of the school, and further may accept that it is their failure to stop 'goofing off' that has resulted in their lack of 'success' at school. Despite the many good reasons we may see that students could--even should--express a resistance to the school through 'goofing off', we must take into consideration the ways in which this activity supports rather than diminishes the sway that school structures hold over the students.

At the very least, the existence of the practice of 'goofing off' in school convinces some students that the repressive measures they may recognize in the school setting are necessitated by the students who engage in it. These students are not seen as opposing--with potentially good reason--the school, but as either unmotivated or unwilling. Willis and Corrigan discussed the element of compulsion in encouraging

attendance at school, and in creating the resistance to oppression. Port Prudence students also expressed a desire to be free of the compulsion they felt. But this desire did not seem to generate resistance to the school because they felt that this compulsion was created not by the teacher or the school board or any other authority figure, but by those 'other' students who refuse to cooperate. This may be one of those 'unintended consequences' Willis (1977:60) discusses.

It is no surprise to the follower of the abundant research into cultural reproduction that the process begins to seem circular: the school culture generates a counter-school culture which in turn generates a counter-counter-school culture. As we know, this must be seen as the result of active processes in which we engage, not as mere accidents. Corrigan's discussion of how the demands of school are portrayed as the demands of life (1979:66) illustrates one of these processes in action. Another 'ideological practice' (Smith, 1974) involves representing as the 'character' of children those traits which have been developed by the school system and analysed by psychologists and other social scientists.

II. "Nobody gets tired of doing nothing": Views of Human Nature

One thing the data made quite clear was that these adolescents have a particularly dim view of their own 'nature'.

"Human nature will be the downfall," predicted one. Alternative schools will fail because students are by nature too lazy, uninterested in learning, unwilling to motivate or direct themselves and unable to determine for themselves 'what they need to know.' Clearly, if all these things are true, the current system is the one most likely to counteact all these negative things. (Of course, one must first accept that there are 'things we need to know' and therefore that all children must be schooled, but that is the topic of the next section.)

Another aspect of 'nature' that is seen to determine the structure schools must take is 'talent'. Students talk freely of others at different 'levels', or 'slower students'; there is no question that these terms represent real factors for the students. The speed or level at which one progresses through school is not seen as having anything to do with desire, interest, resistance, or choosing other things as more important. They are dictated by ability --'natural' ability-- and this ability may be made apparent in the school system, but it is certainly not fostered or created there.

The students, of course, may be right about human nature, but there are all kinds of reasons to think they are not. Not the least of these reasons is the fact that they are not encouraged to remember that there was a time when 'human nature'

was a topic of debate. In the days of Locke and Rousseau, it was possible to think of humans as naturally good or naturally evil. Today it is possible to think that there is no human nature at all; certainly many people would consider that 'the jury is still out' on the 'good/evil nature' debate. Yet we appear to have constructed our institutions around assumptions that we are, if not evil, at least in need of constraint, and these assumptions have been incorporated into the 'knowledge' of those who participate in these institutions. Even Julie, one of only three students who thought FREE SCHOOL might be the best, said: "You like to think that you might be motivated, but you don't know."

Whether positive or negative, one result of the direction that discussions of 'human nature' have taken is to convince us that there is a "'regular sequence' of development (Wilson, 1976:162)" that applies to all and is known by others, not by the adolescents themselves. Thus intervention into their lives by the school and its experts is not an invasion but expected, even welcome.

Nonetheless, maintaining this fairly negative image of adolescents in general and squaring that with their own need for self-esteem must require a constant effort on the part of these students. As more and more of them recognize that their lives

do not have a 'regular sequence' of development, and that their 'meanings' are different from those that others construct, we may have the beginnings of a 'line of fault' (Smith, 1977) through which a new understanding of human nature may begin to develop.

One thing is clear, debating with Locke and Rousseau will not get one a job, and as Corrigan (1979) found, and my data makes quite clear, getting a job is the only thing school is for.

III. The School/Work Connection

According to Willis, students are convinced to exchange 'knowledge for respect' (1977:64). Corrigan found that respect, demonstrated in 'good behaviour', was obtained through the causal chain that led to a good job and more money. My data is certainly more supportive of Corrigan's findings than Willis'. In fact 'knowledge' seems to have disappeared altogether from students' discussions of schooling. The closest the kids come to talking even about 'learning' is to say they 'take' a class, as in 'take history'. School is preparation for work, not for knowledge or learning. While there are analytical, reading, writing and speaking skills learned in academic high school courses which may be useful in white-collar jobs these students

might one day have, students seem unclear about this. The discussion with Julie, Liz and Jane quoted on page 85 show how some students make this connection. High school is there so you can get good marks so that you can go to University and then get a job. It does not seem to matter whether anything is actually learned that they would need on a job.

This may be supported by the students' lack of ideas about work. The only comments they made about work in their responses were: 'being the Queen', 'running the country' and 'being a truckdriver or a waitress'. It is unlikely that fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds do not have a better picture of the world of work than this, and the questionnaire did not ask for their ideas about work. However, maintaining this kind of vagueness about future employment makes it easier for them not to notice the lack of 'fit' between the notion of school as preparation for work and the realities of 'work' itself.

It is therefore not enough to say, as Willis does, that the school conformists accept the school/work continuum (1977:99). We must begin to understand the ways in which the elements of that continuum actually disappear. School is not necessarily preparation for work in any way that could be considered 'training' (at least not for these University-bound students); it is something you must do if you want a job. The reason you

must do it is, quite simply, because you must.

This, I think, better explains the popularity of WORK SCHOOL. For the four-year students it may be that they recognize job training as important. But for the five-year students, the message seems to be that school is little more than a hurdle that needs to be jumped on the way to the world of work. If they can get there sooner, that would be fine. This is another potential 'line of fault' in the 'ideology of schooling.'

For one thing, there is not very much work in our society right now. If preparing for work is the only excuse for staying in school the students can find, they are liable to be disappointed. Sociologists of education have come to see 'preparation for work' as only a small part of what education is really about. Socialization, social selection and the transmission of social and cultural capital are equally important functions of the education process in advanced capitalist countries. As the 'work' end of the school/work continuum becomes less secure, we may hope to see students uncovering and questioning these other functions.

IV. "School is really the only way to get an education": The Failure of Alternatives

These three factors: the effect of counter-school sentiments on those more inclined to support school, the views of human nature they come to believe, and the way the school/work continuum is accepted without question all constitute an attitude that is profoundly fatalistic. Students neither like nor dislike school, but accept it as inevitable. They believe that things are not going to change and so should be accepted as they are. They feel they have control over their own personal future because they can choose to work hard or not; and they are very concerned about this. But for all that concern, they show a remarkable lack of imagination about the future.

This thesis has, hopefully, illuminated some of the ways that this kind of fatalism gets created and reproduced. School reality becomes all reality; it becomes progressively more difficult for the 'counter-school culture' to question school, because it is no longer questioning school but 'reality', 'human nature', or 'truth' itself.

FOOTNOTES

Nichols and Beynon (1977:198) make a similar comment about this in the world of work. They discuss how unemployment insurance threatens people because it means they may have been foolish to work so hard.

CHAPTER 6: SOCIOLOGY AND SCIENCE FICTION--IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Suggestions for Further Research and Practice

Some novelists have been criticised for moving from the subjective to the objective; in the words of Ursula LeGuin they have "...deserted novel writing for sociology (1979:118). Feminists have been at pains to show that this commitment to objectivity is not only bad novel-writing, it is bad sociology too. 'Feminist methodology' attempts to include people's real, subjective experiences and take them seriously in analyses of society. This challenges the dearly-held commitment to objectivity at several levels. One level questions the assumption that only men can be objective and whether what men call objectivity is any more than male subjectivity (Spender, 1981:4-5). Another level questions the very existence of such a thing as 'objective', 'value-free', 'unbiased' social, or even natural, science. Margaret Benston (1982:57) says, for example, that "...this objectivity is another of the ideological features of present science in that it is a myth rather than a description of actual practice." Furthermore, the kind of scientific objectivity encouraged in academia has also implied--if not demanded--a lack of commitment on the part of the researcher. However,

> As scholars, feminists are explicitly committed. We are feminists because we believe not only that the evidence shows the oppression of women, but, further, that such oppression is wrong. We also believe that society should be changed to end all forms of oppression (Benston, 1982:49-50).

Sociology, particularly, should accept the challenge of commitment to social change, but has, instead "...abondoned its utopian impulses for making the best possible society from human nature...Sociology looks to the management of human beings rather than to understanding their social experience (Finkelstein, 1981:181)." Feminism refuses to acknowledge social control as superior to social change, nor objectivity as superior to commitment. Feminists challenge methodology in an era when method is worshipped. (Sheila Ruth (1981:48) calls it 'Methodaltry.')

What has all this to do with adolescent images of the future, or with this thesis? For one thing, the search for a method which this study has undertaken is explicitly inspired by feminist challenges to the social science methods which exist. Secondly, the decision to ask in the study that people try to project into the distant future was made with the explicit intention of searching for a future better than the present, and encouraging students to do the same.

> At this point, realism is perhaps the least adequate means of understanding or portraying the incredible realities of our existence...The fantasist, whether he [sic] uses the ancient archetypes of myth and legend or the younger ones of science and technology, may be talking as seriously as any sociologist--and a good deal more directly--about human life as it is lived, and as it might be lived, and as it ought to be lived. For after all, as great scientists have said and as all children know, it is above all by the imagination that we achieve perception, and compassion, and hope (LeGuin, 1979:58).

The other connection to this study, then, is the need to find ways of discovering and discussing visions of a better world and passing them on to students--of finding in our imaginations what is not apparent in the world. Feminists and others have found in science fiction one method of doing this, and educators might do the same.

Science fiction can challenge students to exercise their imaginations (apparently somewhat atrophied from lack of use) and design their own futures. In doing so, they will be forced to answer a myriad of questions which other scholarship touches on but is not required to answer: How structured would an ideal society be, and how much room does that leave for 'free will'? If students design an anarchistic society, how do they envision the connection between the individual and the collectivity, and how would this society socialize the majority of its citizens? These questions hinge on another, one which, it has been shown

throughout this thesis, is causing a lot of problems: What do they think constitutes 'human nature'? Other questions students must consider are: Do they assume an equal share of the pie for each person? How big is 'the pie'? What place does technology have? Where will the uninhibited development of technology lead? Will it solve all ills? What are the ills? What are the essential elements which constitute a society? What is the motive force that moves history?

This thesis has shown adolescents caught inside the 'knowledge' that the schooled society lays out for them. Neither they nor those who teach them necessarily want school to be this way. The reading and writing of science fiction, together with a social science which passes on new kinds of 'knowledge' through academia could help to construct a 'line of fault' (Smith, 1977) from which a new society could begin to be conceived.

Besides the implications this study has for educational practice, there are implications, too, for further research. The preceding discussion of the developing 'feminist methodology' is one important area where further development is needed. This methodology shows the greatest promise for

beginning to understand how individuals create and recreate their knowledge of the world. The theoretical work which informs this methodology, as discussed in Chapter 2 also needs further refinement. One of the important changes that will be made in research by the incorporation of feminist theory and method will be that social science will no longer focus on boys' education, boys' culture, and boys' knowledge, but those of girls as well. Whether this will require separate research for boys and girls or new approaches and the inclusion of both sexes will remain to be seen.

A substantial amount of historical work also needs to be done, to find the points where certain ideas became incorporated into the 'dominant ideology' and to discover how the 'ideological work' of that incorporation was done. It is only through reconstructing the progress of ideas from the realm of 'ideas' to that of 'common sense' that we will begin to understand how we arrived where we are and how we might bring about change.

At the same time, we must reconstruct 'the future', too. This includes finding new directions for 'futurology' and also encouraging the exploration--by scientists, artists, and every one else--of desirable images of what the future of our society might be like.

FOOTNOTES

As with most ideas, others may have expressed earlier the ideas that are here attributed to 'feminists'. Feminist research is referred to here because it is this work which has informed my research.

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APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

[Note: This questionnaire was presented to the students on fourteen-inch computer paper. The right-hand side provided space for student comments.]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

AGE_____; SEX_____; GRADE_____; DESCRIBE YOUR FATHER'S OCCUPATION. EXAMPLE: DRIVES A TRUCK FOR GREAT LAKES PAPER.

BE AS SPECIFIC AS YOU CAN_____

DESCRIBE YOUR MOTHER'S OCCUPATION_____

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF AN (CHECK ONE)
EXCELLENT_____
GOOD_____
AVERAGE_____ STUDENT?
POOR_____

ARE YOUR MARKS MOSTLY A___B___C___D___E___F___? (CHECK ONE)

DO YOU PLAN TO FINISH YOUR EDUCATION AFTER (CHECK ONE)
GRADE 13_____
GRADE 12_____
COLLEGE_____
UNIVERSITY_____
OTHER (SPECIFY)_____

WHAT SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, TEAMS, CLUBS, ETC. DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN?_____

** WHAT FOLLOWS ARE THREE SEPARATE EXERCISES. PLEASE TAKE YOUR TIME, AND DO THEM ONE AT A TIME.

EXERCISE 1:

IMAGINE THAT THE YEAR IS 2222. KYM IS 14 YEARS OLD. 'SCHOOL' HAS CHANGED QUITE A BIT OVER THE YEARS, AND STUDENTS CAN CHOOSE FROM NINE DIFFERENT KINDS OF SCHOOLS. KYM IS A LOT LIKE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS IN SOME WAYS, BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO IMAGINE HOW THE WORLD MIGHT CHANGE BETWEEN NOW AND THE YEAR 2222.

INSTRUCTIONS

FOLLOWING ARE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE NINE SCHOOLS THAT EXIST IN THE YEAR 2222. PLEASE READ ALL THE DESCRIPTIONS THROUGH THOUGHTFULLY. THEN, HAVING READ THEM THROUGH: 1. SELECT THE THREE WHICH, YOU FEEL, REPRESENT THE BEST SCHOOL FOR KYM TO GO TO. PUT A LETTER 'B' BESIDE THEM IN THE SPACE MARKED 'RANK'. 2. FROM THESE THREE, SELECT THE ONE WHICH, YOU FEEL, WOULD BE THE BEST OF ALL. PUT A #1 BESIDE IT. 3. RETURNING TO THE REMAINING SCHOOLS, SELECT THE THREE WHICH, YOU FEEL, REPRESENT THE WORST SCHOOLS FOR KYM TO GO TO. PUT A LETTER 'W' BESIDE THEM. 4. FROM THESE THREE, SELECT THE ONE WHICH, YOU FEEL, WOULD BE THE WORST OF ALL. PUT A #1 BESIDE IT. 5. WHEN YOU HAVE DONE THOSE 4 THINGS, PLEASE EXPLAIN BRIEFLY YOUR 'BEST' AND 'WORST' SELECTIONS IN THE COLUMN MARKED "COMMENTS/RATIONALE. 6. THEN, IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A SCHOOL, PLEASE WRITE IT AT THE BOTTOM UNDER "YOUR SCHOOL"

DESCRIPTIONS OF
SCHOOLS:

SOCIAL SCHOOL: SINCE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF SCHOOL HAS ALWAYS BEEN SOCIALIZING AND LEARNING HOW TO GET ALONG WITH ONE'S PEERS, SOCIAL SCHOOL TEACHES SUCH THINGS AS HOW TO WIN FRIENDS, HOW TO BE POPULAR, HOW TO BE A GOOD SPORT, HOW TO DRESS FOR SUCCESS, ETC. THERE ARE ALSO LESSONS IN SOLVING PROBLEMS, LIKE ARGUMENTS WITH FRIENDS, PROBLEMS WITH PARENTS, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. STUDENTS AT SOCIAL SCHOOL ARE KEPT ABREAST OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN POPULAR MUSIC, SPORTS, DANCING AND OTHER TOPICS IMPORTANT TO TEEN-AGERS. NO 'ACADEMIC' SUBJECTS ARE CONSIDERED NECESSARY.

WORK SCHOOL: STUDENTS AT WORK SCHOOL LEARN BY WORKING AS

APPRENTICES WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE AT THEIR JOBS. THEY SPEND TIME WITH BIOLOGISTS, SHOEMAKERS, BAKERS, WAITERS, --EVERY KIND OF JOB THAT EXISTS IN THE YEAR 2222. THROUGH WORKING AND TALKING TO THE OTHERS WHO WORK AT THE VARIOUS JOBS, STUDENTS GAIN MANY SKILLS AND MUCH KNOWLEDGE. STUDENTS GET HELP ORGANIZING THEIR WORK/STUDY PLAN, BUT IT IS MAINLY UP TO THEM TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WILL DO AND WHEN.

FREE SCHOOL: THE JOB OF THE TEACHERS AT FREE SCHOOL IS TO TEACH THE STUDENTS WHATEVER THEY WANT TO LEARN. THERE ARE LOTS OF 'EDUCATIONAL' TOYS AND OTHER OBJECTS AROUND, AND THE STUDENTS CAN BASICALLY DO WHAT THEY WANT ALL THE TIME. IT IS HOPED THAT MOST STUDENTS WILL WANT TO LEARN, AND THE TEACHERS AT FREE SCHOOL BELIEVE THAT STUDENTS CAN LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER AND ON THEIR OWN-- IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR THE TEACHER TO BE CONTINUALLY 'INSTRUCTING' THE STUDENTS.

MIND SCHOOL: MIND SCHOOL DEMONSTRATES THAT HUMANS HAVE GREAT POWER TO LEARN, AND EVEN TO SEE INTO THE PAST AND THE FUTURE, OR MAKE THINGS MOVE WITH THEIR MINDS. THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL IS TO TEACH STUDENTS TO USE THE FULL CAPACITIES OF THEIR MINDS. THIS RESULTS IN GREATLY IMPROVED CAPACITY FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVITY.

COMPUTER SCHOOL: AT COMPUTER SCHOOL, STUDENTS LEARN EVERYTHING FROM A COMPUTER. THEY ALL GO TO SCHOOL TOGETHER, AND THERE'S A COMPUTER TERMINAL ON EVERY DESK. THEY CAN TAKE AS LONG AS THEY NEED ON EACH LESSON, BUT WHEN THEY ARE DONE, THE COMPUTER DECIDES ON THE NEXT LESSON--THE STUDENTS HAVE NO CHOICE. THE COMPUTERS ARE PROGRAMMED TO PROVIDE A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION, AND THEY ARE KEPT UP WITH THE NEWEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

EARTH SCHOOL: HERE STUDENTS LEARN THE BASICS OF MAINTAINING A FOOD SUPPLY FOR THE COMMUNITY. WHILE SCIENCE MIGHT HAVE THE POWER TO CREATE FOOD FROM CHEMICALS, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD OLD-FASHIONED FARMING. OF COURSE, SCIEN- TIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES ARE APPLIED WHERE APPROPRIATE. STUDENTS ALSO LEARN THE BASIS OF THE ECOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES WHICH GUARANTEE THE SURVIVAL OF THE WORLD, AND ITS CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AS A SANE AND HUMANE PLACE FOR HUMAN HABITATION.

HOME SCHOOL: AT HOME SCHOOL, STUDENTS STAY AT HOME AND LEARN

USING THEIR COMPUTERS. A STUDENT JUST ASKS THE COMPUTER FOR THE NEXT LESSON IN WHATEVER SUBJECT SHE OR HE WANTS TO WORK ON. THE COMPUTER CORRECTS THE WORK WHEN THE STUDENT IS DONE, AND DOES ALL THE THINGS THAT HUMAN TEACHERS NOW DO. THE STUDENT MOVES ON TO A DIFFERENT SUBJECT, OR HAS A BREAK, WHENEVER HE OR SHE WANTS TO.

ORDINARY SCHOOL: ORDINARY SCHOOL IS REALLY A LOT LIKE SCHOOLS WERE IN 1984. BELLS RING, AND STUDENTS MOVE FROM ONE SUBJECT TO ANOTHER AT CERTAIN TIMES EACH DAY. ALL THE STUDENTS WHO ARE IN THE SAME CLASS THAT PERIOD LEARN THE SAME THINGS, AT THE SAME TIME. MANY, MANY STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME.

WEB SCHOOL: WEB SCHOOL REALLY ISN'T A SCHOOL AT ALL, BUT A PERSON CAN STILL LEARN A LOT. WHENEVER A STUDENT HAS AN IDEA ABOUT SOMETHING SHE OR HE WOULD LIKE TO LEARN ABOUT, HE OR SHE GOES TO WEB AND PUNCHES THE INFORMATION INTO A COMPUTER. THE COMPUTER THEN TELLS THE STUDENT WHO ELSE IS INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING THE TOPIC OR HELPING THE STUDENT LEARN THE SKILL OR SUBJECT. ONCE MATCHED, THESE GROUPS OR PAIRS OF PEOPLE THEN MAKE THEIR OWN PLANS FOR GETTING TOGETHER. STUDENTS CAN MAKE AS MANY SUCH ARRANGEMENTS AS THEY WISH.

YOUR SCHOOL

EXERCISE 2: (PLEASE COMPLETE EXERCISE 1 FIRST)

ASSUME THAT KYM PICKED THE SAME SCHOOL AS YOU MARKED B#1. AFTER 6 WEEKS, HOWEVER, KYM FOUND SHE OR HE NO LONGER LIKED THE SCHOOL, AND STOPPED GOING.

INSTRUCTIONS: BELOW YOU WILL FIND NINE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR WHY KYM STOPPED GOING. PLEASE READ ALL THE ITEMS THROUGH THOUGHTFULLY. THEN, HAVING READ THEM THROUGH: 1. SELECT THE THREE WHICH, YOU FEEL, REPRESENT THE BEST EXPLANATION. PUT A LETTER 'B' BESIDE THEM. 2. FROM THESE THREE, SELECT THE ONE WHICH, YOU FEEL, WOULD BE THE BEST OF ALL. PUT A #1 BESIDE IT. 3. RETURNING TO THE REMAINING ITEMS, SELECT THE THREE WHICH, YOU FEEL, REPRESENT THE WORST EXPLANATION. PUT A LETTER 'W' BESIDE THEM. 4. FROM THESE THREE, SELECT THE ONE WHICH, YOU FEEL, WOULD BE THE WORST OF ALL. PUT A #1 BESIDE IT. 5. WHEN YOU HAVE DONE THOSE 4 THINGS, PLEASE EXPLAIN BRIEFLY YOUR 'BEST' AND 'WORST' SELECTIONS IN THE COLUMN MARKED "COMMENTS/RATIONALE." 6. THEN, IF YOU HAVE AN EXPLANATION YOU FEEL IS MORE LIKELY, WRITE IT IN THE SPACE MARKED 'YOUR EXPLANATION'.

EXPLANATIONS:

KYM'S TEACHERS ARE PROBABLY NOT TRYING HARD ENOUGH TO MAKE THE WORK INTERESTING, OR PERHAPS THEY ARE JUST NOT VERY GOOD TEACHERS.

KYM'S PROBLEM IS THAT SHE OR HE DOESN'T REALIZE ALL THE ADVANTAGES HE OR SHE HAS AT THIS SCHOOL. IF SHE OR HE HAD BEEN ALIVE IN 1984, HE OR SHE WOULD KNOW HOW MUCH BETTER IT IS BEING ABLE TO GO TO THIS SCHOOL.

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH SCHOOL IS THAT SCHOOLWORK IS JUST PLAIN HARD WORK. ALL THESE NEW KINDS OF SCHOOLS WILL NEVER CHANGE THIS FACT.

KYM CHOSE THIS SCHOOL. IT IS NOT VERY REALISTIC TO EXPECT 14-YEAR-OLDS TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION UNSUPERVISED. KYM PROBABLY CHOSE THE WRONG KIND OF SCHOOL FOR HIM/HER.

KYM PROBABLY HAS BETTER THINGS TO DO. THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO GET AN EDUCATion.

THERE IS NOT LIKELY VERY MUCH CHANCE TO INTERACT WITH OTHER

STUDENTS AT THIS KIND OF SCHOOL, AND KYM IS PROBABLY LONELY.

THIS IS ONE OF THE SCHOOLS WHERE THERE ISN'T ANYONE TO COMPETE WITH. NO STUDENT CAN KEEP UP THEIR INTEREST WITHOUT COMPETITION.

PROBABLY KYM'S PARENTS AREN'T HOME TO SUPERVISE, AND AREN'T AWARE OF THE SKIPPING. IF THEY WERE, THEY WOULD STRAIGHTEN KYM OUT.

THIS KIND OF SCHOOL IS REALLY ONLY FUN AT THE BEGINNING. AFTER THE NOVELTY WEARS OFF, STUDENTS ARE NO LONGER CHALLENGED AND WILL BECOME BORED SPENDING ALL DAY ON THIS.

YOUR EXPLANATION:

EXERCISE 3 (Please complete exercises 1 and 2 first):

ASSUME THAT YOUR #1B EXPLANATION IS CORRECT. THE PURPOSE OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO FIND A SOLUTION FOR KYM.

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE READ ALL THE SOLUTIONS THROUGH THOUGHTFULLY. THEN, HAVING READ THEM THROUGH: 1. SELECT THE THREE WHICH, YOU FEEL, REPRESENT THE BEST SOLUTION. 2. FROM THESE THREE, SELECT THE ONE WHICH, YOU FEEL, WOULD BE THE BEST OF ALL. 3. RETURNING TO THE SOLUTIONS REMAINING, SELECT THE THREE WHICH, YOU FEEL, REPRESENT THE WORST SOLUTIONS. 4. FROM THESE THREE, SELECT THE ONE WHICH, YOU FEEL, WOULD BE THE WORST OF ALL. 5.WHEN YOU HAVE DONE THOSE 4 THINGS, PLEASE EXPLAIN BRIEFLY YOUR 'BEST' AND 'WORST' SELECTIONS IN THE COLUMN MARKED 'COMMENTS/RATIONALE'. 6. THEN, IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A BETTER SOLUTION, PLEASE WRITE IT IN THE SPACE MARKED 'YOUR SOLUTION'.

SOLUTIONS:

KYM OBVIOUSLY HAS A SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM AND SHOULD SEE A COUNSELLOR OR PSYCHIATRIST. THEY WILL HELP KYM COPE.

KYM WILL JUST HAVE TO LEARN THAT SCHOOL IS NOT FOR SOCIALIZING, NOR FOR HAVING A GOOD TIME, BUT FOR WORK. THIS IS THE BEST AVAILABLE OPTION FOR KYM AND SHE OR HE IS CRAZY TO RUIN A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY.

LEARNING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE'S OWN EDUCATION IS AN IMPORTANT LESSON. IN FACT, THIS MAY BE THE MOST VALUABLE THING ONE COULD EVER LEARN AT SCHOOL. EVERYONE SHOULD TRY TO ENCOURAGE KYM THE BEST THEY CAN, UNTIL KYM LEARNS THIS IMPORTANT LESSON.

KYM'S PARENTS SHOULD GIVE HIM/HER A GOOD TALKING TO AND MAKE SURE HE OR SHE CONTINUES TO ATTEND SCHOOL AND WORK HARD.

GIVEN TIME, KYM WILL GET TIRED OF DOING NOTHING, AND GO BACK TO SCHOOL. EVERYONE SHOULD JUST LEAVE KYM ALONE FOR NOW.

KYM SHOULD SWITCH CLASSES SO THAT MORE OF HIS/HER FRIENDS ARE WORKING TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME, SO IT WON'T BE SO LONELY.

KYM SHOULD TRANSFER TO ANOTHER SCHOOL.