

# 1

## *The Career Self*

*Interviewer:* So what makes you want to do well in school?

*Sharon:* What makes me...?

*Interviewer:* Want to do well in school.

*Sharon:* Do good in school? Um, as a lower class than other people?

*Interviewer:* Yeah, what I'm sayin is, what I'm tryin' to say is why do some people that's lower class, why do some turn out successful and some turn out to be garbage? Why are some drug dealers and some are just?

*Sharon:* All right, okay, where I live you got those two kinds of people. Now, um, okay, let's say you've got the bad and you've got the good. The bad is going nowhere. They're going straight to hell anyway, so I basically, I do that so that when I get older I won't have to live in the conditions I'm living in now. So if I just get good grades in school now and I study, I make myself. I can get good grades in college and stuff and, um, get a good job.

*Interviewer:* Yeah, right.

*Sharon:* And better myself so that I won't have to live in these conditions for the rest of my life.

Sharon's response was to a question that was asked in every interview. Every one of the students in our sample expressed the belief that there was a definite link between school and career and, furthermore, the prospect of future success was a driving force for success in school. Advanced technological societies such as ours, Jerome Kagan (1984) points out, need only one-third of their young people to fill the high-level skill careers that provide safety, health, economic well-being, and legal protection to others. These careers have both high pay and status and, as a result, there are more young people available than there are these desired careers. Young people must therefore be in the top third of their age cohort to qualify. Regardless of their abilities, it is difficult for minority youths in the inner-city to be recognized as being in the top third of their age cohort. Therefore, inner-city students have additional forces acting on them that have to do with their awareness of their social status and living conditions.

## AN AGE OF DESPERATION?

What are the conditions that Sharon talks about? Is she aware of the demographic data that surfaces only from time to time in the news media? Does she know that the median income for black families in 1989 was below the comparable figure for 1969, after adjusting for inflation (O'Hare, Pollard, Mann, and Kent, 1991)? Does she know that, from 1970 to 1984, New York City lost 492,000 jobs that required less than a high school education and gained 239,000 jobs in which the average employee had some college (Wilson, 1987)? Perhaps not, but all inner-city high students see the results of these trends every day in the streets. Large numbers of homeless people seem to be everywhere, begging on the streets and many of them appear to be under thirty years old. Homelessness is the most visible social problem in our cities. To the same question that was asked of Sharon about what makes her do well in school, Peter had, perhaps, a more graphic but not a dissimilar response.

Peter: Well, sometimes in myself I just . . . it's just a . . . it's not really a desperate desire to achieve, but rather a fear of failing, you know, fear of being a bum or something like that. After seeing what people have to go through to get a meal, what some people have to go through to get money . . . you know, the type of job some people have to get because they're uneducated or something like that. You know that really propels me to keep doing what I'm doing.

But, of course, it *is* a desperate desire to succeed. Developing a career self can become a desperate search for many young people. Peter's response is reminiscent of that of a young man in my study of at-risk students (Farrell, 1990). The young man did not have a history of school success and was in a dropout prevention program while looking for a job.

Cuz you know the thing that scares me the most is fuckin' havin' no future. That really scares me . . . One of my greatest fears is gowin' up and bein' a bum . . . Cuz you know them niggers look sorry as shit . . . Sometimes I be lookin' at them . . . and I be like damn, that might be me in twenty five years, man . . . How the fuck can you be happy with no money? You have to beg niggers for fifty cents. Damn, what the fuck is this? (p. 14)

That both groups of students voice the same fears is remarkable. Growing up in New York, it never occurred to me that I might end up on the streets. Few of the readers of this book have ever felt that kind of fear. Youth should be a time of fearlessness and hope for the future. Erik Erikson speaks of American youth as "proud of its independence and burning with initiative" (1963, p. 323). The age where one develops a career self and tries to integrate it into an identity should not be an age of desperation. We might expect varying degrees of adolescent rebellion but not, in a century characterized by a rising standard of living in this country, fears of becoming a homeless beggar.

Do most young people really worry about this? White mainstream America has generally seen and presented adolescents as likeable and earnest people with few worries about future careers. In the late 1930s, the commercially successful Andy Hardy movie character, admirably played by Mickey Rooney in the series of eight films, was always more worried about the new girl in town than in his future even though he was growing up in the Great Depression. After World War II and through the 1950s, the archtypical adolescent was the radio and comic strip character, Archie Andrews, who could have been called "Son of Andy Hardy." The hippies of the 1960s made us uncomfortable because they often chose to be homeless beggars—though most had the option of going home when things got tough—but stereotypes of them were assimilated into Broadway musicals, again as likeable and earnest people little bothered by finding jobs, much less careers.

Vietnam erected a wall between many adolescents and their future careers. Young people of the 1970s were presented in the entertainment media as likeable and earnest people living in pre-Vietnam times. The TV series "Happy Days" and the widely hailed films *American Graffiti* and *American Hot Wax* succeeded because of the goodheartedness of the characters—even those with leather jackets—still struggling with Andy Hardy's problems with the added burden, perhaps, of the death of the rock 'n roll singer, Buddy Holly. In the 1980s, the actor, Michael J. Fox, became prominent playing a career-oriented young man but was reduced to a comic caricature of a budding Yuppie who always finds out, in the end, that family is more important than his future as an investment banker. Ever responsive to markets, situation comedies on TV now give us pictures of black adolescents, always comic, always likeable and earnest, never having feelings of desperation.

This picture was jarred for many Americans by evening news clips of young people during the Los Angeles looting in the late spring of 1992. But most of the audience, I suggest, preferred to see the looters as criminal opportunists rather than desperate people. For it is easy to understand how adolescents in the poorest of Third World countries, in countries destroyed by civil war, in countries stifled by political and cultural repression, become desperate men and women. They may be driven to become revolutionaries, criminals, or beggars. They may take enormous risks like crossing seas in small boats or sneaking across borders. They may live their days in life-or-death situations. But inner-city students can also be in life-and-death situations. Your chances of being murdered in Detroit are greater than those in Belfast, Northern Ireland. And the slower deaths of street beggars and drug addicts who come out of your neighborhoods and who are the same color as you present a terrifying spectre.

Barbel Inhelder and Jean Piaget (1958), in *The Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence*, the major influence on the study of cognitive development in adolescence, see the acquisition of a future orientation as the underlying change between that period and what has gone before. After presenting their detailed analysis of data collected over years, they write:

On a naive global level, without trying to distinguish between the student, the apprentice, the young worker, or the young peasant in terms of how their social attitudes may vary, the adolescent differs from the child *above all* in that he thinks beyond the present. The adolescent is the individual who commits himself to possibilities—although we certainly do not mean to deny that his commitment begins in real life situations. (p. 339, emphasis added)

In spite of Andy Hardy, the future is paramount for the adolescent and, in the inner city, the prospect of a career is the only long-term balm for the desperation he is likely to feel. It is the major justification for delayed rather than the immediate gratification of peer socializing, cutting classes, experimenting with drugs, or worse. For middle-class high school students, only the vaguest notions of what they will do in life are necessary. They know there are “tangible adult tasks,” to use Erikson’s words, that they can choose later. Working-class high school students in the days when the United States relied on an industrial rather than a service economy also knew there were “tangible adult tasks” to be performed and for which they might be rewarded. The students interviewed here seemed to speak of only the highly visible career tasks. Bill Cosby’s character on his recent popular TV show is an obstetrician-gynecologist married to a lawyer.

In virtually all interviews, students were asked what they wanted as a future occupation. In most cases, the respondents had already decided. The vast majority of those who did, chose professions and, of these, medicine was the first choice. Both young men and young women spoke of being obstetricians, pediatricians, and gynecologists. Other careers mentioned were journalism, electrical engineering, architecture, computers, business. One, we will see below, planned on going into his father’s business but was going to college first and only one did not plan to attend college. He thought he would do something having to do with electricity. It was rare to find a prospective tradesman. The choices of these young people bear out the views of Kagan (1984), cited above, on the high-status, highly paid, highly skilled careers.

#### RACISM, EDUCATION, AND THE JOB CEILING

Race, unfortunately, for many Americans distinguishes these young people from those in the majority culture. John Ogbu (1978, 1989) explained this when he differentiated among minority groups and introduced the concept of the “job ceiling.” Ogbu developed a typology that distinguished the quality of majority-minority relations. As Foley (1991) points out, not all of America’s minorities might fit into Ogbu’s typology but the construct still has value for us in this analysis to show the added stresses that our respondents have to carry in their quests for success.

Ogbu writes of “autonomous,” “immigrant,” and “caste” minorities. The first have a definite cultural identity and choose to maintain that identity (e.g., Hasidic Jews); the second have chosen to come to a new country; caste

minorities, however, are politically, economically, and culturally subordinated to the majority group by virtue of birth. The Maoris of New Zealand, the Burakumin of Japan, untouchables in India, and African-Americans are examples of caste minorities. Caste minorities, according to Ogbu, are hampered in occupational choice by the "job ceiling." This operates by restricting caste members in competing freely on the job market; they are not permitted to obtain their proportionate share of the most desirable jobs.

How does the job ceiling, we ask, affect the motivations of minority adolescents to achieve both in the workforce and in school? Early in his career, Robert LeVine (1967) suggested that achievement motivation might not be strongly linked to socialization practices; children may come to realize on their own what their chances for social mobility are. Moreover, LeVine said, these realizations are likely to be accurate. Twenty-five years later, Sharon, whose remarks began this chapter, seems to understand the problems of social mobility, even though she probably does not have much access to accurate demographic data. Neither she nor most other respondents come from middle-class homes, homes where the possibility of downward mobility is never even considered. She is confronted daily with such a prospect.

Does what Sharon knows intuitively affect her choice of career or her performance in school? Might not even the hint of the existence of a job ceiling act to discourage a student's achievement and aspirations? Ogbu (1978) maintains that neither the schools nor the homes of caste minority children, in this or other countries, adequately prepare them to successfully compete with members of the dominant group. What then makes the young people in our sample achieve and maintain such high aspirations? And why do others fail to achieve?

I would argue that the knowledge or intuition of the job ceiling is precisely what makes them want to join the ranks of professionals. That so many of them aspire to become credentialed professionals points to a belief, correct in my opinion, that the job ceiling is less constraining in these environments. While there are still relatively few black men in professional and managerial occupations their numbers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (O'Hare et al., 1991), have risen from 4 percent in 1949 to 13 percent in 1990. And while it would be naive to say there is no job ceiling in the professions, a physician or a Ph.D. is more apt to be judged on his credentials and ability than his caste status. Advanced degrees cannot be taken away and few holders of such expect to be on unemployment lines.

Now it is obvious that not all these students will achieve what they set out to do. There are many more premed majors among college freshmen than among college seniors. A person who gets a C in comparative anatomy may wisely change her major to English. (This is not to demean English; it was my major.) But they are still in the university environment and still hold to the value that education leads to success. Some may pursue business careers; others may enter teacher training or various levels of government service, both of which are less restrictive and more accommodating to minorities. Specific

aspirations may change but as long as young people have access to environments that promote upward mobility—like higher education—they need not be crushed.

I will argue below and in chapter 6 that, although the future is paramount to adolescents, they do not all see a *direct* link between what they are studying (e.g., algebra and French) and future success even though they believe that it would be good to complete school. Also in chapter 9, I will suggest that a history of a lack of success in school discourages many young people from expending further effort and may lead them to disparage education. This was certainly true of many of the at-risk students in my previous study (Farrell, 1990).

### Ceilings in Other Cultures

Cross cultural studies support these conclusions. Ogbu (1978, 1989), after analyzing a wide variety of field studies both by individual researchers and government agencies in Great Britain, concludes that the job ceiling does, in fact, exist for second and third generation West Indians. He cites a number of researchers (Braithwaite, 1968; Bowker, 1968; Rose, 1969; Gibson, 1988) who suggest that this ceiling has a definite influence on school performance of West Indians and other minorities. Ogbu finds many similarities between West Indians in Britain and African-Americans regarding the job ceiling and education. He saw West Indians as originally being eager to be assimilated into British society but cites Rose (1969) as suggesting that many “withdraw” into such social groups as the Pentecostal church movement or into “cultural nationalism in the context of negritude” (p. 439).

The Maoris in New Zealand, according to Ogbu, are also hampered by a job ceiling. As a group, they are less educated than the dominant white culture and those of them who are educated tend to be civil servants. African-Americans, as stated above, are also drawn to government jobs. The plurality of jobs in the inner city of New York are with city or state agencies. There is a weekly newspaper called *The Chief* which is completely devoted to civil service job listings, information, and test dates. To some it is the most important paper in the city. Like African-Americans, Maoris are underrepresented in the professions. Differences in employment opportunities for Maoris are not, according to Ogbu, overcome by education. In addition, writes Ogbu, teacher expectations, and biased textbooks and curriculums contribute to lower Maori school performance. Critics of American education maintain that these factors exist in our schools as well.

In India, the country most identified with a caste system—even though it has been legally eradicated—the lower castes are attracted to education because, according to Ogbu, it allows them to improve their statuses as individuals, if not as a group; the job ceiling is in effect. Like African-Americans, especially those in cities, they are drawn to the civil service. Education can enable them to enter what Ogbu calls “the technoeconomic system of modern India” (p. 299). He cites Beteille (1967) as suggesting that the lower castes most often

refuse to enter craft training schools out of a preference for professional and white-collar jobs. One wonders if there are similar phenomena operating when so few of our respondents express an interest in skilled trades which, in New York City, are highly paid.

### The Optimists

Not all students expressed desperation, of course. The future professionals seemed very upbeat. But I suggest that those who mentioned careers in medicine are probably not aware of the particular demands of that profession. They have an image of a doctor but might not know specifically what a doctor does. They well might change their minds later but, for now, the image of a future career sustains them. A few students, however, are willing to defer specific choices till later. Like James, they are willing to tolerate uncertainty.

Interviewer: What do you plan to do after high school? This is your last year, right?

James: Yes, I'm planning to go to college. Either Fordham, Pace, Stony Brook [State University], or maybe Baruch [City University]. I plan to study business, business administration. I'm not really sure yet which school I'll be accepted to so, you know, I'll just have to see and see if my grades get me in.

Interviewer: Is there anything specifically you want to do?

James: Well, I'm really not sure. I want to study business, but ever since I was a kid I always liked the cops.

James is confident, optimistic, and realistic. He was the only student who expressed an interest in being a policeman and, in fact, in any civil service job. That is understandable in that policing is such a visible profession; few people know what most other civil servants do. James, incidentally, is in a selective business-oriented program in his high school. And he may not have made his final decision but he holds on to what will enable him to do so—education.

Cathy and Roberta seem to echo Erikson's view of youth as independent and full of initiative.

Interviewer: What are some of the expectations that you have for yourself?

Cathy: I want to. . . I don't know what profession I want to be in like in between, but whatever I choose to do I wish to succeed and to have a family and to be the best that I can be.

Roberta, below, feels that the world is her oyster. But she has a wide range of possibilities, from stardom to the practical. Adults may chuckle at this range but also admire her belief that anything is possible.

Roberta: There are so many things. I want to be a singer or a teacher, a stewardess, psychologist.

Pedro, however, the young man referred to above who expected to go into his father's business, is not typical among this group. That his father has his own business gives the son a great sense of security.

Pedro: Let's see, I want to do well in school. But you know, I apply myself in high school and go to a good college and, um, you know, take control of my father's business. And then, um, you know, I mean if I have to, I'll get married.

A higher proportion of Hispanics own businesses than African-Americans but a lower proportion of them attend college, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (1990). Data from the Bureau of the Census indicate that African-Americans own 3 percent of America's firms but those firms account for 1 percent of business income (O'Hare et al., 1991). In suburban, small-town, and rural high schools there are always some number of students who will follow in their father's footsteps. Statistically, few of our respondents, however, have this option open to them.

#### SCHOOL AND CAREERS

That these students have definite career aspirations is probably both a cause and an effect of their school success. Even if they later change their minds, their views of the future give them a direction that they can verbalize and be reinforced for. Where, one asks, did they get these directions? In chapter 4, we will see that their families encourage and sometimes pressure them to succeed in school but there were no indications that families pushed them toward specific occupations. Guidance counselors, because of their enormous caseloads, give very little career guidance as we will see in chapter 10. Nor is there any evidence that they get their career selves from their friends. These students, we will see in chapter 3, have come to realize that they pick their peers. There is no instance in these dialogues of two friends having the same career expectations. It would seem that they get their ideas and make these choices independently.

#### Special Programs

New York has a number of elite high schools that, in my opinion, provide as good an education as do any of the famous prep schools in this country. The students in this study were *not* drawn from those schools; we need to know how students function in mainstream district schools. However, there are a number of "magnet" schools (institutions devoted to a particular theme: humanities, science, or a specific career area) in the system and many theme programs within mainstream schools. A few of the respondents were in these theme programs. There are also alternative schools in the city system, which will be discussed in the last chapter, and vocational schools, some excellent like the School for Fashion Industries, which prepare students for a range of careers. Others, however, are dumping grounds for less successful students.



Do these schools contribute to a student's career choice? For some, the answer is yes. These schools and programs might be brought to the attention of successful elementary and junior high school students by teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors but this often seems to happen only by chance. If a student is absent the day a particular announcement is made about admission to such programs she may lose out. As was said before, there is relatively little organized career guidance given in schools covering the whole spectrum of careers; students do not see the variety of tangible adult tasks that exist.

There seems to be little attention given to careers in areas other than the professions. While I was teaching a graduate course for teachers in a public high school in the Bronx, I learned that the woodshop had been closed as a cost-saving measure. A bright young man I know in another state who dropped out of high school has always been able to support himself because of his knowledge of hand tools which he gained in a high school shop. He would not be called highly skilled but he can get a job as a framing carpenter or, more likely in the present economy, in maintenance. In New York City, apartment and office maintenance pays a living, if not a princely, wage. Skilled craftsmen, as I have said, do well, especially if they have skills that can be transferred across fields.

At the risk of sounding like the junior high school teacher in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* who, because of the "realities" of the race situation, advised Malcolm to become a carpenter when the young man expressed an interest in being a lawyer, I would suggest that not everyone can be a doctor or a lawyer. We should, of course, like Emerson, encourage all our young people to hitch their wagons to the stars but we should also show them the range of career possibilities and give them the wherewithal to make some basic decisions. They should know that you can't fix a Toyota unless you have a set of metric sprocket wrenches or that too heavy a hammer will bend too thin a nail. A former professor of vocational education bragged to a group I was in that his department no longer did vocational education; they did technology. They are no longer training teachers to show our young people how to hammer nails, replace carburetors, or to plumb a house. But who, I would ask, will teach them to change faucet washers?

## Teachers

Are individual teachers a source of career guidance? Other than parents, the teacher is the most often seen representative of the world of work. Yet teachers, at least high school teachers, we will see in chapter 6, are perceived by students as being almost totally caught up in teaching their subject matter. And it is difficult for many students, successful as well as at-risk, to see how conjugating French verbs and the like will contribute to their future careers. It is difficult for teachers to show them such connections as well. Our respondents apparently see a general connection between school and career success but they do not

seem to be guided to specific careers by teachers. For many students, the connection between school and career is too vague.

The majority of the teachers of our respondents are white and of the dominant culture. Seeing the connection between school and career means buying into the dominant culture. But knowing, on some level, of phenomena like job ceilings might make young people wary of doing this. That only one expressed an interest in being a teacher must say something of how these young people perceive their own teachers. I suggest that seeing more minority teachers—even if these young people do not choose to become part of that profession—will make them less wary of the dominant culture. They need to see people like them who are successful because they have bought into and can recreate American culture. They need to be shown by people they trust that there is a connection between school and career.

### The Subject Matter of School

If these young people are not, for whatever the reason, in special programs and if their teachers are not helping them develop career selves, who or what contributes to self construction? Are they able to make independent judgments based on what they learn in school? Do they experiment in a chemistry or biology lab, read a book like *The Double Helix*, and decide to embark on a career to code the DNA molecule? Do they read the poems of Dylan Thomas or the novels of Richard Wright and decide they want to write a great novel on love and death? Do they become immersed in the computer culture and decide they want to develop computers receptive to the human voice? Do they come to love the smell of wood and decide to fashion objects that have never been made before? I do not know. We will see in chapter 6 that they rarely talk about the content of their courses.

But I was a secondary school teacher for twenty years and I have to believe that my students grappled with ideas, thrilled to the poetry, and incorporated some of material I taught into their lives. I also have to believe that the students in this study see some rewards other than good grades for their academic endeavors. Perhaps the more basic rewards of school endeavor drive them. Getting a correct answer on an algebra word problem may give someone a small sense of triumph. Having similar small triumphs every day might have helped these students trust that they themselves will find a place in the technological world in which they live.

### THE GOOD-, THE BAD-, AND THE NOT-ME

We have seen that school and career are interlinked among these young people. The search for a career drives them but we ask whether they are living their lives in the manner of typical American adolescents, like all “good kids,” or whether racism in the form of a job ceiling makes theirs a desperate quest. In other words, how deeply are they affected by their environment? To answer

this we might look to how Harry Stack Sullivan (1953), whose work is one of the theoretical underpinnings of this book, elaborated on his theory of the self system; he speculated on how that system develops through the life span. Sullivan pointed to a number of what he referred to as personifications within the self that are created in interpersonal relations as we grow up. He suggested that there were three personifications of the self—the *good-me*, the *bad-me*, and the *not-me*.

According to Sullivan, humans are exposed to these three personifications before the end of infancy; they are part of the socialization process. They are phases of what will be part of *me*. In every instance of a child being trained for life in whatever culture, said Sullivan, there will be these three personifications. The *good-me* is the beginning personification which organizes experience. In this respect, it is like the Freudian *ego*. It is what most people mean when they use the word “I.” This personification is introduced by what Sullivan calls “the mothering person” and is further constructed and reconstructed in all the developing human’s interpersonal relations. The *good-me* is introduced by the family and is further developed in relations with peers and with school personnel.

The *bad-me* begins to be developed when anxiety comes to be associated with behavior. Anxiety has its beginning form in *others* who induce the anxiety. Like the *good-me*, the *bad-me* begins very early in life and continues to be formed in those interpersonal relationships that result in anxiety. A teacher or a parent may be seen by a student as sitting in judgment on her when the student’s anxiety is increased after she gets back a paper full of red-penciled corrections coupled with a poor grade. This anxiety contributes to the *bad-me*, the part of me that others do not like. This is the part of me that fails tests, cuts classes, or ignores assignments. It is difficult not to have a *bad-me* develop in school.

Sullivan saw, as a characteristic of late adolescence, that some young people become “extremely agile” at discerning the smallest hint of anxiety and avoiding the situation. Even in the best of schools, when young people are making life decisions based very much on their school performance, there is bound to be anxiety. The *bad-me* will not get into college; why should I then take difficult courses? Less successful students might have developed more of a *bad-me* than successful ones. Sullivan maintained that anxiety must be tolerated and in an “educative experience” the young person must deal with its source. He writes:

The problem of the psychiatrist [read, teacher] is more or less to spread a larger context before the patient [read student]; insofar as that succeeds, the [student] realizes that, anxiety or not, the present way of life is unsatisfactory and is unprofitable in the sense that it is not changing things for the better; whereupon, in spite of anxiety, other things being equal, the self-system can be modified.

The respondents in this study apparently can see the larger context. They make a connection between school and career success which enables them to tolerate the anxiety that school necessarily brings. But there is an additional personification which, for them, may act as an incentive in that it is something to avoid but, for their less academically successful peers, acts as a source of terror. Peter, in the second section of this chapter, spoke of his desire to succeed as emanating from his fear of being a bum. And the virtually identical fear was voiced in the same section by the student in the dropout prevention program. To reiterate, the specter of homeless men and women, not ten years older than they are, ragged and begging on the street and the perceived possibility that they could become like these people may well be terrifying. This specter is a living vision of the *not-me*.

The not-me is encountered mostly, according to Sullivan, in dreams and nightmares. The not-me comes from poorly grasped aspects of life, incidents of intense anxiety, which are later associated with "awe, horror, loathing, or dread." The good-me and the bad-me are part of conscious experience as opposed to the not-me. Under exceptional circumstances, says Sullivan, we have an awareness of the not-me. I suggest that the ubiquitous presence of homeless men or women which even the most secure of us find appalling raises the specter of the not-me in the consciousness of these young people. The vast majority of the homeless in the cities are people of color and, while there have always been panhandlers in the cities, the current numbers are unprecedented in my lifetime. The homeless person is not me and my emotions about him run from pity to annoyance to loathing. But if I were to perceive him, on some level, as *my not-me-who-might-become-me*, a very real terror might be added to what I feel. The homeless beggar can become one of a young person's "possible" selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Gergen, 1967, 1972), as we will see in chapter 10. The effects on young people of the daily sight of large numbers of those, young and old, who have failed at life cannot be exaggerated.

These respondents offer the good-me when they use the word "I." They tolerate the anxiety of having others judge the bad-me. They are driven, consciously and unconsciously, by fleeing the terror of the not-me. These three personifications of the self are intertwined with their futures and they need to see their futures in terms of careers. Their less successful peers must also be driven by the terror of the not-me but may not be as willing to tolerate the anxiety of being judged the bad-me and may simply avoid these judgmental experiences. Shawn voices the power of the good-me which has become his "I" in spite of many serious obstacles.

Shawn: I've got a lot of problems. I've got a lot of problems that I have to deal with every day, mostly my health, my family, and other things that go on every day. But I consider my school work very important and I want to make something of myself, even if I'm not alive to enjoy it.

A good kid, a desperate kid, or both?

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