

Admittedly, these issues are being raised more for the purpose of asking questions than of seeking answers. The main purpose of this book is still to describe students and their school behavior. The original questions remain: What does a student do in Horatio Gates? How does he make sense of his life there? How does he develop a reasonable and consistent pattern of thinking and acting so that he can fulfill his personal needs and at the same time deal effectively with institutional demands? To answer these questions we have to move beyond the description of environment, teachers, and administrators, and start to describe the students.

General Student Behavior

A visitor to the corridors and classrooms of Horatio Gates would probably be impressed by the general appearance of the students. All but a very few are clean, neat, and moderately well-dressed. The boys wear the slim-lined or belled wash pants and button-down shirts or sweaters. The girls wear fresh blouses or sweaters, skirts of the fashionable length, stockings or knee socks, and some variation of flat heeled shoes. While a few boys keep their hair shoulder length, only a few of the entire senior class affect the hippie garb. In previous years there had been a staff-enforced dress code, but in keeping with Mr. Vincent's attempts to give the students more freedom, that had been dropped and according to both students and teachers, it did not make any difference. The students still dressed the same way.

Like their dress, their overall behavior was orderly. Having been told to expect a "tough" school, I was genuinely surprised by the apparent lack of conflict between the expectations of the staff and the desires of the students. When the bell sounded and the students were expected to go somewhere, they went. When an administrator asked for some compliance or quiet, or a teacher for attention and order, he received it. The students did not seem to find the atmosphere at all oppressive or even distasteful, and they went about their daily activities with apparent willingness. They seemed to accept, almost without question, their place at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. At a time when the spectre of student revolt was frightening many school people, the students at Horatio Gates, even when unsupervised, would automat-

ically stop what they were doing and stand at attention when the Pledge of Allegiance came over the PA system in the morning. Problems such as violence and drugs, that bedeviled so many schools, seemed nonexistent there. Only twice in the period when the study was being conducted were there any fights, and these were between a few boys and lasted only seconds. And while there were some who regularly took drugs, it was not generally known to other students either who they were or where they got them. According to both users and nonusers, most Gates students who wished to experience illegal thrills were content with weekend drinking parties. Only in formal classes did I hear any general discussions of drugs, and it was the teacher who initiated these discussions, not the students.

A School Day

If one is to understand the students' life in school, he could best begin by examining their day. Between 7:40 and 7:50 each morning the yellow school busses come into the circular drive and release the students at the front door. Others are entering from the side adjacent to the student parking lot. On entering the building, most students go immediately to their lockers where they remove their coats and get their books. Then many go see a guidance counselor, a teacher, the nurse, the librarian, or an administrator. Having taken care of these details, they report to their homeroom at 7:55. This homeroom period lasts ten minutes, during which the teacher takes attendance, and sends the names of those absent to the office where they are typed up for distribution to all rooms so that throughout the day teachers will know which students will be absent from their classes. Also during this time, the vice-principal or an appointed teacher recites the pledge over the PA system and makes various announcements of special events, athletic contests, or anything else that may be important. He also calls those whom he wishes to see for various reasons, the most common of them being that while the stu-

dent was present the previous day he was reported absent from a particular class.

Following the homeroom period, the bell rings and at 8:05 the students depart for their first class. The halls are then jammed with the entire student body and staff going one place or another, but this lasts only a few minutes until all are in their classrooms. At Gates the students always seemed to take their seats immediately upon entering. When the teacher arrives, his first few minutes are taken up with the usual maintenance details, then the class is expected to settle down and do whatever he had planned. After forty minutes of teacher-directed, instructional activity, the bell rings, the students again fill the halls going to the next class, activity, or study hall, and so on throughout the day with classes changing and the entire student body moving around every forty minutes to begin some different activity under the direction of some other teacher. There are also two lunch periods during which the students, who are forbidden to leave the building, may go to the cafeteria to purchase a standard, state-approved school lunch. This routine may frequently be upset by special assemblies, meetings, athletic events, or fire drills, and classes are cut, shortened, or lengthened accordingly. Following the seven periods, most depart on the same bus they rode that morning, and the rest leave in their private cars.

At first glance, that is how the school day appears. But minimal consideration should convince one that there must be more to school than that. After all, adolescents are not robots or automatons, and Horatio Gates was not some manner of prison, but a public school where 1100 adolescents spent approximately seven hours a day, five days a week, for forty weeks a year. The questions asked earlier remain. What did they actually do within this routine? How did they create some sort of meaningful pattern of activity which, given their situation, seemed logical? What characteristics of the institution most strongly affected their day-to-day behavior, and how did they fulfill their basic human needs while massed together at the bot-

tom of the school's hierarchy? These can probably best be explored by going back and beginning with the students as they enter the building.

The first thing one sees, even as the students leave the bus, is that they all appear to be going somewhere in a great hurry. Only a very few, not more than six or seven, go to the library to study. The rest are in the hall where there is a great deal of movement and where, at the same time, most, if not all, seem to be engaged in animated conversation with one another. In dyads, triads, or larger groups, they then go on to their lockers or to the lavatory where many smoke and others simply socialize. The most common topic of conversation is cars, their own, their parents, the ones they saw or had or plan to buy someday. Following this many walk somewhere, and others simply stand around. However, one notices that it is only those who are with others who stand around. Those who are alone are seldom standing still but always seem to be going somewhere in a hurry, perhaps to their locker or to the office to get a pass or to the guidance counselor to make an appointment. Even at the beginning of the day, there is one fact of student life that starts to emerge; that is, that students are never physically alone, but are always in the company of many more individuals who for all organizational intents are identical with themselves.

It is, of course, natural that they should talk to one another before school, but when they get to their homerooms this should presumably cease, and the work of the day begin. This is, however, not the case. When they arrive at homeroom, the assigned teacher is usually busy with his own class preparations and with the maintenance details of the homeroom unit. He has to talk to a series of students asking them, "Where were you yesterday?", "The vice-principal wants to see you," "Where's your excuse?" "Here's the pass," and so on. While he is thus engaged with one or another, the rest are, within fairly broad limits, free to carry on as they wish. They may talk to one another, continue what was happening in the halls, watch others interact, or do some class work. Most, however, choose the former, that is, they talk quietly with one another, and

since Horatio Gates is not repressive and teachers are not whining martinets, this talking does not bother the teacher or prevent him from carrying on the business at hand. If a boy is talking to his friend, and the teacher interrupts, the boy turns, acknowledges the teacher, and does as the teacher wishes; when that is finished, he goes back to his friend. For the first few minutes of the homeroom period, then, the students are usually continuing their private interactions.

However, this ceases and all pay attention when the vice-principal's voice comes over the PA system and he makes his announcements:

"Bus 73 is late, homeroom teachers please take note. Last night we lost a soccer game to Williamsville. The Future Teachers of America will meet in room 108 eighth period. Will the seniors and juniors please mark the ballots that are being passed out and return them to your homeroom teacher? The votes will be counted by the class officers who are to report to the vice-principal's office during eighth period. There will be a Drama Club meeting eighth period. The sale of tickets for the Friday night football game will be held on Thursday. Will the following students please report to the office, following the next bell? . . . Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance."

At that, the students rise, stand at orderly attention, and together with the vice principal recite the Pledge. As the Pledge ends, the bell rings and out into the halls they swarm, again walking with and talking to their friends. It does not matter that they might be attending different first period classes. There is time to walk along and greet one another, or talk about whatever it is that they and their friends consider important. When they arrive at their rooms, they enter the class and sit down.

Now it is presumed that they will begin the real business of the day, that of cognitive interaction with the teacher over some academic matter, but not yet. First the teacher has to arrive, take attendance, ask for one or more late slips, ask this or that student where he was yesterday, or the day before, ask another why he did not

hand in yesterday's homework, or tell him he has to go take a make-up test somewhere. And then some student will have to explain that he has to go somewhere and the teacher will have to sign a pass. These are important matters and are taken seriously by both teachers and students. A fairly representative class might be drama where Mr. Lilley was, in the first few minutes, taking care of his classroom maintenance details. "Now we're going to talk about propaganda. First the tests."

"Read our marks," says one girl.

"Your, ahem, marks, ah yes," says Mr. Lilley. "There were two failures in the class. That's because both of them forgot or just didn't bother to do something."

"Who, who?" a couple of kids in the back were saying. "Was I one of them?"

"Yes," says Mr. Lilley, "and the thing for you to do is make up the test. You can do it today or tomorrow. When are you free?"

"I'm not," says the kid. "I get out of school early on the release program."

"Well," says Mr. Lilley, "What do you do first period?"

"I don't get here first period, just second period because I don't get the car till then."

"Well, what time do you get here, is it half an hour before second period?"

"No," says the kid, "Only about five minutes."

"You're taking it second period tomorrow," says Mr. Lilley. "Be here."

Another student asks when he could take the test and Mr. Lilley says "Third period tomorrow."

"When do we get our report cards?" a kid asks.

"Well, I don't know."

"Maybe next April," says a girl.

Some teachers seem to take up the first ten minutes of the class with this type of activity, while others seem to be able to go right through it. Generally in harder classes, such as physics, calculus, or literature, the teachers were able to go through these things faster because there were fewer deviations; that is, fewer students who miss class, miss tests, fail to hand in work, come late, and so forth

but all teachers and students have to spend at least some minutes at the beginning of each period on these things. While these things are going on between the teacher and one student, the others are either watching or are again interacting quietly with their friends. In those few minutes taken up with more maintenance details, one begins to see a second important fact of student life. That is, that a tremendous amount of school time is taken up with procedural and maintenance details. Although they have been in the school for approximately forty minutes, from 7:40 until 8:20, they have spent the entire time either waiting, engaging in some sort of spectatorship, interacting with their friends, or dealing with some maintenance matter, such as with lockers, passes, coming, or going; but they have not been engaged to any significant degree in anything that could even remotely be called academic activity. This is not to imply that they were in a state of disorder or even that they were restless and bored. During this time, some seemed perfectly content to simply watch the action of other students or teachers, or continue to be actively engaged with their friends, either leaning over or back, or turning around in their desks to talk in a quiet and interested manner. Of course, this did not in any way upset the teacher nor did it prevent him from doing what he had to do.

But then it is finally time to begin. "Take out your books" or "Look at the board" or "Here are some handouts" or a lab experiment is set up and then there is some bustle as papers, pencils, and books get opened, closed, or shifted around and the students get ready to undertake the day's lesson. In Horatio Gates when the teacher begins to show signs of seriousness and wants to begin something, the students comply. Even in the classes with "tougher" students, I was always impressed by the compliance given the teacher when he finally asked for it. However, one can still expect one or more students to be unable to find the page, while another did not get a work sheet, forgot his book, or is just coming in from a dentist appointment, or from talking to the guidance counselor, or is leaving because the vice-principal wants to see him. This takes

another minute or so before the class and the teacher have their attention focused on the matter at hand and learning is ready to begin.* As stated, the skill with which a teacher gets a class ready depends on his personal style, class content, and the students. By the time the teacher and class are finally ready, it is pushing 8:14 in some classes. In other cases it might be 8:20 or even 8:25 before class and teacher finally settle down. It is important to remember that the maintenance and procedural activities are not limited to those first forty minutes of the morning. The bell will ring at 8:50 and both students and staff will have to go somewhere else to begin some other class and there, too, the teacher will have to call roll, take attendance, collect slips and passes, send students to the office for various appointments with counselors, nurses, college admissions recruiters, administrators, and so forth. In fact, it seems that the first period of the morning is the one in which the least amount of this kind of activity goes on. And all of these things go on between one teacher and one student, but there are twenty-five or so students in the class, and while the teacher is thus engaged with one, the rest are for all practical purposes not engaged in any cognitive interaction with the subject matter; they are instead watching and waiting. The assumption mentioned previously, concerning the teacher's subject matter expertise, demands that the teacher initiate and direct the learning activity. If his attention is diverted, the students are left to wait and they do. When the teacher finishes, they once again begin their interactions with the subject matter.

It does not seem necessary to go through the entire day to make the point that a large part of the students' day may be spent in a state of spectatorship in which he simply watches and waits. Consider just the first thirty-five or forty minutes of the morning that have already been mentioned, add the thirty-five for the total day devoted to passing in the halls, the additional forty minutes devoted to lunch, the time spent in getting ready in each of the classes, a conservative estimate of which would be at least five minutes; add five minutes more for the time taken out of class for more passing of papers, books,

worksheets, or directions. Add at least half of the study hall period in which something other than academic activity is taking place and judging from the observed study halls, that too is a conservative estimate. Add an additional period when a student is engaged in something other than academic activity, that is, time spent with administrators, counselors, nurses, activities, looking for someone or going somewhere. The total is 200 minutes a day, or over three hours of the total time spent in school in which any single student can be expected to either spend his own time on procedural and maintenance details or wait while others tie up the class with their own. And that, according to my timed estimates, is conservative. There are many days when much more time is devoted to these things. It assumes that only ten minutes of the class time will be lost, that there will be no major interruptions, that the teacher will be well prepared, that there will be no discipline problems, no assemblies, no fire drills, no special events or activities, and no one interrupting the class once it begins. It also assumes that the students will be reasonably attentive, awake, willing to undertake the matter at hand, and that they and the teacher will be on the same wave-length for the other four hours.

Some Particulars of Classroom Interaction

It is not to be readily concluded that all of this time is merely wasted. If, indeed, it is a background and support for the other four hours, then one can reasonably say that there is adequate time left to spend on learning, enough for anyone, and that Horatio Gates, as such, is doing a good job. For that reason it is imperative to look more closely at the class time in which the teacher is presumably free to instruct without interruptions. The previous discussion of the usual classroom organization becomes important and relevant here. Since the teacher is a subject-matter expert, and because it is assumed, and rightly so, that he will use his time to pass on some knowledge to the twenty or thirty students, most teachers at Horatio Gates

treat the class as if it were a dyadic interaction—the teacher on one side and the class on the other. Both parties, then, actively engage in the business of studying a common issue. In practice, however, this unanimity of purpose is difficult to achieve, even for good teachers. Some students will simply not be engaged in the matter, and therefore, a question directed toward them may throw off the entire class.

For instance, a teacher was trying to initiate a discussion of the origin of language:

"Where do we learn to talk? Consider for a minute. Com'on, how do we learn?"

He called on one particular boy, Red, who, watching the teacher with disdain, replied, "In school, you have to go and listen to all these stupid people talk all day long and that's where you learn."

The teacher, of course, ignored the remark, the feeling behind it, and called on another student. He could do little else. If not left alone, these remarks can lead to a distraction from the subject by both the teacher and students.

In another class a teacher was trying to discuss the novel, *Lord of the Flies*, and she was beginning to talk about the novel's symbolism: Simon's love of beauty, his death, Jack's nature and how he was beginning to prevail over Piggy's plea for reason and a civilized attitude. At this point she tried to involve the class by questioning them about the problem of evil. "It wasn't any one individual's fault for Simon's death, or was it? Are you responsible for the evil in this world? Are you responsible for the fact that many individuals in this city went to bed hungry last night?" She wanted them to talk a little about social responsibility, but then Joe spoke out, "Put 'em in concentration camps, those people on welfare, those niggers."

"What, Joe?" said the teacher.

"I said, those niggers who won't work and go on welfare—I pay \$30.00 a week in taxes—should be put in concentration camps."

She couldn't ignore it, so she asked, "Why, Joe, why?"

"I know this nigger, he's got an apartment up by the university. This guy was telling me what he has for breakfast, he's reading from a menu, he says like 'What shall I have.' And on the menu it says . . . uuh . . . wine and uuhh . . . eggs and uuh uuh . . . milk. And I'm supporting him. Put 'em in concentration camps."

Then Chris spoke up, "Yeah, why won't they work? They just sit around all day and we have to support them." Immediately, of course, the teacher was on the defensive and tried to deal with the issue in a logical manner. She could not, after all, ignore that kind of comment.

"Do you have facts to prove that people on welfare are cheating? Most of them, you know, can't work, or have little children and these are mostly women." Others in the class were beginning to respond.

"There's a lot of whites on welfare, too," said a girl.

And a boy added, "He's right." And another boy on the other side of the room agreed.

"Aw, those niggers, shoot 'em or put 'em in concentration camps."

Mrs. G. knew better than to continue the issue, and saying "All right, that's enough of that," went back to the *Lord of the Flies*. As she resumed talking, there were no further comments on welfare or shooting people, but Joe and a few other boys were nodding to one another in vigorous agreement.

Mrs. G., like most teachers, took one side of the dyad and assumed that the students were with her and would respond with appropriate comments. But as Joe's behavior indicates, one simply cannot depend on that assumption. Joe wanted to express his resentments and used a fairly innocuous question to make his point. The kind of behavior that Joe exhibited is potentially present in any class and can easily emerge to destroy the subject matter planned by the teacher. After that, the students were not about to be immediately tempted back into thinking about literary symbolism.

Another type of behavior the writer repeatedly watched was that exhibited by Darlene. When she came to class, Darlene had her homework done; when the class was

asked to read, she read; she came on time, left on time, and paid ostensible attention, but she would never respond to a question or say a word to the teacher. When called on for an answer in any class, she just stared straight ahead, and if the teacher, in the most gentle manner, tried to prod her a little, she just sat and stared. It really made sense for Darlene, who, for reasons of her own, just does not want to respond. She knew that the teacher could not stop the class and make a big issue of it; there are twenty-four other students in there who need attention and who, if the teacher spends her time with Darlene, will find something with which to occupy themselves. The teacher cannot let that happen. She has to deal with Darlene the way she deals with Joe. She just ignores the personal issue and goes on with the subject matter which, after all, she was hired to impart.

Red, Joe, and Darlene all exhibited some variation of that student behavior which can disrupt the class time presumably devoted to subject matter. The teacher's defense, of course, was to stick to the subject matter and interact only with those students who were paying close attention. But there are two dangers associated with this means of defense. The first is that the teacher may be forced to avoid the student's personal responses and in effect will actually be discouraging student involvement. The teachers cited in Chapter One who answer their own questions or who, in asking their questions, leave only a very narrow range of possible responses seem to do this. The second danger is that the teacher will avoid the marginal students and will concentrate his attention on a small group upon whom he can depend for a reasonable response. The others, of course, are left as spectators. Both of these often occur in classes. It is a very difficult position for the teacher to be in, but considering the setting, it is virtually unavoidable.

A closely related and very common occurrence was that of a thoughtful remark by some student going unnoticed because of the teacher's attention being taken by some one else. For instance, in one class the teacher asked them

to consider the differences between the 1920s and the present. Roger, a fairly thoughtful boy, replied that as opposed to the twenties, "Today people are in tune with lone individuals like Natalie, Easy Rider, and Bronson. Those people that ride along and don't get entangled, those are our present heroes."

Unfortunately, at that moment Jim was playing around and the teacher turned and told him to "Stop it or get out," and by the time the attention was turned again to the subject matter, Roger's remark was forgotten. I told him later that I thought it was a good remark and that it was too bad no one was paying attention. "Yeah, I know," said Roger. "That's why I sit and jack off all day."

Even Joe, on one occasion when the teacher was continuing her discussion of Simon and asked why Simon's tongue was so swollen, replied, "He had a fever." The teacher, who by that time may have had enough of Joe, smiled condescendingly, completely ignored Joe's remark, and went on to explain the swollen tongue in terms of literary symbolism. It was another case of a student making an input into the class and getting no return, because the teacher with everything else on her mind could not give the needed response.

There are two important points about classroom interaction. The first is that even when all procedural and maintenance details are put aside and the teacher and students are presumably tuned in to the subject matter, there is simply no assurance that Red, Joe, or Darlene or, for that matter, any other single student is getting the points made by the teacher. The second is that when the teacher's attention is turned to a student who is exhibiting some sort of individualistic behavior, the rest of the students are, for that moment, reduced to a state of spectatorship. There is really little that they can do but sit and watch and wait. Roger's comment to me indicates many may even hesitate to feed thoughtful comments into the class because they simply go unnoticed and unrewarded.

It has to be restressed here that Horatio Gates is not some blackboard jungle, staffed with poor, unsympathetic

teachers and racist, nonattentive students. It is an orderly, well-run, middle-class American school which, given a cursory inspection, would appear to be doing a fine job. But if one watches the classroom interaction process very closely, he can see the real difficulty of carrying on meaningful dialogue under certain conditions. It is not simply the teacher's fault. She does not need two more courses in methods, literature, or clinical psychology. If she attempts to explore Darlene's problem, the rest are left out. If she tries to reason with Joe and show him the error of his thinking, it will be a long, difficult, perhaps unsuccessful process and that was not what she was hired to do. If she responds to Roger's thoughtfulness, what will Jim do next? And what, after all, can a teacher say to an eighteen year old student like Red who obviously despises the whole institution.

The teacher's solution to these things is to talk, talk, and keep talking. In fact, a rough and perhaps even conservative estimate is that teachers there did seventy-five percent of the talking that went on in the class. Verbal communication is what is going on. In most classes it is the only thing that is going on, and that is partly because of the earlier stated assumption that verbal communication and learning are closely related, if not identical. But if talking is all there is and the teacher does seventy-five percent of it, what is left for the students? Twenty-five percent, of course, but divided among twenty or thirty students, this means that any single student will be allowed only a very small percentage of the active classroom participation. The two dangers mentioned earlier become very real here. The talking may be on a superficial level, and only a few may get to participate. For instance, when the vocational education teacher asked Andy a question, he replied, "I don't know. I never know what you're talking about." The teacher quickly explained the brief answer and went on. He did not even try to deal with Andy's lasting problem, but just talked right over and past Andy, who probably did not understand any more at the end of the class than he did at the beginning.

Of course, a possible answer is that the students can listen as much as they want. They are, after all, supposed to be paying attention. Yet if one takes the time to watch the listeners closely, he can see that there is a great deal of yawning, looking about, playing with papers and pencils, doodling, sleeping, looking at pictures, wallets, and whatever. It is very difficult to be an active and attentive listener for five periods a day.

Of course, there were teachers and classes which apparently interested most of the students most of the time. A good example was physics class where Mr. F. handled his maintenance issues in about one minute. He did not have to tell them to break into groups and go to their tables. They were already there by the time he said, "Now today we're going to talk about something that many consider the most difficult thing in physics. That is motion . . ."

And when it was time for the lab experiment they gathered their equipment and went about the matter in a quick, quiet, and interested manner. The teacher was free to go around the room and interact with those who asked him individual questions. There was no necessity of talking to everyone about the same thing, others had their own concerns. But this was an exception. He was cited repeatedly as being the best teacher in the school, and the fact is he had a situation where the organizational characteristics worked for, not against him: highly motivated students—no Jims, Reds, Darlenes or even Rogers in his class; a subject that demanded the physical involvement of handling equipment; a small class of sixteen students; and a subject area with built-in, logical sequence of events where the activity one engaged in on Tuesday was factually integrated with the material one learned on Monday.

It is not fair to say that this occurred only in the more academic classes. In ceramics class where the teacher had everyone actively engaged in a project the same kind of attention was present. There the teacher did not care if the students interacted quietly about their private con-

cerns as long as they continued their work. The music teacher, too, who was reputed by many students to be "really great" was able, by engaging them all in singing, to keep just about every student involved and interested. In all three of these classes the nature of the subject was such that good order and common participation did not depend entirely on the teacher, but on the active physical and mental involvement of the students.

4 However, even those students who took music, physics, or ceramics did so for only one or two periods a day and for the rest of the time, they were in classes that put them in the situation described earlier. Thus, for any single Gates senior, the time spent actively engaged with some teacher over a matter of cognitive importance may not exceed twenty minutes a period for five periods a day. That is a high estimate. I would say that if an average student spent an hour to one and a half hours a day in school involved in subject matter, that was a good day. 3

In sum, it seems that there are a number of important points about the students and their daily routine. The organization of the school is based on certain characteristics (1) compartmentalization of knowledge, (2) teacher subject specialization, and (3) batch processing of students. These assumptions are operationalized when the students in groups of twenty to thirty are placed in classes where it is expected they will be instructed by the teacher-expert for a certain number of minutes. In practice, however, there are a number of immediate problems in this system. First, it requires a tremendous amount of maintenance activity which detracts from instruction time. Secondly, it forces the teacher to do most of what there is to do in the class and simultaneously limits the students' active involvement, and thirdly, it forces the teacher to purposely exclude vast ranges of possible student behavior because they can serve to disrupt the process of passing on his subject-matter speciality. The unintended consequences of these organizational characteristics seem to be that the students spend very little actual time involved in academic interaction with the teachers.

Individual Students: What Are They Doing?

Having demonstrated that there are a number of difficulties inherent in teacher-student interaction in the classroom, it remains now to look more closely at some of the behaviors of individual students. The question becomes, if these students were spending only a limited amount of time actively engaged with the teacher what were they doing the rest of the day? An incident which occurred during my first month stands out. Ed, a pleasant boy whose ambition was to become a policeman, met me in the halls and proceeded to tell me about a hunting incident in which he was fined for having one shell above the legal limit in his shotgun. As we walked to the first class, he included Vince in the conversation and as the two entered, sat down and waited for the teacher to start, they were talking about hunting. The teacher finished his attendance taking and passed out the vocabulary worksheets. Ed, Vince, and I were at one library table where they were simultaneously engaged in both the vocabulary exercise and the plans for Monday's hunting trip.

"Be ready to hike, man. We're going to walk about eight miles."

"Ah, that's silly. I'd rather drive the car, and you can drive right down the dirt road by the second barn."

Then Vince drew and Ed modified a map of a cornfield adjacent to a pond where the geese spend the night. "We'll have to leave by 5:30 to get there by six. Hey, Phil, you wanna come?" I declined and they went on with the map and also with the vocabulary sheet.

"Hey, what's ominous? Is that like an ominous phone call?"

He was asking me so I had to say something. "No, that's anomomous. Ominous means threatening."

"Oh," said Ed, "like a threatening phone call."

Vince was still drawing the map and the teacher came over.

"You know that one," said the teacher. "'He scrutinized the signature to be sure it was really hers.' What does scrutinized mean?"

"I don't know, I'm dumb," said Vince.

"Well, what's a signature?"

"Like writing, when you sign something."

"Well, what do you think you would do if you scrutinized a signature?"

"I don't think, I'm dumb," said Vince.

While this was going on, Ed was writing the definition of ominous and then the teacher, who seeing that Vince had his work almost done and was just fooling, turned and left. Immediately Vince turned to Ed and said, "Yeah, but if we arrange the shooting patterns like this," and he proceeded to modify the drawing. He did not even blink when he turned from interacting with the teacher back to talking about hunting. No problem for Vince and Ed. They get their work done, they satisfy the teacher, and at the same time they plan a hunting trip.

Later in the day, they were still talking about their hunting trip and by the end of seventh period had it all decided: who would drive, how they would go, what time they would leave, how they would set up their shooting patterns, and what they expected to come home with. Of course, all the time they were going to their respective classes, doing the work the teacher asked of them, and in general fulfilling the demands of the institution.

More and more, as I continued in the school, I saw that the students' most active and alive moments, and indeed the great majority of their school time, was spent not with teachers and subject-matter affairs, but in their own small-group interactions which they carried on simultaneously with their class work. For instance, in auto mechanics class when the teacher had the students working on the car that they and the teachers were building, they would simultaneously be talking among themselves about what they would do after school that evening, this or that weekend, or something similar. While the teacher's attention was diverted to some maintenance or procedural detail, or while he was interacting with one to the exclusion of the others, there was this breaking up into dyads, tryads, or groups and this activity paralleled the subject-matter interactions.

In one particular class this was extremely evident. The situation in humanities was one in which the students were creating some filmed commercials to teach them creativity, writing, and skills in handling material. The material was quite sophisticated; a Sony TV camera, a monitoring set, some microphones, and some other audio devices. There were twenty-three people in the class, one or two of them had written the script and they were among the six involved in the skit. One more was working the camera, and another was adjusting the TV. But the other fifteen were standing around watching or rather half watching, half talking among themselves. By that time I had been in school for a month and was beginning to feel at ease talking to people, so I asked Dick, who was on the edge of the circle holding his girl's hand, "Don't you get tired waiting around like this?"

"No," said Dick, "teenagers enjoy grooving on the edge of the scene just like this. Just standing around making remarks with their friends."

"Don't you wish there wasn't so much of it?"

"No. I don't know how adults are, but we don't mind this."

"But is this all you do?"

"Well, yes. But there is nothing we can do about it. I get tired of saying we're going to do something, and talking about it. I wish we would do it."

The girl spoke up, "But we can't help it."

Then another class section came in and now there were about twelve playing with or at least interested in the machinery, and thirty standing around. Then an AV man came in and showed them how to get the proper reception on the machine, but he was talking to only three or four students, then even the actors were doing nothing but standing around.

In the academic classes the same type of phenomenon occurred. Mr. C. was presenting the material in geometry and all the students were with him, writing on the worksheets, doing the problems, and answering the questions concerning angles and lines. This lasted about fifteen minutes. Then he passed out a homework assignment and the

students proceeded to work on it. Of course the rate of completion varied; while some finished quickly, the rest took longer. Those who finished then turned to one another and began talking about football. Jim, an important player, was reading the newspaper account of the previous game and making comments on the write-up. About six others in the back of the room were listening to him and laughing at his comments. In another corner two boys who had finished their work were quietly talking. Of course they, no more than Jim and his group, were preventing the teacher from helping a student at his desk. Only when Jim made too much noise, the teacher asked, "Have you got your work done?"

"Yeah," said Jim, "It was easy."

"All right, then, keep it down," and he went back to one student and Jim went back to the paper and the reading. No problem; it was not a bad class or a bad teacher. He presented his material well, students apparently paid attention for the fifteen minute presentation, but when he no longer demanded their attention, they turned and immediately went into their group interactions. When these group interactions were going on, the students were literally unsupervised; that is, they were outside of any meaningful interaction with subject matter, and since they were together and apparently enjoyed each others company, it was natural that they should begin to talk to one another. This, also, occurred in physics class and indeed in both more and less academic classes. It made sense. Students were never alone but always in the company of like individuals. They have known each other for some years. ~~The~~ situation demanded that the teacher be the center of the class, but the same situation demanded that he pay attention to a number of nonlearning factors and this left the students in a state of spectatorship from which they naturally gravitated into their informal interactions.

It should be admitted that the school, on the whole, seemed to be very undemanding of students. One could easily see that those who were giving only bare compliance to the academic demands were not failing, nor were they being chastized by the teachers for nonachievement.

They simply were not expected to do very much and just about anyone who gave at least a little effort could and did succeed. Bare minimal compliance seemed to be all that was necessary. Of course the degree of effort varied and some students were reputed to put out a great deal. All came to class most of the time, handed in assignments of varying worth, took and somehow passed their tests, and to some degree listened to the teachers. But even after devoting some time and energy to this, they had a great deal of time left for their private friendships.

One might wonder, as I did at the beginning of the study, how it is possible to spend only an hour or so a day with academic matters and still succeed in school. It seemed that students accomplished both goals by paying strict attention to the procedural and maintenance elements in the organization. In fact, the level of anxiety would rise only when the usual schedule and procedures were changed. At those times, one would hear, "What time is it?" "Where do we go?" "What are we supposed to be doing?" "What time do we get to eat?" These questions would be endlessly repeated by students who on normal days would go about their business without thinking or speaking of such matters. In fact, the only time the writer ever saw the entire student body upset was at the beginning of the year when instead of being allowed to leave at 2:20 as in the previous year, they were kept until 2:50 because of a change in the bus schedule. This caused an endless amount of griping and concern by both teachers and students up to the end of September when the old plan was reintroduced, and no more mention was heard of it.

Classes were the same way. For instance, in Mrs. K.'s psychology class, as in most classes, all paid strict attention when she was saying,

Now about your term papers, my first two semesters teaching this class, I used to tell them on September 3 that they should turn in a term paper on November 15. And, of course, when November 15 came around they had gotten their time fouled up and the term paper was not completed. Now, when doing term papers you have

to plan your time. I might as well tell you, you can plan on at least bunches of hours spent in the library. The best thing is to use the reader's guide in this library to find out the kind of things you want to complete your papers and then you can go to the libraries either at the university or maybe downtown. I don't know, can you get in the college library? You probably can if you act like you belong there, you know you can steal the crown jewels if you act as though you belong there. Now you have to have at least five sources—books, magazines; most of your topics are so general that that won't be difficult. You can do that, then you carefully write down the sources and then when you make notes figure out some system to indicate which of the sources the notes came from. The next Friday, I want to see your notes; I mean I don't want to read them all, but I want to make sure you have notes plus sources. Then the hard part comes. Whenever I write a term paper, the worst thing is to outline a rough draft from the notes. [Somebody asks about grades, not having to do with the term papers.] If you want to figure out your grades, multiply your six week test by two, and that will be close. Anyway, the reports won't be out for a while, the sheets that we're supposed to mark aren't even in the school yet and they were supposed to be here last Friday. Anyway, when they do come there will be a lot of mistakes.

Even Joe, Red, Vince, and Ed paid attention to this type of talk although it took an inordinate amount of time, but that was to be expected. All the students were concerned about meeting, in their own fashion, the teachers' and the class demands and thus gaining the future promised reward of high school graduation and, for some, college acceptance. Once the mechanics of the class were clear, the students would seem to relax and then the diverse behavior would emerge, some paying good attention, some looking at their wallets or pictures, yawning, looking around, or carrying on some subtle form of communication with their friends. If after class they made any mention of what went on or would go on in the future, the point was always about some procedural or maintenance issue, not a matter of academics. It seemed that the institution demanded not learning, but compliance with a fairly complex set of procedures. One is reminded of

something John Dewey mentioned, "At its worst, the problem of the pupil is not how to meet the requirements of school life, but how to seem to meet them, or how to come near enough to meeting them to slide along without an undue amount of friction."¹

This was never more apparent than one day when in the humanities class the teachers brought in a dean from a nearby university. The dean, an important figure in state education, was a member of the State Board of Regents. He talked for about thirty minutes about issues which he assumed were of great importance to young people: Vietnam, the draft, the hard choices faced by youth, and the challenge of the future. At the conclusion he asked for questions, and of fifteen or twenty questions, all but two had to do with the state sponsored high school exams. They apparently thought he actually wrote the Regents exam himself, and they wanted him to change or clarify some of the questions. He finally explained that he had absolutely nothing to do with state exams, and when that was clear he got no more questions. The minutiae of answering specific questions on the June exams was more important to them than any issue about which the dean assumed they were concerned.

There were some issues over which the entire student body was commonly involved and excited. One was a cafeteria boycott organized by some seniors over the allegedly poor quality of the food. Personally, I found it to be no worse than that served in the United States Army or a host of other schools, but the students, although they consumed it in great quantities, were convinced that it was poisoned. On October 2 the word went around that there would be a cafeteria boycott the next day. Signs which read "Bag it tomorrow," appeared in the busses and lavatories, and on October 3 only 118 students bought the school lunch, as opposed to the usual 565. Vincent and Rossi were in the cafeteria that noon, both leaning against the wall and looking very serious. Then the district business manager showed up and they conferred at length.

¹ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 184.

Meanwhile, the doors to the cafeteria were crowded with students who would hoot and holler if someone actually bought a lunch. Rossi yelled at them for this and they stopped harrasing the buyers, but continued to mill around and revel in their accomplishment.

The administrators took quick action. Rossi called a special Student Council meeting, had the cafeteria manager explain the issues of cost, cooking, preparation, serving, and so forth. Then he appointed a "special cafeteria investigating committee" composed of senior class council officers and a few football players, and the next day the committee got a guided tour of the cafeteria. Two days later the boycott ended and lunch sales once again exceeded 500. This was one time when it seemed as if a majority of students were actively interested in a school issue.

In sum, the students' active and interested involvement centered not around teacher-initiated, academic issues or even around the issues that were nationally centered. Instead, they concerned themselves with the procedures of fulfilling institutional demands, the cafeteria food, and their private in-group interactions. In general, what they did in school they did with their friends. For instance, if in class a teacher asked them to divide into groups and discuss some matter, they scurried around and found their good friends with whom they talked not about anything academic, but about their out-of-school activities. This was true not only of the nonacademically oriented students, but also of those such as Jean. In some structured interviews toward the end of the study I asked her, "Do kids seem to spend a lot of time together?"

"Yes, that's true. That's what we do, we're not very interested in school."

"You mean school, academically?"

"Yes, that's right. There isn't much to be interested in."

"Is that what you do, hang around with each other most of the time?"

"Yes, that's it. We're with our friends."

"And when you're with your friends, do you talk about school?"

"No, we talk about ourselves a lot. Self-analysis is big this year."

That interaction with one's friends was time consuming and important was substantiated time and again.

One boy who had recently entered the school told me: "When I first came, I hated it. You know, Phil, I skipped fifty-eight days last year because I couldn't stand to come to school because I didn't know anyone, and when I tried to talk to someone, we would just exchange small talk, never get down to anything. I felt like a real outsider."

"I guess you were."

"I know it. It's bad when you don't know anyone, you just walk around by yourself and feel like other kids are talking about you."

"What about the kids who don't have any friends?"

Bill was with us. "Yeah, sometimes I wonder about those kids standing around with no one to talk to. They don't say anything, but you know they see you and are thinking something. It's really sad."

"Is that the most important thing you do in school though, hang around with your friends?"

"Like I said, Phil, when I didn't have any friends, I hated the place so much I couldn't stand to come."

"I notice when you and your friends are together you don't talk about school."

"No, we have our own way of talking and we don't have much to say about teachers."

This is readily verifiable; all one had to do is walk in a room with students and listen to them. "No, last night I was with Joe on a motorcycle, all over town; he's a junior."

"Is he the one who owns a Jaguar?"

"No, that's Jeff."

And the next girl is saying, "Well, they should let me go. After all, I pay for the insurance and I'm supposed to have the car any time I want it. You know what else? Last night we, my family, bought a brand new Chevy, brand new, last night."

From a heavy girl in striped slacks, "You should'a seen what Bill did, he was choking me."

"Why?" asked another.

"Because John swatted me in the head with a paper."

"Why didn't he choke John?"

"He couldn't. He's afraid. Boy, if he'd a held up his fist, I'd a killed him."

Two rows over two girls were talking about Arlo Guthrie, "But he's awfully cute."

"I know," said the second.

By the time the teacher was ready and called for attention, all the students turned and paid attention for as long as the teacher wanted. The minute the teacher's demands ceased, all the sets of students were back into their conversations described previously.

Of course this made it extremely important for students to have friends. In fact, it may have been the single most important thing in the school. To not have friends was to have no one to be with in the corridors and classrooms, no one to walk with to class, or to carry on with before, after, and even during class, no one to eat with. The students spoke easily of this phenomenon. As Ken said, "When I didn't have any friends, I hated this place so much I couldn't stand to come." Or Dick, "In school we groove with our friends, that is, those who have friends, and most kids do." Or Pete, "You can't go to high school without friends."

After discovering this it became necessary that I begin to examine more closely the students' friendship patterns. If that is what they spent their school time doing, then that was my topic. And upon examination it became apparent that those friendship patterns were rigidly divided. One just did not hang around with anyone, or go to class with anyone, or eat with anyone. He talked to, walked with, ate with, and spent as much time as possible with his few friends and literally did not pay attention to those who were not in his group.

Therefore, the class was not simply an undifferentiated mass of students, but was a series of dyads, tryads, clique and groups. In fact, one did not even see those with whom he did not directly associate. That may sound odd to teachers who are used to thinking of students in terms of

batches of not less than twenty or thirty, but it was strongly substantiated every day. If I were talking to a member of one small group and a friend of mine who was in another group approached, I might find myself in two isolated conversations since, the two students would not even recognize each others presence. In the cafeteria it was particularly noticeable. In fact, the rush to the cafeteria at noon was probably more to assure one a seat at the proper table with one's friends than it was to satisfy hunger. If one did not sit with his friends, he literally sat alone. Once when I was with Jean she mentioned that, "The worse thing that can happen is that you have to walk around the halls alone."

"What about the cafeteria?"

"Oh, that's even worse. Kids would rather not eat than eat alone."

Thereafter I frequently asked informants, "Which would you rather do, flunk a test or eat alone in the cafeteria?"

Invariably the answer was, "Flunk a test!"

I asked one of the athletes, Greg, about associating with those not in his group. The thought just did not make any sense to him. "You know like if you came here and didn't hang around with us, I wouldn't even know you."

Apparently the teacher did not see this. When asked, some admitted that the students hung around, but they thought of students in terms of the Cowpens-Winnsboro gang or the Hillsborough gang. Or sometimes they spoke of the academics and the locals, or those who were and those who were not active in extracurricular activities. Neither the teachers nor the administrators saw the class as a series of rigidly differentiated friendships. This is understandable, of course, since the teachers have their own interests.

There was an important question about those who apparently did not have any friends. One person in particular was a boy named Nick who would frequently stand around the student lounge by himself. In the first few minutes I knew him, he volunteered, "You probably noticed that I'm not too popular. I don't have many friends."

Of Nick and others like him, Bill said, "Them, they're

just standing around leaning against the wall. They're out of it." Which, as far as I could see, was a good description of what Nick did. I occasionally asked others about students who had no friends and would mention Nick as an example. Although he had been in the class for years they would say, "Who? Who do you mean?" They did not even see him, and I found that as I became closer to the members of one particular group, I, too, stopped seeing Nick.

The Group Phenomenon and Class Status

The fact that the class was broken into a series of groups had a considerable impact on the extracurricular activities section. In general it seemed to more freely allow a few students to run whatever there was to run. A number of researchers, among them Coleman, Gordon, and Hollingshead,² who previously studied adolescents in school, have all stressed the idea of prestige stratification among the students. They have generally found that the more athletic and personable boys, and the more good-looking, personable girls tend to rule all the extracurricular activities. This seemed to be generally true at Horatio Gates. It was not, however, just a matter of individual qualification but a matter of group affiliation. In that class of 364 members, there were about fifteen to twenty students who seemed to get elected to whatever office happened to be available and who seemed to run whatever there was to run. Since it was always the same ones, I asked about it frequently. The editor of the school paper, Marilyn, provided some good and accurate insights. She agreed that only about twenty were active. I asked "Why?"

"The rest just don't take an interest."

"Why?"

"Because they don't. You can't make them."

"Who does take an interest?"

"The power group."

² See August B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth* (New York: Wiley, 1949); C. W. Gordon, *The Social System of the High School* (New York: Free Press, 1957); and James Coleman, *The Adolescent Society* (New York: Free Press, 1962).

"What's that?"

"That's the kids who get elected to offices and run things."

"How does that happen?"

"Oh, that's it. You know what they do? There's a few of them, Joan, Sally, Betty, and them, they do this, there's a few girls who start to drive early, then they get to go around you know. Then they get a few boys; this is their sophomore year. Boys everyone likes, and they start to have parties and they drink, and the next day they come to school and tell everyone about what they did. They do fun things like, you know, tobogganing, and that, and pretty soon everyone knows about the party they had and they're envious because they seem to be the ones that are having the fun. Then, class elections come along and they put up some one of them for class elections, and then they're in and then they stay in, they won't let you in."

I asked Marilyn, who was a former cheerleader, the editor of the school newspaper, and apparently a popular girl, if she was in.

"No, I can't get in. I tried, I tried hard, but I can't do it. I can't get elected to an office. I tried last year and before that. I had a platform."

"What was it?"

"Well, I wasn't going to let Mr. Rossi run the class like he does and I was going to get some action in the cafeteria and I was going to get more kids involved."

"And they didn't vote for you?"

"No, I lost. And I was pretty bitter about it, too. Those kids won, Joan, Sally, and Betty. They always win. They vote for each other and keep nominating each other, and they've won all the elections since sophomore year."

"What about Bob?"

"Good example. He was vice-president of his freshman class, president of the sophomore class, and this year he's the vice-president."

"What does it mean to be an officer? I hang around with Bob and I never hear him mention it or do anything."

"That's just it. You're right. They don't do anything, but everyone thinks they do."

"Then what does it mean to run things?"

"It means you're in on the dances, the parties, the events, the offices. There isn't that much to do, but just a few do it all."

Talking about groups in general, Marilyn said that in addition to the "power clique" there were the jocks and the music-drama group. "And then each clique has its followers, like the jocks have the girls they go with and the power clique has their boy followers." She also said that there was an academic group who came to school to get grades, and another group of boys whose thing it was to go out and get drunk. At that she stopped and said that she had covered only about 100 students. I asked about the rest of the students. She was not sure, but assumed that everybody had someone to hang around with.

I asked Marilyn why she could not win an election by herself.

"Because the kids won't vote for me."

"But you had a platform and offered them something."

"That's right, and you know another thing? Last year at the junior class meeting when we were having elections, Rossi—I can't stand him—he says, 'Just give me one thing and I'll give you anything you want! Give me four officers I can work with!' Then he left the meeting. And you know what he meant? He meant the kids in the power clique. He loves them, he's always with them and flatters them, and then they do anything he wants, they're so flattered by his attention. He supports them and they support him and that's the way it is."

Other students supported the idea of the "power clique" who did what there was to do and excluded others. It was certainly true that the same few students kept getting elected to class and council positions, kept themselves on the committees and clubs, and were constantly with each other in school.

Marilyn's description of how things worked was as good as I could find. But it seemed that the reason a few were able to dominate was that there was very little to dominate. The range of possible behaviors and possible rewards was, in fact, so limited that involvement of more than a few was

unthinkable. In fact, it was difficult to get any class member to speak of activities other than in terms of bake sales or beany sales. Regardless of the stated intent of activity, the members did little other than engage in raising petty cash with dances, sales, or car washes. For instance, I once asked Lorraine, officer of the Honor Society, "What does the Honor Society do?"

"Well, it's supposed to build character, leadership, scholarship, and service."

"How does it do that?"

"Well, last year we had a bake sale."

"What about this year?"

"Oh, this year we won't have a bake sale."

The truth is that the Honor Society did little as a society. One became a member because of reasonably high marks and a good deportment for some unspecified period of time. He attended a formal induction ceremony in which he carried a candle across the stage and received official greetings from the assistant superintendent, and then listened to a speech by that central office official, and had his picture taken with the rest of the members for the yearbook. But like the classroom, membership in the Honor Society actually demanded little, if any, active involvement. I suggested this once to a teacher, and she replied that the society did a great deal. In fact, she said they were presently starting a tutoring program in one of the elementary schools. I checked this and found that some of the members were indeed going in and acting as aides for two hours a week in an elementary school. But those who were doing it were members of the music-drama clique and were among the central figures in the fifteen or twenty who ran the class. They were doing it not as members of the Honor Society, but as members of an "in" group. Other members of the society who were not members of that group were not tutoring, and in fact, some of the tutors, while group members, were not Honor Society members. It was a case of one girl, Jean, a member of the music-drama clique being elected or appointed because of her high marks to the vice-presidency of the club. In carrying out her club duties she responded, not to

the society's membership, but to her group membership. She justified her actions of including non-honor society members in an honor society function by saying that she had to get people she could depend on. "For instance, once we were having a bake sale and we appointed a junior to run it and she ruined everything. You simply have to get dependable people."

Another example was the case of student council officers. Bob, a popular boy, was a member of the council but refused to run for council office. So the other officers appointed him "sergeant at arms" and he was then treated as an elected officer of the council.

The members of the music-drama group frequently moaned the fact that only a few students ever became involved in activities. I suggested to one of them, Dick, who was probably the single, most active person in the class, that if more than fifteen students became involved, they would probably displace him since there was not enough activity for more than a few. He became angry at that, "That's not true. You've drawn your conclusions and now you're out to prove it."

"Then why can't you get other kids interested in your activities?"

"Because they're introverts."

"That means you have 359 introverts in the class." (There were a total of 374 students in the class.)

Dick was unconvinced, "I'm telling you, we open up our activities but still only a few kids participate."

But it was true even in the senior class president's assessment of what it took to run the senior weekend. I asked Tony, another music-drama clique member, "What do you do as president?"

"Well, for one thing, we're responsible for setting up the big senior weekend. And you have to get the place and everything."

"How many people does it take to do that?"

"I'd say five, no—I'd say two."

It amounted to calling the motel and confirming the reservation. It was the same motel that a previous class had used. Mr. Rossi took care of the band.

The president of the Student Council, also a member of the music-drama clique, one of the tutors, yet not an Honor Society member, was asked about the Student Council. "What do you do?"

"Not much. Last year we had a council dress code, but we dropped it and now the kids dress the same way."

She was right, not only about the dress, but about the council not doing much. I attended all the meetings and there was not much happening.

A few students would be charged with running something on the mimeograph, and a few would decorate the gym or the halls prior to a big ball game or dance. These were always the same few, a combination of the "power clique," most of whom were cheerleaders, the "music-drama clique" just mentioned, and some of the better football players. They were the only ones who were ever observed to be actively engaged in "student activities."

Other clubs were similar. Debbie, the editor of the yearbook, was a good girl to ask about the clubs. I was going through a yearbook with her one day and asked, "What does Future Nurses do?"

"Nothing, it's been discontinued. We didn't have an advisor."

"What does Yorkers do?"

"Nothing. We had this club designed to study the state, but that fell through, no interest."

"What does the French Club do?"

"I don't know. A lot of times you'll see those clubs and one or two names after them, but usually they get discontinued after one or two years."

"How about math or Latin Club?"

"Oh, those kids are usually the brains who take the harder math classes and the Latin classes and who get together once a week to talk about them." (I looked for meetings of these last two and could not find any record of them having met recently or planning to meet in the future.)

"How about the FBLA, what does that mean?"

"Future Business Leaders of America. They run the student store. I don't know if it's still running." (It was.)

There was considerable resentment by noninvolved stu-

dents at those who ran everything. At class meetings I frequently sat in the back and overheard many resentful comments about "always the same kids," or "Why not pick someone else for a change." But these comments by non-participating students were made not to the whole class but to their own friends. No students ever challenged the right of the central fifteen or twenty students or the football players to run whatever activities there were. As was mentioned before, the total number of "active and involved" students did not exceed twenty students out of the entire class. Debbie, also mentioned previously, was the single exception. Although she was editor of the yearbook, she was not a member of the lead group. According to her, she worked hard the previous year and deserved the teacher-made appointment. But the clique members resented her severely and maintained that she just "grabbed it," and that "she was acting like a dictator."

Even Debbie, however, would liked to have been an "in group" member. "Well, yes. Most of us would like to but we can't."

"Do you have your own friends?"

"Yes, most of us just don't pay any attention to the lead group. Like me and my friends hang around together. We just don't need those kids."

In sum, there are a number of important points about the activity sector. A few ran what there was to run, but in truth there was not much to run. And while other students probably resented the "leaders," those "leaders" failed to understand the rest. All the students reacted in pretty much the same way; that is, they had their own friends and in truth did not pay very much attention to others. This raises the question of whether it is even legitimate to talk of high school classes in terms of leaders or representatives. If the few ran it for themselves, which seemed to be what happened, then looking for class leaders seems to me a silly pursuit. There was simply no one leading, nor anyone being led.

An incident occurred in a Catholic school in that same district in which I carried on a similar, although shorter study, in preparation for this one. I was sitting with a group

of students who were not among the more esteemed students. Class elections had been held that morning and the priest supervising the cafeteria announced on the PA system, "Here's a list of the class officers. You can come up and check the names of your leaders." Not one boy at the table, not one member of the group, even looked up. The conversation did not even stop for a second. To them the issue of "class leaders" was not even commonly admitted. It seemed that for the majority of students at Gates that same type of situation existed.

Summary and Discussion of Chapter 3

In keeping with the format outlined in the introduction, I have attempted to provide a general and fairly objective description of the way I saw students spending their school time, and simultaneously, I have tried to avoid editorializing in the main part of the chapters. However, at this point there are again some specific questions which should be raised and directed toward those who teach or plan to do so.

It has been strongly stated that the school's organization places barriers to student-teacher interaction. What would happen if a particular teacher was not satisfied with those barriers of batch processing, maintenance details, and subject specialization, and wanted to cross them to see if he could change his students. Suppose he wanted to change Joe, sharpen up his social conscience, and get him to stop his talk about shooting people.

If it is difficult to reach such students in class; it is practically impossible outside of class. First of all, that teacher would have to get Joe alone—that means outside of class. Since keeping students for other than disciplinary reasons is not generally done, at 2:40 the teacher would have to go find Joe, convince him that coming in and talking would be in his best interests, and then proceed to set up a few sensitizing sessions on race relations. Or suppose he wanted to convince Red that the school is basically concerned with his well-being, and that the teachers really have his best interests at heart. Again, he would have to

move quickly at 2:40, presuming that Red hasn't already left on early release for his job, and convince him to come in and prove that he's not just another of those "stupid people" who "talk all the time." That teacher's convictions had better be pretty strong, because Red has some good reasons for believing the way he does. Or if he wanted to convince Roger that the next time he makes a sensitive input into class, he will be commensurately rewarded, that will be a difficult task; Roger has a lot of experience that tells him otherwise. If a teacher wanted to reach any of these individuals he would have to make an "extra-organizational" effort, he would have to step out from the role of subject-matter expert, maintainer of order and discipline, and batch processor of students.

This is the same issue that was discussed in the first chapter. Horatio Gates' organization does not encourage, depend on, or even need one-to-one personal interaction between teachers and students. It does not reward teachers for attempting to reach students individually. In fact, the structure makes it difficult to do so. Also, the organization does not reward students or teachers for their individual efforts other than within very narrow boundaries. Those students who stand outside those boundaries, such as Joe, Red, and Andy, get no rewards, nor do they even receive any remedial attention. Teacher and students are allowed to play only a limited role in school. Those students who do not take a deep interest in the "student role" are, for the most part, left to their own devices. The teacher, and indeed, the whole school may just pass them over.

Perhaps one might read this and think, "If I were teaching there, I would find a way to help Joe, Red, Darlene, Andy, and Roger." But those who think and write about organizations tend to agree that people who inhabit organizational roles, as teachers do in school, behave as do others who take on those same roles. In most situations even a superior individual would tend to do what his fellows do. The lesson may be that if one is dissatisfied with the way schools are run, rather than examining individual teacher behavior, perhaps he should begin to think about the school's basic organizational structure.

For the purposes of this book, the main question then becomes, "If the many students are left to their own devices and are outside of any interaction with the teachers, are they suffering?" "Do they perceive themselves to be suffering," might be a better question. I do not think they did. Although I saw many signs of boredom, they seemed reasonably happy as long as they had their friends to talk to and be with. However, up to this point there has not been enough information presented to draw any conclusions. If hanging around in small groups was what they did in school, then my task was to begin to explore the patterns of their groups. I had to move deeper into student life by attempting to become a partial member of one or more of those groups.