Theodore Lidz

The Life Cycle

The Person

The Life Cycle

Theodore Lidz

e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *The Person* by Theodore Lidz

Table of Contents

The Life Cycle

INTRODUCTION

In the ensuing chapters we shall follow the child through the life cycle, the infant's course from the emergence from the mother's womb along the circuitous route until, weighted by years and with dimming memory, the person returns to the earth, the mother of all living things. No two persons are alike, and the path one follows is never the same as another's, for we are part of the infinite variety of an inexhaustible nature. The course of life that we intend to follow will be an abstraction that is no one's, but that of Everyman and Everywoman containing the essentials of all.

Despite the uniqueness of each individual and the different ways and varied environments in which we are raised, all of us are endowed with physical makeups that are essentially alike and with similar biological needs that must be met. In common with all living things our lives go through a cycle of maturation, maturity, decline, and death. In common with all human beings each of us goes through a prolonged period of dependent immaturity, forms intense bonds to those who nurture us, and never becomes free of our need for others; and we mature sexually relatively late as if the evolutionary process took into account our needs to learn how to live and how to raise our offspring. Each of us requires many rears to learn adaptive techniques and become an integrated person, and we depend upon a culture and a society to provide our essential environments; we rely upon thought and foresight to find our paths through life and therefore become aware of the passage of time and our changing position in the life cycle. From an early age we know that the years of our lives are numbered; at times we bemoan the fact and at times we are glad of it; but in some way we learn to come to terms with our mortality and the realization that our lives are one-time ventures in a very small segment of time and space. These and many other such similarities make possible the generalizations and abstractions necessary for the scientific study of personality development.

THE PHASIC NATURE OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE LIFE CYCLE

The development of the personality[1] and the course of the life cycle unfold in phases, not at a

steady pace. The process is not like climbing up a hill and down the other side, but more akin to a Himalayan expedition during which camps must be made at varying altitudes, guides found, the terrain explored, skills acquired, rests taken before moving up to the next level, and the descent is also made in stages. Children go through periods of relative quiescence and then undergo another marked change as they move into a new phase of life, which opens new potentialities, provides new areas to explore, and poses new challenges for them to master and requires them to learn new sets of skills and abilities. Thus, when infants learn to crawl and can move toward objects that attract them, a new world opens before them that enables them to channel their ebullient energies in new ways, permits a new zest to become manifest, and opens up opportunities for new learning. But it also alters their mothers' lives and the relationships between mother and child, and they will have to learn to relate differently, expect rewards for different types of performance, and gain greater control of their own behavior before achieving a new relative equilibrium. Whereas their parents had always been delighted with any display of new activities, now they seek to restrain or somehow limit behavior, and a child has difficulty in adjusting to such changed attitudes. Similarly, a child may have settled down into a reasonable stable relationship with family and peers, and found a suitable pace and place in the school world, when the sudden spurt of growth that precedes puberty alters the proportions of the body, almost making it unfamiliar to its owner, and then the surges of sexual feelings aroused by hormonal changes must be managed; and a period of relative calm and security has ended.

The phasic nature of the life cycle derives from several interlocking factors.

1. The acquisition of certain abilities must wait upon the maturation of the organism. The infant cannot become a toddler until the nerve tracts that permit voluntary discrete movements of the lower limbs become functional. However, even after maturation permits the acquisition of a new attribute, gaining the skills and knowledge to develop it is a very lengthy procedure, but is amenable to specific training and education. The amount of practice required before children can properly use their hands and learn to measure space three-dimensionally is enormous; but because much of it seems random movement or play, the quantity is rarely appreciated. Adequate mastery of simple skills must precede their incorporation into more complicated activities.

In a similar way phasic shifts in the physical equilibrium of the organism initiate new phases in the life cycle. The metamorphosis of puberty furnishes a prime example of how new inner forces provoke change without regard to prior developmental progress.

2. The individual's cognitive development plays a significant role in creating phasic shifts. The capacity to assume responsibility for the self and the direction of one's own life depends upon the increasing abilities to think, to communicate, and to know the nature of the world and of the people with whom one lives. The child's cognitive development does not progress at an even pace, for qualitatively different capacities emerge in rather discrete stages.

3. The society, through the child's parents, peers, and the roles it establishes for persons of differing ages, sets expectations that promote shifts in life patterns. At the age of five or six, for example, a child is moved into the role of the schoolchild which includes many new demands as well as new privileges. Becoming a married person involves socially set expectations such as an ability and willingness to rescind areas of independence to care for and consider the needs of a spouse. But, in order for any society to remain viable, the expectations and roles it establishes must be compatible with people's capacities and needs at each period of life.[2]

4. The child gains attributes, capacities, roles, and, particularly, capacities for self-control and self-direction by internalizing parental characteristics. Little children clearly need "surrogate egos" in the form of one or both parents to direct their lives. The internalization of these directive influences also takes place in stages in relationship to children's physical, intellectual, and emotional development and the expectations established for them.

5. The passage of time is, in itself, a determinant of phasic changes, not only because there is a need to more into age-appropriate roles, but also because changes in physical makeup require changed attitudes and self-concepts, as when people reach middle life and realize that their life story is approaching a climax.

THE EPIGENETIC PRINCIPLE

The epigenetic principle maintains that the critical tasks of each developmental phase must be met and surmounted at the proper time and in the proper sequence to assure healthy personality development. Psychoanalysis adopted the principle from embryology, in which the proper unfolding of the embryo depends upon each organ's arising out of its anlage in the proper sequence and at the proper time, with each development depending upon the proper unfolding of the preceding phase. If something happens that disturbs one aspect of the sequence, a series of maldevelopments follow in chain. Some such aspects of personality development are obvious: a child who does not gain adequate

autonomy from the mother prior to going to school will have difficulty in remaining in school, learning there, and relating to classmates. Personality development is not, however, as rigidly set as embryonic maturation; and even though development is impeded or altered when a developmental phase is not properly mastered, compensations are possible, and deficiencies can sometimes even be turned into strengths, which is not the case with the embryo. We once again recall Helen Keller, who did not learn to use language and remained very immature emotionally until she was seven, as an outstanding example of such plasticity in personality development.[3]

Progression, Fixation, and Regression

The course of any life contains a series of inevitable developmental crises that arise out of the need to meet the new challenges that are inherent in the life cycle. Through surmounting these crises the individual gains new strength, self-sufficiency, and integrity. The avoidance of challenge leads to stagnation. Each person meets each developmental crisis somewhat differently but similarities exist in the ways people meet similar developmental problems, and there is likely to be something repetitive in how the same individual surmounts various crises in life.

There is often a pause before a child achieves the confidence to venture into the strange uncertainties of a new phase of life. The need for emotional security sets limits upon the pace of development. The child constantly faces in two directions and is prey to opposing motivations. There is an inner impetus to expansion and the mastery of new skills and situations, a desire for greater independence and new prerogatives, and a wish to become more grown up like the parental figures the child seeks to emulate; but movement into new areas brings insecurity, inability to manage the new situation creates frustrations, and greater independence requires renunciation of the comforts of dependency. The ensuing anxieties tend to direct the child toward regaining the security of shelter and dependency and to renounce for a time further forward movement, or even to fall back to gain greater dependency.

Children need support and guidance to progress properly. In some instances, they may need to be restrained from unbridled and untutored use of new capacities, as when they first walk or when they first mature sexually; whereas in other circumstances they may need help or even some prodding to

move into the next phase, as when reluctant to leave the familiar home to attend school. The developmental hazards lie on both sides: too much support can lead the child to become overly dependent; too little can leave the child stranded or struggling to keep afloat.

The failure to master the essential tasks of a developmental phase leaves the child unprepared to move forward into the next phase. Emotional insecurity, lagging physical maturation, and premature pressures upon the child to cope before attaining the necessary skills and emotional mastery are among the major reasons for such failures. The child gives up and ceases to progress developmentally, or, more usually, moves ahead in some spheres but squanders energy in repetitive efforts to cope with old problems. Children who do not receive enough gratification during infancy may continue to suck their thumbs, seeking the gratification needed then; or school-age children who never gained adequate security in the home continue to seek maternal protection when their peers are secure with one another. Such developmental arrests are termed *fixations.* The movement backward to an earlier developmental phase in which the individual felt secure is termed *regression*[4] and paradoxically regression is part of developmental progress, for all children will, at times, regress in order to regain security. They may fall back to regain stability after a forward thrust or when some external threat upsets their equilibrium and makes them anxious. Small children progress with security when they feel that parental protection can be found at the center of their expanding worlds, when needed.

Although fixations and regressions are means of maintaining or regaining security, they create insecurities in turn if they are not simply temporary expediencies. The child remains improperly prepared to meet the developmental tasks of the next phase of the life cycle and is unable to accept its opportunities and challenges.

Even though children are pulled in two directions and the desires to remain secure can be powerful, the motivations to move forward are greater. Children are carried along by their growth, by impulsions for stimulation and new experiences, by drives, by needs for approbation and affection from significant persons, by desires for companionship with peers, by the body's yearning for another, by the needs of survival, by the roles provided by the society, by desires for progeny, by awareness of mortality, and by other such influences which we shall examine in the ensuing chapters.

THE STUDY OF PHASES OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

The descriptions of the various stages of personality development that will be presented in this book evolved to a very large degree from four rather different approaches to understanding the phasic emergence of personality attributes: those of Freud, Sullivan, Erikson, and Piaget. As familiarity with these approaches is essential to understanding the literature and language of personality development and psychopathology, the orientations and the essential contributions of each of these theorists will be included in the presentation of various developmental stages even when they differ from, or even run counter to, the conceptualizations of the writer. In the following paragraphs only brief orienting material will be offered to provide a perspective concerning the emergence of the phasic and epigenetic approaches to personality development and an overview of these several orientations.

Freud's Phases of Psychosexual Development

Consequent to his epoch-making studies of childhood sexuality, but based primarily on his analytic studies of adults, Freud conceptualized five phases of psychosexual development between birth and maturity: the oral, anal, phallic or oedipal, latency, and genital phases.

In a strict sense Freud was not proposing stages in personality development but tracing the vicissitudes of the sexual energy which he posited and termed *libido* and deemed a prime motivating force in all human behavior. He considered that the libidinal investment (cathexis)[5] of the oral, anal, and phallic zones in turn was an inherent part of physical maturation. The origins of these concepts are significant because as foundations of psychoanalytic theory they continued—and continue—to exert profound influence upon the subsequent development of the theory.[6]

Freud also used the phases of psychosexual development in a broader sense, and when the concepts of the various postulated phases of childhood development were divested of such metaphysiological speculations, or when less attention was given to these concepts of energetics, they served to draw attention to important aspects of child development and the parent-child interaction. Thus, to note but a few examples, the critical importance of proper maternal nurturance during infancy to all future emotional security; the relationship between harsh and rigid bowel training to the development of obsessive-compulsive personality traits; the origins of certain adult sexual

incompetencies in fixations during the oedipal phase—devolved from appreciation of the phasic nature of childhood development and the focusing upon the critical issues of each phase.

The *oral* phase is virtually equivalent to infancy, when the child's needs and energies focus upon nursing and close relatedness to the mother. It is a time of almost complete dependency, with intake at first largely passive but shifting to more active and aggressive incorporation as the infant matures. The lips and mouth are highly erotized and a primary source of sensuous gratification. Either too much or too little oral gratification or some innate predisposition to orality can supposedly cause fixation and unpreparedness to move into the subsequent phases.

The *anal* period follows, and attention was directed to it by the frequency of problems related to bowel functioning, by anal erotic practices in adults, and by certain character traits connected to withholding and letting go. Bowel training was considered a primary developmental task of the second year of life, and the anal zone a primary source of erotic gratification during the period. Fixations at the anal phase have been related to various character traits such as obsessiveness, stubbornness, miserliness, and many other related characteristics, as well as lasting erotization of the anal orifice. The specific focus on the anal area would appear to have been due to the emphasis on strict bowel training in Freud's cultural setting.

In the *phallic* or *oedipal* period the primary erogenous zone has been considered to shift to the penis in the boy and the clitoris in the girl with an upsurge of sexual feelings toward the parent of the opposite sex. The boys wish to possess the mother and be rid of the rival father, and the girl's desire for the father and jealousy of the mother—the oedipal situation—come in conflict with reality, create fear of retribution from the hated parent, and lead the child to repress his or her sexual feelings and possessiveness of the desired parent. Instead, the boy pursues the more realistic goal of ultimately becoming a person like his father who can possess a person like his mother, and the reverse occurs in the girl with variations and differences that will be elaborated in the presentation of the oedipal phase. The child gains strength by identifying with the previously hated and feared parent, internalizes parental controls, and becomes more oriented to reality.[7] Various problems inherent in the conceptualization, such as the idea that the boy always internalizes a hated and feared father, and the evidence that the girl's development is not a mirror image of the boys, will be considered in Chapters 7 and 8. The "oedipal

transition" is considered a central event in personality development and critical to the patterning of all subsequent interpersonal relationships.

Following the resolution of the oedipal conflicts the child enters the *latency* period—a period when sexual impulses are supposedly latent, either because of a biological subsidence of libido or because of the repression of the sexual impulses that seem to children to endanger them.

The *genital* phase starts with the upsurge of puberty, with an erogenous reinvestment of the phallus in the male but supposedly with a shift from the clitoris to the vagina in the girl. If individuals pass through all previous phases without undue fixations, they become capable of mature sexuality. The capacity for genital sexuality was originally equated with the achievement of emotional maturity.

The Orientations of Sullivan and Erikson

The modifications of psychoanalytic developmental theory formulated by Harry Stack Sullivan (1946-47) and by Erik Erikson (1950) have particular pertinence to the orientation of this book.

Sullivan emphasized the importance of the interpersonal transactions between parents and child and the child's development in a social system; and he thus became an important influence in bringing psychoanalytic theory into a working relationship with the behavioral sciences. He also directed attention to the importance of the juvenile period, and, rather than letting it remain the "latency phase," emphasized the influence of the school and peer groups on the child's development, and how they could offset the intrafamilial influences. He also considered the critical significance of the events of adolescence.

Psychosocial Phases of the Life Cycle

Erikson also opened new approaches by superimposing an epigenesis of psychosocial development upon the psychosexual phases, and by designating the critical psychosocial task of each phase that the individual must surmount in order to be prepared for the next stage. A developmental crisis, so to speak, is inherent in each phase, for the sequence of maturation and development presents new essential problems with which the person must cope. Erikson also went beyond the traditional

psychoanalytic psychosexual phases that end with the "genital phase." He emphasized the critical moment of late adolescence, when the personality must gel and a person achieve an ego identity and a capacity for intimacy, and then continued to consider the critical tasks of adult stages of the life cycle. He has formulated eight stages of psychosocial development, focusing upon the specific developmental tasks of each phase and how the society meets the needs of providing essential care, promoting independence, offering roles, and having institutionalized ways of assuring children's survival, their proper socialization, and their emotional health. The critical tasks of each phase are handled more or less differently in each culture.

As Erikson's paradigms will be discussed when we consider the specific developmental periods, only a resume will be presented here. In the oral phase of psychosexual development the psychosocial task concerns achievement of a *basic trust* in the self and others, with failures leading to varying degrees of *basic mistrust;* the "basic" is emphasized to convey that the task is not particularly conscious but blends into and forms an inherent component of the total personality. Emphasis in the second year of life is upon the attainment of muscular control in general rather than upon bowel control in particular. In learning self-control the child properly gains a lasting sense of *autonomy,* whereas loss of self-esteem and shaming in the process lead to a pervasive sense of *doubt* and *shame.* In the phallic period the resolution of the oedipal crisis leads to a heightening of conscience, and it is the time when the child needs to develop the prerequisites for masculine or feminine *initiative* or become prey to a deep and lasting *sense of guilt.* The latency period moves the child to school, where the gaining of admiration, approval, and affection depends upon achievement, and now the child must acquire a capacity for *industry* or become subject to an enduring sense of *inferiority.* Erikson then departs from emphasizing the relationship between genital sexuality and emotional maturity and focuses upon the attainment of an ego synthesis by the end of adolescence that affords a sense of *ego identity,* "the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain an inner sameness and continuity is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (Erikson, 1959); and if this is not attained the person is subject to *identity diffusion.* After achieving a sense of identity, young adults can move on to achieve a true *intimacy* with another with the concomitant capacity to *distantiate* the self from forces or people whose essence is dangerous to their own; failure almost inevitable leads to *self-absorption.* Then, an interest in producing, guiding, and laying the foundations for the next generation makes the capacity for g*enerativity* the critical issue in the

next phase of adulthood, with *stagnation* the negative outcome. The final phase in the schema concerns the achievement of mature dignity and *integrity* through acceptance of "one's own and only life cycle" and responsibility for how it has turned out, whereas *despair* involves the feeling that this one chance has been wasted and has, in essence, been worthless.

The approach takes cognizance of the fact that the child grows into a social system and must assimilate its institutions and roles, and helps eliminate the untenable concept that civilization through requiring repression is inimical to man's freedom. The specific dichotomies utilized to characterize the critical issues of each phase sharpen the appreciation of the need to cope with tasks rather than simply to pass through a phase free of traumatic influence.[8] Still, the critical issues selected neglect other developmental tasks that seem just as vital, and some that are more important.

Piaget's Approach to the Study of Cognitive Development

Another extremely important approach to the study of the child's development is found in the monumental work of Jean Piaget and his school. The child's cognitive development forms the core of these studies. Piaget has sought to trace and conceptualize the epigenetic development of intelligence, language, reasoning, concepts of nature, and the emergence of the categories of time, space, causality, etc.; but his studies of the child's moral development and of the child's play and dreams have also provided new insights and stimulation. Piaget has given but passing attention to the child's emotional development and to interpersonal and social influences upon development, which leaves some serious deficiencies in his observations, explanations, and theory.[9]

As Piaget's work has been carried out in a totally different frame of reference from the analytically oriented approaches that we have been considering, and as those unfamiliar with his work may find it difficult to grasp his conceptualizations, a very cursory introduction to Piagetian concepts and terms is offered in the following paragraphs.[10]

Piaget has traced the ever increasing scope of the child's abilities by the constant process of adaptation of the existing state of the organism to new experiences. Children cannot utilize experiences which their cognitive capacities are not yet ready to assimilate. The foundations for experiencing

develop step by step through the expansion and reorganization of existing capacities as children take in new experiences, and thereby become prepared to react to and utilize more complex experiences. The process of cognitive development is, thus, a very active process in which the organism is, in a sense, ever reaching out to incorporate new experience within the limits permitted by its capacities and organization at that moment in its development. Piaget's theory posits a constant cognitive reorganization that is more dynamic than either associational psychology, learning theory, or operant conditioning psychology. His observations are of great importance to any conceptualization of the life cycle not only because they provide guides to how the child and adolescent regard the world and can think about it at each stage of development, but also because of the interrelationship between children's development of autonomy and their cognitive capacities.[11]

The reader is likely to be puzzled and even discouraged by the unfamiliar terminology that is an inherent part of Piagetian psychology. Terms such as "aliment," "assimilation," "accommodation," "schema," and "egocentricity" have specific and rather idiosyncratic meanings, and other terms such as "circular reactions" and "decentering" are unique to the system. They do not, however, pose too formidable a barrier. The *aliment* is new experiential food which furnishes the nutriment for cognitive growth. The aliment is *assimilated* by the cognitive processes insofar as they are prepared to do so, and the cognitive processes *accommodate* to include what has been assimilated, reorganizing and expanding in the process. The term *schema* is used primarily in describing the first developmental period, that of sensori-motor development.[12] A schema is a cognitive structure to which experiences are assimilated, and which reorganize in the process. There are "sucking" schemata, "visual," "grasping," "hearing," and other schemata. The organism, so to speak, repeats activities that have produced new experiences, setting up *circular reactions* in order to gain the reward of new aliment until the aliment is thoroughly assimilated into the schema that has accommodated to it. The development of the child's cognitive abilities through increasingly complex circular reactions will be described in subsequent chapters, which, it is hoped, will help clarify these basic concepts of Piaget's system.[13]

Piaget's Developmental Periods

Piaget has divided cognitive development into four major periods, which in turn are subdivided into a number of stages and substages. The *sensorimotor* period, which lasts from birth through the first

eighteen to twenty-four months, essentially covers preverbal intellectual development. The development of the child's ways of interacting with the world is traced, step by step, from the primitive reflex sucking, hand movements, and the random eye movements of the neonate to the stage when the child uses internalized visual and motoric symbols to invent new means of solving problems at a very simple level. The *preoperational* period follows and lasts until about the time the child enters school. Children become capable of using symbols and language. They do not yet have the ability to appreciate the role of another and adapt what they say to the needs of the listener, to note contradictions, or to construct a chain of reasoning. During the period they move away from static ways of thinking as they gain experience and as words become symbols of categories.[14] The period of *concrete operations* approximates the years between the start of schooling and the onset of puberty, the so-called latency period. Children have acquired a coherent cognitive system with which they can understand their world and work upon it, and into which they can fit new experiences. The period of *formal operations* starts early in adolescence when youths become capable of thinking propositionally, of conceptualizing, and of using hypotheses. It may require considerable education to move through the stage of formal operations for only exceptional persons appear to master this stage on their own.

THE ORIENTATION TO THE PHASES OF THE LIFE CYCLE

It is not always feasible to sum up the various tasks of a developmental phase under a common rubric, nor is it always wise, for it can convey an oversimplification of a very complex process. Various aspects of the personality develop at differing tempos, and it is essential to study each developmental line separately. As Anna Freud (1965) has emphasized, the interrelationships between the development of such essentials as separation and individuation from the mother, cognitive abilities, gender identity, object relationships, self-concepts, and ethical concepts require continuing study. Still, dividing the life cycle into a series of rather natural phases permits the comparison of the various developmental lines, and how an individual's development may be globally or partially impeded, fixated, or regressed at a given phase in development.

In following the life cycle we shall focus on the critical aspects of each phase of development, noting how the biological process of maturation provides much of the pattern by opening new potentials and setting limits for the child's capacities, but also on how the culture, through the society and particularly

the child's parents, provides expectations, and how children develop other expectations for themselves that help establish the sequence of phases and the crucial issues of each phase. Although attention will be given to the epigenetic concept as a cornerstone of developmental theory, room for compensations and later restitutions will be included. The phases, as in Erikson's approach, are not simply important in themselves, but as part of the larger pattern of how the child grows into an integrated adult.

The Divisions of the Life Cycle

The division of the life cycle into developmental stages in this book follows fairly clear lines of demarcation. *Infancy* approximates the first fifteen months of life when babies can neither properly walk nor talk and are almost completely dependent on others to care for their essential needs, to provide a sense of security, and the stimulation required for their proper emotional and cognitive development. So much occurs that we may doubt the wisdom of considering it as a single developmental period.

During the first half, the baby's physical maturation is of dominant importance, whereas during the second half the beginnings of individuation and socialization require greater attention. In the *toddler* stage, as the baby begins to walk and talk, crucial problems arise over the imbalance between the new-found motor skills and the baby's meager mental capacities. The necessary control by parental figures and their increasing expectations of the child almost inevitably lead to conflicts over control and initiative. Some time around the age of two and a half or three, the child ceases to be a baby and becomes a *preschool* or "oedipal" child. It is a critical time when the child must rescind the erotized attachments to the mother as well as the baby's highly egocentric view of being the center of her existence, and find his or her own place as a boy or girl member of the family. By the end of the period the child properly will have completed the tasks of primary socialization and internalized parental directives sufficiently to be ready for school and to move into peer groups. During these few years children take a giant step toward becoming independent and self-sufficient persons, even though they do so through appreciating the long road ahead before they can attain adult prerogatives.

In the *juvenile* period the equilibrium children gained within their families is disrupted as they go off to school, where they will be judged by their achievements rather than by ascription (Parsons, 1964), and as they spend increasing amounts of time with neighborhood peer groups, where they must also

find their places on their own. Although psychoanalytic theory considers this time of life as the latency period, it is apparent that these early school years are critical to the development of many personality characteristics. Children begin to crystallize a concept of the self in relation to the ways in which teachers and peers, as well as parents, relate to them. *Adolescence* involves the discrepancy between sexual maturation and incomplete physical maturity, and between the upsurge of sexual impulsions and the unpreparedness for adult responsibilities and parenthood. Adolescence will be divided into three substages: the period around puberty starting with the sudden spurt of prepubertal growth; mid-adolescence with its expansive strivings and the revolt against adult standards and controls and its conformity to peer-group values; late adolescence, when delimitation and the achievement of an ego identity are central issues and yearnings for intimacy become major motivations.

The *young adult* period is a time for commitments—to a course in life, to marriage, and to parenthood. If a person cannot make these commitments, diffusion of energies and interests ensues, as well as loss of the opportunity for meaningful interrelationships with others. The choices of occupation and spouse, as well as whether or not to become a parent, profoundly affect the further course of the person's life. The passage over the crest of life during the *middle years*—the moving toward and away from the peak years—is often a time of stock-taking concerning the manner in which the person's one and only life is passing. The turn involves a state of mind rather than some clearly demarcated shift in life roles or bodily state. A person becomes one of the older, responsible generation. For some it is a time of fruition, for others a time of regret, disillusion, and resentment toward those who seem to have frustrated. In *old age* physical abilities and mental capacities slowly become more limited, people retire from work, and sooner or later become more or less dependent on others to provide for essential needs. *Death* is the end of the life cycle and an inevitable outcome that brings closure to every life story. Because persons are aware of this eventuality from an early age, it profoundly influences how they live their lives.

Panphasic Influences on Personality Development

Factors in the developmental process that are not phasic must also be taken into account. Persistent attitudes and shies of the parental figures, and indeed of the social system, pervade all phases of the child's developmental years. It is true that a parent may be more capable of relating adequately to the

child in one phase than another because of problems in the child or in the parent's own development, but many such influences are panphasic. The obsessive parent not only exerts a deleterious influence upon the child by perfectionistic and rigid efforts to overcontrol when the child is starting to ambulate and to use the "potty," but continues to teach a specific way of coping with life and its anxieties that helps shape the child's personality. The mother who needs to find her own completion through a child not only is likely to interfere with the process of individuation and boundary formation between the child and herself during the second year of life, but also impedes the attainment of a sense of autonomy during the oedipal transition, when the child leaves her to attend school, and when the youth seeks to gain intimacy with another person in adolescence.

We must also note that *identifications* that are a major factor in shaping the personality also transcend specific periods; and although major patterns of identification may be set during the oedipal transition, later shifts in identification can be of paramount importance. Then, as we mentioned in the chapter on the family, there are the crucial intrafamilial influences involving the parents' relationships with one another, the nature of the family they establish, the structuring influence of the specific family, and the enculturating capacities of the parents that impinge throughout childhood and transcend any single phase.

The approach we shall take specifically differs from those that explicitly or implicitly consider that the infant will unfold into a mature and well-integrated person as a concomitant of physical maturation unless there is something innately wrong with the child, or unless the child is deprived of proper maternal nurture or seriously traumatized emotionally in the first years of life. Such factors are, of course, critical, but we must also consider the positive influences that go into inculcation of emotional stability, stable integration, coherent identity, intellectual development, and that provide familiarity with roles and institutions, and instill the instrumental techniques required for successful adaptation. Some of the fundamentals of this orientation were introduced when we discussed the family's requisite functions of nurturing, structuring, and enculturating the developing child.

TOPOGRAPHIC AND STRUCTURAL CONCEPTS

The Topographic Concept: Conscious and Unconscious Mental Processes

As part of the description of the dynamics of children's development we shall trace the slow organization of the mind, which is part of the personality but not synonymous with it. We shall note the intricate development of the foundations of children's concepts of the world during their first few years of life, and their gradual progression to conceptual thinking (Bruner *et al.,* 1956; Flavell, 1963; Kagan and Moss, 1962; Vygotsky, 1962), and how this epigenesis of their cognitive development intermeshes with their total personality development. But attention will also be directed to the importance of unconscious mentation: how the unconscious processes differ from the conscious in the solving of problems; how they contribute to breadth of experience; how they utilize unverbalized and diffuse factors in decision making; and how they permit the dreams and fantasy without which persons are scarcely human. We shall also examine how drives and impulses that cannot be expressed directly lest they provoke punishment or loss of self-esteem still continue to influence behavior and thought unconsciously in various subtle ways.

The Structural Concept: The Id, Ego, and Superego

We shall also note the emergence of what is usefully termed an *ego,* a construct used to designate the decision-making, self-directing aspects of the self or of the personality. Ego functions depend upon the use of language to construct an internalized representation of the world which can be manipulated in trial-and-error fashion to weigh potential outcomes and to contain gratification of wish, drive, and impulsion in order to cope with "reality" and the pursuit of ultimate objectives. The ego has been conceived as mediating between *id* impulses—the pressure of the basic drives and their pleasure-seeking or tension-releasing derivatives—and the *superego,* a construct that designates the internalized parental directives and, to some extent, also the internalized parental figures who continue to seem somewhat outside of the self. Superego directives, like the parents in childhood, can provide conscious and unconscious support to the ego functions in the person's struggle against pressures from id impulsions. They can also punish, as would imagined parental figures. The id impulses can counter the superego directives sufficiently to force the ego to allow adequate gratifications. It is essential, at this

point, to indicate that these are simply highly useful ways of conceptualizing the structure of the personality, to clarify conflicts, and to help explain why certain motives and thoughts are repressed and kept out of consciousness. There are other useful ways of conceptualizing the structure of the personality,[15] and grave difficulties arise if these abstractions are reified and considered as clearly differentiated parts of either the mind or the personality. These concepts will be presented in greater detail in Chapter 8 after more adequate foundations for their consideration have been established.

Now, as we are about to start the infant on his or her course through life, observing rather than guiding the process, we must be prepared for the countless dangers that beset the path. Children are sturdy, the product of millions of years of trial and error. During the first years, when they neither know the way nor possess the necessary strength or skills, they will be guided by persons who cherish them, and predecessors have trodden trails for them to follow. None traverses the life cycle unscathed. A smooth passage through each developmental phase is neither possible nor even an ideal. The conceptualization provides a pattern against which to measure the actual. Parents and the society strive to provide a nontraumatic passage; they do not foster deviance because they know that it comes unbidden and despite all efforts to avert it. Overprotection or development in an extremely stable and homogeneous setting is likely to produce colorless individuals.[16] As everyday experience often shows, difficulty can strengthen a person; trauma can produce defenses that can serve well in later emergencies; deprivation can harden. It is not a matter of adhering to a norm, but one of balance and integration. A seed bedded in but a handful of soil on a boulder can sometimes grow into a large tree by sending roots down to the earth, roots that firmly wedge it onto the rock: and the sequoia, the greatest of trees, grows best when forest fires periodically threaten its existence; they often scar it deeply but assure the proper composition of the soil.

REFERENCES

Aries, P. (1962). *Centuries of Childhood.* Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Blatt, S. (1974). "Levels of Object Representation in Anaclitic and Introjective Depression," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child,* vol. 29, pp. 107-157. International Universities Press, New York.

Bruner. J„ Goodnow, J., and Austin, G. (1956). *A Study of Thinking.* Wiley, New York.

Burgner, M., and Edgcumbe, R. (1972). "Some Problems in the Conceptualization of Early Object Relationships," *The Psychoanalytic*

Study of the Child, vol. 27, pp. 315—333. International Universities Press, New York.

Engel, G. (1974). Unpublished report.

Engel, G., and Reichman, F. (1956). "Spontaneous and Experimentally Induced Depression in an Infant with a Gastric Fistula," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4:428-452.

Erikson, E. (1950). *Childhood and Society*. W. W. Norton, New York.

____(1959). "Growth and Crises of the 'Healthy Personality,'" *Psychological Issues*, vol. 1, no. 1, Monograph No. 1. International Universities Press, New York, p. 89.

Fairbairn, W. R. D. (1952). *Psycho-Analytic Studies of the Personality*. Tavistock Publications, London.

Flavell, J. (1963). *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*. Van Nostrand, Princeton, N.J.

Freud, A. (1966). *Normality and Pathology in Childhood: Assessments of Development*, vol. 6 of The Writings of Anna Freud. International Universities Press, New York.

Freud, S. (1916-1917). A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. Boni & Liveright, New York.

Gouin Decarie, T. (1966). *Intelligence and Affectivity in Early Childhood: An Experimental Study of Jean Piaget's Object Concept and Object Relations*. International Universities Press, New York.

Grinker, Sr., R., Grinker, Jr., R., and Timberlake, J. (1962). " 'Mentally Healthy' Young Males (Homoclites)," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 6:405-453.

Hartmann, H. (1958). *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*. International Universities Press, New York.

____(1964). *Essays on Ego Psychology: Selected Papers on Psychoanalytic Theory*. International Universities Press, New York.

Hartman, H., Kris, E., and Loewenstein, R. (1946). "Comments on the Formation of Psychic Structure," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, vol. 2, pp. 11-38. International Universities Press, New York.

Kagan, J., and Moss, H. (1962). *From Birth to Maturity*. Wiley, New York.

Lidz, T. (1975). *Hamlet's Enemy: Myth and Madness in Hamlet*. Basic Books, New York.

Newman, P. (1965). *Knowing the Gururumba*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York.

Parsons, T. (1964). "The School Class as a Social System: Some of Its Functions in American Society," in *Social Structure and Personality*. Free Press, New York.

Piaget, J. (1962). *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood*. C. Gattengo and F. M. Hodgson, trans. W. W. Norton, New York.

____(1963). *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*. M. Cook, trans. W. W. Norton, New York.

Piaget, J., and Inhelder, B. (1969). T*he Psychology of the Child.* H. Weaver, trans. Basic Books, New York.

Sullivan, H. S. (1946-1947). *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*. H. Perry and M. Gawel, eds. Norton, New York, 1963.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and Language*. E. Hanfmann and G. Vakar, eds. and trans. M.I.T. Press and John Wiley & Sons, New York.

SUGGESTED READING

Erikson, E. (1956). "The Problem of Ego Identity," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4:56-121.

____(1959). "Growth and Crises of the 'Healthy Personality,'" *Psychological Issues*, vol. 1, no. 1., Monograph No. 1. International Universities Press, New York.

Freud, S. (1933). *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. Norton, New York.

Piaget, J., and Inhelder, B. (1969). *The Psychology of the Child*. H. Weaver, trans. Basic Books, New York.

Sullivan, H. S. (1946-1947). *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*. H. Perry and M. Gawel, eds. Norton, New York, 1963.

Notes

1 In discussing the life cycle we follow a convention whose purpose is to lessen confusion by using the word maturation when referring to biological unfolding and physical growth, and development when referring to personality functions.

2 Differences in societal institutions and role allocations create variations in some aspects of the life cycle in different societies and even in subsystems of the same society— including differences in just when some phasic shifts occur in the life cycle. Thus, the Okinawan child is expected to have very little capacity for self-direction before the age of five, but is given considerable responsibility, particularly for siblings, soon thereafter. Adolescence differs in societies in which sexual intercourse occurs freely at or before puberty from those in which adolescents are warned that intercourse before they are full grown will endanger their lives (Newman, 1965). Old age differs from the period in the United States in societies where people are aged at forty-five and very few live beyond fifty or sixty.

3 Perhaps Helen Keller was enabled to reach her unusual emotional and intellectual capacities because she had the brilliant Miss Sullivan constantly interpreting the world to her—a compensatory advantage that perhaps no other person has ever had. Another notable example is Monica, a girl with a gastric fistula studied by Engel and Reichman (1956) who despite a severe retardation in her development related to hospitalizations and a lengthy period of depressive apathy in early childhood has married and become a competent mother (Engel, 1974).

4 Regression is said to occur to points or levels of fixation. Freud (1916–1917) used the analogy of an advancing army leaving troops at strongholds along its line of march; this "fixation" of troops at the strongpoints progressively weakens the advancing contingents but provides a secure line to which to retreat if the army experiences a setback. However, it seems more suitable to consider fixation as repetitive attempts to resolve old unsolved problems or tasks, and regression as the gaining of relief from anxiety by returning to a period of security or to former ways that do not arouse anxiety.

5 The German word Besetzung was unnecessarily translated by a neologism created from the Greek—cathexis—which has come into common usage not only in psychoanalysis but in many related fields. "Cathexis" connotes the charge that attaches the libidinal energy to something, analogous to a positive or negative charge in electricity. Actually, Besetzung can properly be translated by the term investment, in the sense of an army investing a stronghold, and "invest" or "investment" will be used in

this hook. The use of the word "cathexis" has become somewhat loose in much of the psychoanalytic literature.

6 A theory, like a child, is permanently influenced by its early developmental phases, particularly if such early influences are relegated to the unconscious lest parental figures be offended. Freud had been considering that anxiety states were caused by a damming up of sexual fluids by inhibition or repression of sexual activity, and that neurasthenia was a resultant of excessive sexual activity. The idea of a sexual fluid playing a major role in the production of certain neuroses continued in the modified form of a libido that cathected the various erogenous zones, and that was at first autoerotically invested in the self and then in one or another external object.

7 The oedipal complex was named by Freud after the mythical king of Thebes who unknowingly fulfilled his predicted fate by killing his father, Laius, and marrying his mother, Jocasta, after solving the famous riddle of the Sphinx. When eventually the incestuous nature of the marriage was revealed, Jocasta hanged herself and Oedipus blinded himself. Freud considered that the myth symbolized an unconscious wish in all men that had to be overcome in their lives, and that unresolved residua created problems for everyone but serious problems for some that explained much psychopathology. Freud did not invent the oedipus complex; he discovered it. The story of Oedipus is the myth of the hero found (in one variant or another) in virtually all parts of the world: the tale of the child supposedly put to death lest he eventually kill his father or some father-substitute but who grows up in a foreign land and returns unknowingly to kill his father and marry his mother. Among the most primitive versions are the very ancient myths of Uranus and Kronos, and among the most sophisticated variants that of Shakespeare's Hamlet (Lidz, 1975).

It should be noted that the Oedipus myth proper concerns a father who feared the rivalry of his son (reflecting his own feelings to his father) and a mother who was willing to commit infanticide for her husband's sake. Some myths hold that Laius introduced sodomy into Attica.

8 The orientation, however, remains attached to a system of psychosexual phases based on libidinal shifts, even though it places minimal emphasis upon libidinal concepts and more upon the observable unfolding of the individual in his cultural setting, somewhat in contrast to the formulations of the psychoanalytic ego psychology of Hartmann, Kris, and Loewenstein (1946), and others. Hartmann's important contributions are not discussed in this chapter, as they have greater importance to efforts to reorganize and revitalize psychoanalytic theory than to developmental psychology (Hartmann, 1958, 1964). Unfortunately, his initial emphasis upon the emergence and development of "autonomous ego functions" in social systems became enmeshed in efforts to adhere to libido theory with consequent concepts of neutralization of aggressive and libidinal drives, the positing of countercathexes, etc.

9 Piaget has been interested primarily in epistemology and set out to investigate how people learn to know and the psychological foundations of knowing. His studies led to the discovery and description of a vast amount of knowledge about child development. In evaluating Piaget's work, we must realize his intentions and not criticize him for not studying what we wish he would have studied. However, Piaget follows the French intellectual tradition and Aries has commented in his book Centuries of Childhood that until recently child development meant to the French the child's intellectual development.

10 The uninitiated may find it difficult to find their way into the hundreds of articles and numerous books dealing with various aspects of Piaget's work. Fortunately, a number of useful introductions to it are now available. The reader is referred to *The Psychology of the Child*, which Piaget and Inhelder wrote in 1969 as a synthesis of their studies of cognition; and to J. H. Flavell's *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*, which provides a fairly comprehensive and highly useful introduction that permits the serious student to read meaningfully in Piaget's various works, particularly pages 41-67 for an introduction to the basic theory.

11 The interrelationship had been almost completely neglected in psychoanalytic theories of development and of psychopathology until recently. See Gouin Decarie (1966), Burgner and Edgcumbe (1972), and Blatt (1974).

12 Schemata are, so to speak, the preverbal sensori-motor equivalents of a system of relations and classes. See Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, p. 385.

13 One other major aspect of Piaget's orientation requires mention. The newborn is completely egocentric, apprehending only in terms of how a new sensation meets an existing built-in reflex. Development involves a progressive *decentering* until sometime in adolescence individuals place themselves in their universe and their time in history, and can fit their ideas into abstract systems of logic and thought. However, in each period children must learn to decenter from an "egocentric" use of their new capacities. Egocentrism means not only the placing the self in the center of experience, but also the failure to distinguish the subjective from the objective (Piaget. 1962, p. 285), and the distortion of reality to the point of view of the individual. In a more general sense it includes the overevaluation of cognitive solutions without adequate attention to actual solutions. Thus, in the preoperational stage children believe that their actions or thoughts influence inanimate nature, etc., and adolescents must gradually come to appreciate that the manipulation of ideas in fantasy is not the same as convincing others who have differing orientations and convictions. Problems of cognitive egocentricity at each developmental stage will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

14 Piaget's studies of the early phases of the preoperational period are sparse, limiting their usefulness for clarifying the early development of language, but his studies of the later phases of preoperational development contain some of his most significant work.

15 As, for example, in Fairbairn's (1952) psychoanalytic "object-relations" theory, which does not utilize concepts of the id, ego, and superego in this fashion.

16 See the study of R. Grinker *et al.*(196:) of middle-class, Midwestern students at a Y.M.C.A. college, whom he has designated as "homoclites," persons who are unimaginative and uninterestingly average.