

Ledford J. Bischof, *Adult Psychology*. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. 310 pp. \$5.00.

A differential psychology of the adult years as a special period in the life span of the individual has long been overlooked by the psychological enterprise. Since the early days of G. Stanley Hall, and particularly since the installation of the Child Welfare Research Station at the University of Iowa in 1918, infancy, childhood and adolescence have increasingly become areas of major emphasis in psychological research and theory. In more recent years, with the growing number of older people in society there has been a corresponding effort to concentrate on the psychology of the later years as well. But the years in between, from about age 20 to 65, the most productive in a person's life, have been neglected as a domain of systematic inquiry. Within the last decade or more this situation has begun to improve.

Bischof submits impressive evidence for the momentum which the study of adult psychology is currently developing. For example, of the approximately 930 items contained in the forty-two and a half pages of bibliography at the end of the text (p. 225-298) 5 per cent were dated before 1950, 9 per cent appeared between 1950 and 1960, 20 percent between 1960 and 1965, *while 66 per cent were published between 1965 and 1968*. It is probably rushing matters to say that adult psychology as an established field of inquiry has already arrived, but it is well on its way.

The book begins with an "overview" which gives perspective to the material in the following chapters. Opening with a discussion of "Why Study Adults," and "Who is an Adult," the author turns his attention to various theories of development, the stability over time of personality structure, and the problems and methods of studying adult populations.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal in standard fashion with the topics of "Maturity" and the "Self Image," while chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 discuss "Marital Status," "Parents and Family," "Vocation and Avocation," "Friends and Fellow Citizens" in that order. It is in these four middle chapters (4-7) where, to coin a word, the essential "adulthood" of the book appears. For here one encounters a thoughtful analysis of the tasks associated with marriage, parenthood, work, leisure time, social and civic relationships which are the warp and woof of adult living. In this context the reader becomes aware that the author is writing about *adult* and not child or adolescent psychology.

In the first section of chapter 8 with the omnibus title of the "Body, Brain and Behavior," we find a highly informative presentation of the physiological changes occurring with age and in the second section,

"The Brain" (misleading title) appears a statement of the current position of research on age related changes in intelligence, reaction time, memory, and problem solving.

In a final chapter the author discusses the tasks and adjustments of the later years thus including the full life span in his delineation of the field.

The topical character of the above chapter titles fails to convey several important themes threaded throughout the text. For instance, the author uses the results of longitudinal studies and relevant theory to emphasize the developmental character of change throughout the adult years. This is an explicit feature of each chapter in the book. For illustration—a discussion of theories of development, changes in the self image, a marriage time chart for males, and a comparison of the friendships of young, middle age and older adults in chapters 1, 2, 4, and 7 respectively. He reveals other themes in his recurring reference to questions of measurement, his recognition of social class membership as an important determinant of adult behavior, and his use of comparative data from other parts of the world such as England, France, Sweden and India.

Bischof has not written a book on abnormal psychology. This statement is not intended to detract from the realistic way he handles such topics as divorce, death and crime, or his obvious intention to include a representative sample of adult living within a wide range of normal variation. For example in the chapter on "Marital Status" he devotes eight pages to Masters and Johnson's famous research on the *Human Sexual Response* and does not water down or expurgate, but just as Masters and Johnson does, "tells it like it is."

But the generic items on his agenda are the tasks, adjustments, and difficulties commonly encountered by adults as they live out their years from the beginning of the third decade to the end of life. Thus Bischof focuses on the problems of the *typical* adult, not on the *pathology* of the *problem* adult.

This is not an in-depth book. Ten pages on "Maturity" and sixteen pages devoted to the "Self Image" do not allow sufficient space for in-depth or exhaustive type of presentation. Even if it is more introductory or "surveyish" than "in-depth," it is nevertheless a sound book, based on empirical research throughout and thoroughly documented.

It is an interesting book—obviously and partly because of the intrinsic appeal of the subject matter. It is interesting also because of its format, writing style, and the author's ability to discuss a point clearly without an excessive use of technical terminology.

The book should appeal to three kinds of readers. The person specializing in adult psychology as a field of inquiry will find value

in the author's extensive use of research and theory to amplify and support the implications of his discussion. He will also be impressed by Bischof's 42 and one-half page 900 plus item bibliography, 86 per cent of which has appeared since 1960.

Our second reader is the adult education practitioner. He will find here nothing that explicitly deals with how to teach an adult or how an adult learns. But this book will help him understand with greater depth the client he is attempting to teach with obvious implications for programming and counseling in the operation of the instructional enterprise.

Our third reader is the knowledgeable and curious layman who would like to become better informed on what recent research says about adult living. This book could be, with proper guidance, a major if not *the* major reference in a course for adults on adult psychology.

This is a useful and versatile book. Some day, as the author in the preface freely predicts, it will be done more thoroughly and perhaps better. But at this time and in its present form, it represents an informative and competent performance and contributes substantially to a much neglected but increasingly important field of study.

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Robert E. Sharer. *There Are No Islands*. North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House, 1969. 127 pp. \$3.95.

The observation that adult educators have done more educating than philosophizing about it comes to mind while reflecting on Mr. Sharer's book about the concerns and potentials of the field. (1) He gives us several short essays which reflect his philosophy of continuing education developed over many years as a practitioner at local, state and national levels.

The subtitle, "The Concerns and Potentials of Continuing Education" is a clearer description of what follows than the title. The author demonstrates often that he is intensely aware of his environment and seems to be leading the reader to become similarly aware. The concerns he would have the field develop are related to the human condition—the concerns man has in maintaining and developing himself in an environment too often made hostile by his own hand.

These concerns of man are related to those which the field of continuing education has in developing appropriate agencies and learning experiences for its clientele. They are: selecting desirable emphases; definition and implementation of appropriate roles for agencies and in-