

SOCIALIZATION refers to the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their society. It is apparent that the socialization experienced by a person in childhood cannot prepare him for all the roles he will be expected to fill in later years. People move through a sequence of different positions in society, in accord with different stages of the life cycle. Changes in the demands upon them arise from their mobility, both geographic and social, and from the customs of their society which may vary during their lifetimes. A half century of important research on socialization of the child has described the development of children's personalities and social behavior; there has been much less work, almost none in comparison, on socialization at later stages of the life cycle. Moreover, neither those studying child socialization nor those studying adult socialization have yet realized the full extent of the similarity of their research interests, concepts, and procedures.

This essay is concerned with the characteristics of socialization at different times in the individual life span and is focused on the question of whether the fundamental components of socialization differ in important ways in different stages of the life cycle—in particular, whether there are differences between socialization in childhood and socialization in adulthood. Throughout, the objective has been to speculate, to try to identify topics warranting further study, and generally to open up the field of inquiry rather than to partition it into areas.

### *Personality in Relation to Society*

There are two great traditions in the study of personality in relation to society. One is the interest in how individuals adjust to soci-