

A GENERAL THEORY OF BUREAUCRACY by Elliott Jaques. Exeter, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980. 412 pp., paper.

Reviewer: JOHN GLASS, Private Practice, Studio City, California

Elliott Jaques, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Brunel University Institute of Organizational and Social Studies in Britain, is both a qualified psychoanalyst and a social therapist. He is best known for his work over a period of 30 years with the Glacier Metal Company while he was associated with the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. His pioneering work in action research with organizations was reported in *The Changing Culture of the Factory* (Tavistock, 1951), *The Measurement of Responsibility* (Tavistock, 1956), *Equitable Payment* (Heinemann, 1961) and subsequent works.

One of the most important findings to come out of the Glacier research was that individuals in organizations need to have their role and status clearly defined in ways acceptable to themselves and their colleagues. This book builds on his previous work and in it, Jaques develops a general theoretical construction of how social institutions and human nature affect each other with special reference to bureaucracy.

Jaques argues that bureaucracies, which he defines as hierarchically stratified managerial employment systems where people work for a wage or salary, are neither inherently humanizing or dehumanizing; rather, problems arise when role boundaries and authority patterns are not properly arranged.

The major contribution by Jaques, which underlies much of his theory of bureaucracy, is the concept of "time span of discretion." This is a scheme for evaluating jobs by the length of time before decisions made by an individual are reviewed and evaluated by his or her superior. The lowest level jobs have a short time span; work is frequently checked, while at the highest levels it may be several years before the effectiveness of a decision shows up.

The work capacity of individuals, the time span of positions occupied, and wage and salary earned are independent variables which can be in or out of balance and can be arranged so as to maximize individual and organizational functioning. When there is a lack of congruence between a person's capacity, the level of work (time span), and level of payment, stress and conflict occur between the individual and society and within the individual.

The utility of this analysis is evident, for example, for women who seek to remove inequities of pay for positions such as administrative assistant which often have time spans equivalent to those of management positions commanding far higher salaries.

What is so unique about Jaques' work is that he takes both individual differences and social structure into account in this major advancement of bureaucratic theory. Jaques provides a blueprint, based on solid research and practice, for the organization and control of bureaucracy compatible with the needs of an open and democratic society. He is squarely in favor of small scale, step-by-step, deliberate design of social institutions as being crucial for a good society. Bureaucracy is inevitable, and the attainment of humanitarian bureaucratic systems is essential for human progress in industrial societies.

Jaques' book is invaluable for student, theorist, and practitioner alike, not only as a significant advance in organizational theory, but as an exemplary instance of theory growing out of practice - an example of clinical sociology at its very best.

STRATEGIC STYLES: COPING IN THE INNER CITY by Janet Mancini.
Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1981. 330 pp.

Reviewer: SUZANNE POWERS, Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Janet Mancini has written a stimulating clinical analysis that is likely to become a landmark book in clinical sociology. Holding constant the variables of socioeconomic status, age, race and geographical location, the author studies the evolving identities of five young men. All five are black and live in poverty. The book addresses the basic issue of how five distinctly different personalities and coping styles can emerge with so many constants.

Taking the symbolic interactionist perspective, Mancini develops a typology of "strategic styles" — ways of interacting which are predictable and identifiable. Each of the five young men has his own strategic style: the cool guy, the conformist, the tough guy, the actor, the retreator. The cool guy is characterized by moving toward others, the conformist moves with others, the tough guy moves against others, the actor moves over and the retreator moves away. Mancini states, "The styles are tools with which the individual shapes and structures interaction with others in terms of controlling them (or allowing them to control him) and satisfying his needs for affection, approval, intimacy, status, and so forth. . . . The strategic styles are the products of two variables — activity/passivity on the one hand, and friendliness/hostility on the other."