

The Program of the Journal

An Editorial

This first issue of the *American Journal of Individual Psychology* marks a step forward for Adlerian Psychology in the United States. Sponsored by the newly-formed national society, it becomes the official organ of Adlerian psychologists in this country.

On this occasion it is appropriate to state the aims and goals of the *Journal*. It is self-evident that the *Journal* should provide the opportunity for all our co-workers to share with each other their ideas and observations. In this way we all can grow and enrich each other. The development of Individual Psychology depends on scientific studies and their compilation and publication, and the *Journal* offers such opportunity.

It is also of utmost importance that we recognize our obligation to scientific progress in general by making our findings available to those who are not fully acquainted with Individual Psychology and its contribution to an understanding of the dynamics operating within each individual and between individuals and groups. The significance of our contribution is evidenced by the amount of work which each one of us has to carry in his work as psychiatrist, psychologist, educator, or social scientist. Overwhelmed with the burden of service which is expected from us, we may be inclined to feel that this is all we can do. Such inclination to limit ourselves to our practical work is enhanced by personal experiences, from which none of us is exempted, when we encounter a lack of understanding if not antagonism from professional groups. There is real danger that we may contribute to a splendid—and often not so splendid—isolation in the scientific fields to which we belong by training and function. If we are realistic, we must admit that we ourselves oppose to a large extent the type of research which is prevalent in certain areas, as we find opposition to our own scientific position and approach. We cannot step aside without depriving ourselves of our due place and recognition, and without denying others the benefit of our knowledge and information.

An inevitable by-product of our concern with and our concentration on the task of teaching others is a tendency to restate again the theoretical framework within which we operate. It is true that the theoretical formulations developed by Adler and his co-workers during what we may call the "formative" period of Individual Psychology are insufficiently known within the various fields of scientific investi-

gation and practice. Much progress has been achieved during recent years, as evidenced by the many accurate descriptions of Adlerian concepts and methods in recent textbooks, in contrast to those published previously when only a few of Adler's basic tenets were acknowledged, and then often misunderstood. But it contributes little to the progress of our school of thought, nor does it effect an increased understanding among scientists, if we merely repeat what has been said and written so many times before. A mere restatement of our principles is not what we need in this journal.

A clarification of our theoretical premises is nevertheless indispensable. It can be accomplished by comparative studies of our position and that of other well defined and recognized theories. Accurate and objective studies of this kind can add considerably to the process of integration which seems to be of foremost importance at the present time. It is perhaps less important to emphasize that Adler discovered many years ago what is now so often rediscovered by piecemeal, one aspect here and one there. We can and must point to the general direction of research which seems to support many of Adler's tenets. Such a tendency becomes obvious in exploring the similarities and contradictions between us and others. We must know what others do and where they stand if we wish to avoid the deplorable tendency of many to ignore and neglect what has been found before or elsewhere. It would be fatal for us to follow the example of many outstanding "experts" who seem to be oblivious to anything which has not been reported by either their master or their friends.

For this reason we welcome papers of comparative study. The present issue contains such papers, and more research in this direction is under way. We plan to open the pages of this journal to a frank discussion between representatives of other schools and ourselves; we will select certain subjects and invite outstanding personalities to present their position for a discussion with us. Whatever we can contribute to a better understanding between each other can be regarded as scientific progress. Such understanding would enrich the knowledge of all and permit a greater utilization of our common knowledge by many who so far know little of each other.

The second area in which our co-workers can make an important scientific contribution is the detailed description of the techniques they use in their work. Case studies indicating the methods used and the results obtained can elucidate theoretical considerations far better than brilliant formulations. We may know that our approaches are effective,

but we have the obligation to share our observations with others who may equally benefit from the application of these methods. We do not need "proof" of our "success," but rather clear indication of what we are doing, and why. Let us open our files and not sit on them! Let us not excuse our inertia by pleading overwork or lack of time. We are amiss if we fail to meet our obligation to publish our observations and findings. Failing to publish them, we hamper scientific progress. Since the number of trained Adlerian psychologists in this country is comparatively small, every one of us must accept the responsibility to contribute to the knowledge, both of our co-workers and of those non-Adlerians who are willing to see what we may have to offer. This is an urgent appeal to each one of our members to take the pains of preparing and submitting a scientific paper to the *Journal*.

A free and more frequent communication of a scientific nature is bound to reveal the evolutionary process within our own school of thought. Science never stands still. If any scientific endeavor fails to bring about progress, we may seriously doubt its scientific validity. Our frame of reference, if sound and accurate, must inevitably lead to new horizons, to improved approaches and to greater insight.

Last but not least, we need the type of research which could prove or disprove the validity of certain assumptions which Adler made and which we have asserted. We must keep in mind the scientific conditions at the time, from which Adler, like his contemporaries, made his observations and drew his conclusions. It is characteristic for the medical approach to draw far-reaching conclusions from relatively few observations. The physician who tries to treat every single patient effectively cannot wait for a long series of controlled experiments. Most of medical progress, in all fields of medicine, has been based on relatively few observations. The time has come to explore with accepted scientific methods the validity of dynamics which we so well recognize in our patients, in our work. We might be completely correct, and we have many reasons to assume that we are; but we have to document our observations with demonstrable facts which permit re-examination. Some of our co-workers, particularly in the field of clinical psychology, are already engaged in this type of research. We can hope to present their findings in these pages before too long.

The realization of our plans depends on the members of our national and local societies to make this journal what it should and could be, a contribution of Adlerian Psychology to scientific progress.

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