

How The Child Selects His Symptoms

ALFRED ADLER

In my opinion the problem of symptom-selection is the most difficult of all subjects in neurosis-psychology and psychology in general, and I believe that it should not be approached before the psychologist has mastered the numerous complexities that neurosis-psychology and psychiatry are forever presenting to us. In addition he must begin by discarding all vague prejudices and personal biases, for symptom-selection is a problem that demands absolutely water-tight conclusions, and not one of the links in the chain can afford to be a weak one. In fact the psychologist must go so far as to be able to say: "Were I in the same position as this child, had I the same misinterpretation of the meaning of life and had I been trained as he has been trained, then I, too, would have suffered from approximately the same symptoms." Only then, after identifying himself wholly with the child, can he conclude that he has really understood the case and discovered the reason for the child's selection of certain symptoms.

We can understand symptom-selection only if we look upon symptoms as creations, as works of art. We must forget our self-imposed judgments and accept with admiration the fact that every individual is an artist in his mode of life, even in his very errors. Behind his mistakes lie influences that could not have been good ones and to which he reacted with an erroneous response.

Thus when we try to prove something from any particular symptom we can do so only if we look upon the symptom as a single part of a complete whole, i. e. we must find in every symptom something that lies deeper than the outward and visible signs, something that underlies the actual manifestation and the form of suffering itself. We must look *behind* the headache, the anxiety-symptom, the obsession-idea, *behind* the fact of an individual being a thief, or a loafer in school. For behind lies something more, something personal and entirely individual. Phrases and formulae will not help us, as the more clearly we observe symptoms and the more we understand of the structure of the psyche, so the more will we realize that no two symptoms have ever exactly the same significance. There are always distinctions, some of which are very obvious indeed. But there is one assumption we can make in all cases; we can always say: "In this symptom, in this creative accomplishment — whose creator and master is always the patient himself — *there is inevitably a movement heading toward some kind of successful achievement.*" There is always an "I will," never an "I am"; a will-to-become that cannot fail to be visible to the student of symptom-selection. Whether we realize it or not this student cannot help but connect the selection of a symptom with the individual's struggle to reach a chosen goal, but he will never grasp and understand this struggle if his point of view is at fault.

First we must stop to consider the question of heredity and see if it plays any part in symptom-selection, for often when we examine a patient's family-tree, we find a certain similarity of symptoms existing. Well, I have already said that we can never draw conclusions from external similarities of symptomatic resemblances, and here we can well say that when two individuals — even if related to one another — tackle the same job the result is *not* the same. In Individual Psychology we try to discover *all* the factors that have caused the individual to take the wrong path and the first of these factors is the child's opinion of his own physical self, his attitude towards the body that is to accompany him through life and withstand the demands of the outer world. It does not take us long to see just where the child feels he "stands" and how he feels he should behave in life; it is not hard to see that one child is self-confident, another less so, one very active, another less active; one apprehensive and thinking always of himself, another ready to mix with others, do things with them, help and play cooperatively and not always ready to put the whole burden on someone else's shoulders, etc. Of course, in these examples, I have only picked out certain general types, and this will not be enough for our solving of the individual problems, as there are invariably thousands of variations to be considered in the various individual cases. Still, we can observe very quickly the influence that the child's physical constitution has had upon him and the extent to which he is organically sound; also how he has reacted to his body and organs and how he adapts and employs them. It is very easy for the child to go wrong. No matter what his environment may be he finds himself confronted by the demands of life, and no matter how slight these demands may be, still they have their effect upon the child's respiration, movements, assimilation of food, cleanliness, etc. Naturally all these everyday functions have a relationship with the child's organic soundness. Individual Psychology can state with a greater degree of certainty than existed hitherto, that children who are born with defective organs are in one way or another impressed by the fact; they are given an impression of personal weakness, insecurity and inferiority, which becomes particularly strong when they find themselves in a difficult situation.

Here I must mention an important point that will bring us nearer to an understanding of symptom-selection. If such a condition of insecurity, of inferiority feeling, persists over a long period, it is clear that the child will plan its life and life-style accordingly. So we can conclude that physical defects act as a *training* for the child, a training that teaches it to form a certain attitude toward the tasks of life, a training that is chiefly characterized by the fact that the child becomes abnormally self-centered and develops certain character-tendencies that the outside will condemn as improper and unjustified. But, from the child's point of view, these tendencies are both necessary and sensible. You will find, for instance, that such a child displays exaggerated caution, and that is

a trait that tells us he has very little self-confidence and suspects the world of being full of dangers. You will find traits of hyper-sensitivity; a sign that the child has a great fear of being the loser in the event of attack. You will find traits of impatience, and these, too, are the stamp of an individual who is lacking in self-certainty, who cannot wait, but believes his desires must be fulfilled immediately as otherwise he will feel he has suffered a defeat.

As you know, there exist symptoms of a physical nature which constantly recur or even become chronic although no organic cause is behind them. Often, however, they divulge the individual's "place of least resistance" (*locus minoris resistantiae*). While in later years distinct manifestations of organic injury may come to light, in childhood we find that the child, not feeling in the least that he is acting at all oddly, will take a particular interest in tending and developing the creative ability of his "place of least resistance". Children who suffer in some way from weakness of vision take a particular interest in observing perspective, colour, line, shadow and levels, in order to grasp them more completely. There is no doubt that they suffer from an unusually strong tension, which sometimes can be put to great advantages; a tension that they may direct later into channels that will give them a better grasp of visible things (painting, etc.). Sometimes, however, they give up very soon and do not bother anymore with visual matters, because they have tried and met with no success. The same applies to other defective organs, to inferiority of nutritive organs, for instance. Children with defects of the nutritive tract often suffer for a long time and have to go hungry in order to be healthy or even in order to live; they have to gulp down unpleasant forms of food and watch over their nutrition in every way, with the result that their interest becomes linked up artificially with the problem of food. (This Czerny pointed out many years ago.) Frequently one finds that not only is their nutritive apparatus susceptible and subject to illness, but sometimes the same susceptibility will be found in their family-tree. Often such individuals develop a great interest in food, love to talk about food, and can even turn their interest to a certain advantage. But in actuality they impose a burden upon life and behave in a way that is not conducive to harmonious living. For we must realize something that is emphasized in every sphere of existence, namely, that if anything in our composition, in the structure of our psychic existence, is subject to over-emphasis, the harmony of communal life is upset.

Cleanliness for example. Say a child decides to over-emphasize cleanliness and to regard it as the most important thing in life. When he grows up, if this thought is still paramount in his mind and he feels that everything else must take second place to washing, he is but a short step from a wash-compulsion neurosis. Such an individual will present himself to the world (not in words, but letting his cleanliness speak for him) in all his immaculateness, much to the detriment of others, and the

fact that he will never consider other people to be properly clean will not help him toward cooperative work. So far as I can see, there is perhaps one function that cannot be made personally and socially harmful by being over-stressed, and that is the function of social interest. I believe that recognition of the vital part played by over-emphasis can help us greatly in understanding a vast number of symptoms both within and without the sphere of neurosis.

For example, let us take again the child who has experienced nutritive difficulties. As he is deeply concerned with all problems of food, is avidly voracious and desires food above all, it is not long before he sees a connection between the problem of food and the problem of money and stretches his interest to include the latter. We often find this double-avidity in a type which I described a long time ago as the "pocket Napoleon". There are many examples of this kind and sometimes they open up vistas of so interesting a nature that I can warmly commend you to bear this aspect well in mind. A long time ago Czerny pointed out the importance of the nutritive system in regard to the individual's psychic development and also in relation to problems of neurosis. In each individual case there are other noteworthy points I cannot go into now and can only indicate to the psychologist the line he should follow. Of course, sometimes the line is clearly visible, and sometimes very tortuous to follow and is not found solely in cases of organ inferiorities which have influenced the life-style, but in all cases of children who have in some way or other placed themselves artificially in sharp opposition to the problems of life and are thus unprepared to meet the demands of civilization.

We must also consider the influences connected with the child's upbringing, which come to bear upon the child at an early age. Not simply the economic conditions in the family, the attitude of the child's teachers, and the skill and experience of the mother, but also the *entire* family situation. For the waves of social life lap into the nursery itself and are forever at work influencing the growing child.

To protect his personality, the child is obliged to adopt some attitude toward his family; he must find a "direction" in which to move, and this direction will be one that aims, by this or that route, at having done with the problems of life. He will take a direction which promises to lead him to an ideal state, in which all his problems are resolved. But at the same time, the family situation will be a strongly stimulating and motivating factor, one that can easily influence the child's choice of symptoms, and we must never neglect to consider how the child's psyche has been affected by it. The child has to prepare to meet a constant stream of demands from life, demands which are fairly uniform for every person. His preparation for this battle is one with which his mother must help him to the best of her ability, for the attitude he forms can only be a man-made creation and thus will always fall short of an *ideal* solution to

his problems. Hence we can see, too, that all manner of results will obtain from the rearing of the child, from the attempt to bring his primitive capabilities into harmony with civilized life. We can see that innumerable false moves will be made, mistakes that will sway the child's attitude and make him lean in a certain direction, so that the inevitable arrival of the problems and tasks of life will find him in a state of inadequate preparation. We can consider these problems of life (not absolutely literally, of course) in the light of mathematical problems. A correct solution will be found only by the individual who has had mathematical training. So we must train the child in such a way that he will become a cooperating individual, as our culture demands he should be; train him to be prepared to solve the many problems that cannot be overcome without social interest; problems of "I" and "Thou", problems of occupation, problems of love; in all of which it is essential for the individual to have a sufficiency of interest in his partner, and in other people generally.

As we know, the life-style is fixed by the fifth year of life at most and does not undergo any change unless the child understands the flaws in the faulty construction and corrects them. This life-style has a form and breadth that corresponds with the stage of progress reached in the child's life at the time the style becomes fixed. So the question arises; how will this specially constructed life-style—with its ingrained influence of mother, environment, and, also, the child's *own* creative abilities—respond when the child is confronted by a problem for which his life-style is not prepared? The response tells us immediately to what extent misconceptions of the outside world have crept into the construction of his life-style and left their mark within it. Sometimes a child will respond by depending entirely upon another person, thereby binding that person to him, and this is the case with the pampered child. In actual fact there are only very few children who are *not* pampered and possibly every child, at the beginning of its life, is bound to experience a certain degree of pampering. Thus the proper mode of training is one that teaches the child to become an independent cooperator as soon as possible and it is to this end, of course, that our educational efforts are devoted. We certainly would not even mention symptoms, failures and the family paths followed by the psyche, if we were able to believe that those at fault were co-operators, and that they lived, worked and loved in a cooperative way. But that is just what they do not do, and thus mankind is forever occupied with creating laws, and with instituting corrective improvements, etc. Since the perfect method of conducting a child's upbringing is only very rarely employed, there will always be many weak spots in the development of every child. But this is where really the most vitally important function of upbringing comes in, namely the discovering and improving of these weak spots at an early stage in the child's life. People often come to me and protest: "I have done absolutely everything I could;

I have tried to make the child independent and there just hasn't been any success. For instance, he makes trouble about eating, won't go to bed, won't evacuate his bowels easily, is jealous of his younger sister, wets the bed, calls out at night, etc." We can only reply, "Your method was not a successful one." Today probably we have not yet reached the stage of being able to educate a child to such a degree that he will, as a matter of course, move in a cooperative direction. Society could certainly do better than it is doing today in this respect and if it would only do more we would certainly not have to put up with children who refused to carry out the daily functions of civilized life. For a child rejects such civilized functions only when the mother is unable to succeed in handing them on to him. Though there may be difficulties to be met with in training the child, there is no doubt at all they may be successfully overcome and if anyone doubts this, I would like to say: "If you don't believe that one can train a child in such a way he will come into line with civilized demands, won't you at least believe that it is possible to train any child to be just the contrary; to mess its bed, be difficult over eating, not go to sleep, and hate its father or mother?" It would certainly not be difficult to do this. Thus we can see that the whole problem of symptoms is a matter of upbringing, and it is mainly pampered children—who have not reached the point of being able to meet the problems of life and who are accustomed to see their every wish fulfilled—who hate anyone who tries to stand in the way of their desires. They are the children who bind themselves tightly to one person and try to eliminate all others from their lives. They are the children who, later, (and even at quite an early stage) can in extreme cases be described as having an Oedipus Complex. They are children who have rejected culture, who are opposed to culture because no one has succeeded in imbuing them with it. They have an intense love for themselves, and boast "I come first; I do what I want and don't bother myself about other people." We see their rejection of cooperation at an early age: their training for maladjustment begins on the first day of life. I cannot stress enough how important it is not only that the child should not be pampered in its early years but also that a definite method be introduced into its life from the very beginning, so that the danger of a future clash with the demands of civilized life be avoided. As a rule we can be successful. But it is no use to look upon the situation simply as though unclean children were "naturally" inclined to be nuisances.

Let us now discuss the problem of the pampered child. Pampered children live in a situation in which their inferiority feeling is outstandingly intensified; and we all know today that this condition exists because the pampered child regards any alternative situation as a danger, as a limiting of his sphere of power, so that he lives in a world in which he is forever suspecting dangers, insecurity, and defeat. Within the pampering circle at least he is determined to be a king, and we know that pam-

pered children are better trained to become home-tyrants than to become anything else. The mother is the first person to become subject to this tyranny because she is the first person to offer herself to the child, so that actually pampering on the part of the mother is the principal cause of a child taking to erroneous paths. Now there are innumerable parents who have no proper grasp of the facts of life; sometimes they have a pampered childhood of their own behind them and are encircled by fallacious traditions. They make the mistake of passing on their false notions to the child. For instance, they lay exaggerated emphasis on the question of eating, thereby giving the child the opportunity of rebelling against eating. If a pampered child notices that by rebelling in such a way he gets a lot of attention and pampering, he rebels all the more. There can be no question that a child who rejects food has a far greater sense of superiority and a far greater satisfaction of his striving for superiority than is felt by other children. These pampered ones, after a few preliminary trials, hit on just the right point from which to carry on the battle. Like practised strategists they attack where the resistance is most vulnerable. Thus, if the family lays great stress upon the necessity for cleanliness in bed, and the child has reason to suppose that he will be able to get his mother's attention by night as well as by day, we can well expect him to become a bed-wetter. In saying this I am not neglecting the fact that defective organic functions, physical anomalies, etc., can also play a part in the game. But if a pampered child who suffers from any minor physical trouble (and also a pampered child who does *not* have these troubles) is constantly being lectured to on a certain subject—say on the proper way to speak, eat, sleep, evacuate the bowels, urinate, etc.—and lectured to in such a manner that he is quickly able to notice a way in which to get a hold on others, then he will almost certainly become a stuttrer, make difficulties over eating and sleeping, and a bed-wetter. The same applies to difficulties over bowel-evacuation. There are many parents who regard the evacuation of the bowels as a matter of vital importance. A pampered child will spot this fact at once and force the family to spend a vast amount of time in attending to his bowel-evacuation. He moves quite instinctively, striving frantically to gain his own ends, and automatically places his own satisfaction on an elevated plane so that somehow or other he may force his way into the center of the pampering circle.

There are other aspects to be considered, of course, but my chief intention is to show how the selection of certain symptoms is occasioned by defective upbringing. If symptoms disappear later on it is always because the individual is in a situation in which they are no longer of any benefit to him. When an individual grows up and enters a situation in which he does not find himself prepared, the reason is always to be found in his defective ability to be a social member, a cooperator. In such a situation a *physical tension* arises, a tension which, through the

vegetative system, grips the inferior organs or, to say the least, the organic-inferiority manifests itself. When a certain method is tried out and found to be successful, the pampered individual will use it again and again. As in neurosis, his aim is always to enlist the support of others; to exploit the social services of other people.

I have deliberately chosen to cite simple cases in this chapter, for my aim primarily has been to show how one can learn to understand the child's selection of a certain symptom. In continuing I want to say that there are children who, owing to a lack of social interest are found also to lack a more important ability, an ability that really determines the value of an individual, namely active *performances*. Now in modern life, even in childhood, it is very hard to avoid all active performance, but one can go a long way toward doing so, as we see in cases of neurosis. The dues of life are demanded of all of us because we live in a community-world, but they can be cut down to the minimum through neurosis. The neurotic attaches himself to someone who shoulders his dues for him; he insists upon the cooperation of others, but at the same time contributes practically nothing himself. Such a situation can arise only if an individual feels himself threatened by a defeat: when he has to a greater or lesser degree the vague impression that he is too weak, that he has no real value. Such people are individuals who think only of themselves and of their vanity: they cannot ever forget themselves, can never concentrate their whole strength on a bit of work and can only think: "How do I look? What impression am I making? What do people think about me? What do I get?" It is among such people that we find strong antagonistic feelings, jealousy, spite, obstinacy, etc.—always signs that their attitude toward society has become a hostile one. This is a trend that may be traced back to the beginning of the individual's life and shows that his education was not successful in moulding the prototype into a cooperative individual. In every case you will find corroboration of this fact if the line of life is examined from childhood onwards.

There still remains for us to discuss the question of how the individual's creative powers are displayed in the forming of his symptoms. Let me give an example: If I have in my mind's eye a goal that means the avoidance of performance, and on account of my anxiety feelings I have been trained since childhood to let another person work for me, look after me, support me, sacrifice personal freedom for me, and become my very slave, I must, so long as I follow such a path, make it as foot-worthy a path as possible so that I will reach my goal safely. Now how am I to *fashion* my anxiety, the anxiety which absolves me from taking part in any social cooperation and forces another person to relieve me of my anxiety-burden?

Patients give us a very clear answer to this question. They do not understand what they are telling us and they have no idea that they are opening the windows of their mental-factories and allowing us to look

in and observe what is going on when they say, for instance: "I feel the ground is unsteady", or "I think of my husband's death", or "I am afraid that I will become unconscious, that I will have a heart-attack", etc. Particularly with the pampered individual, thoughts of death of others play an unbelievably large role, because death might rob him of his supports, might take away one of his tyrannized subjects. The patient is forever preoccupied with thoughts of how awful it would be to him if his supports were to fall away from him, but by means of these thoughts, which are questions of life and death to him, he is enabled to create a strong anxiety-state, to feel as if the person concerned were *really* dead. That is to say, he identifies himself with a situation which might possibly exist in the future. We see this with melancholics who live as though disaster had already occurred.

In other studies, the reader will have ample opportunity to examine the problem of symptom-selection in nervous adults. So for the moment I will only say that if a certain symptom is selected in childhood and found workable, the neurotic adult will often employ it in his later life as a means of furthering his asocial ends. This cannot be described as "repression"; it is a definite employment of past experiences for present and future use.

In closing the present study, I would like to cite two simple case histories which will help the reader to see the whole problem of symptom-selection in a clearer light.

Case 1. A boy, 13, was in his fifth year at public school, which meant that he had "repeated" twice already. He was considered the worst pupil in the school, and apart from that he had committed thefts on various occasions and several times had run away from home and disappeared for some days until found and brought back by the police. The teacher had tried to improve the boy by punishing and reprimanding him, but neither punishment nor kindness had done the boy any good. So eventually he was sent to a reformatory and arrived there with a certificate stating that he was feeble-minded.

One of the teachers in the reformatory was a pupil of mine, and this man did not merely consider the *symptoms* of the case, but also studied the boy's life-style and, thereby, his *choice* of symptoms, being convinced that no two thieves are exactly similar to one another. Because he realized that the boy's mistakes were manifestations of his whole personality, he strove to probe to the kernel of the personality in order to find the "psychic constitution".

He realized too that he could approach the examination from any angle he chose, because (to revert to our musical simile) in every symptom will be found the individual's complete, basic Leitmotiv. So he began by collecting the boy's school reports. There he found that the boy had had good reports for the first three grades and had only got a bad one when he reached the fourth grade. From this he concluded that the

boy must, for some reason or other, have been unprepared to face the fourth grade. He decided that the boy had had a new teacher in the fourth grade, which proved to be correct. He was able to find out that for the first three years the boy had had a friendly teacher, and an unfriendly one in the fourth year, so that his life-style had not been prepared for an unfriendly master. He could conclude that the boy was a pampered child who only progressed *conditionally* (as his life-style demanded), i. e., only when he was treated pleasantly. As a result of such a psychic constitution, it was obvious that if the child had to face some test of his functional ability—as, in this case, the test of a strict teacher—he was bound to respond with a symptom that expressed refusal. The teacher was able to conclude this much simply by examining the child's school reports, and the child himself confirmed the teacher's guesses. The teacher asked him: "What did you do with the things and the money you stole?" The boy replied: "I gave them to the other boys so that they'd be my friends, because I haven't got any friends; because I'm poor and the worst in the class, the others always avoid me."

Here again we see the strong basic Leitmotiv at work; one that leads to thieving being selected as a symptom. We can see the desires of this boy, his craving for affection and his readiness to obtain the affection of others by bribery. We can guess that his mother pampered him, but we will have to corroborate this guess. "What was your purpose in running away from home?" he was asked next. He said: "I hid myself in the woods, or in a barn. But at night I always went to the woods and collected fire-wood and put it in front of the kitchen door so that my mother would have fuel for her cooking." Again he steals, this time in order to bribe his mother, to get her affection, just as he did with his companions. This is the only way he knows of getting enough of the pampering attention which to him is the whole object in life.

Can anyone suggest a better way? He is a bad pupil, knocked about by his teacher, unprepared to make his way in the world—how is he to make friends? Under such circumstances I can think of no more efficient means of doing so than the means he chose. We can say that despite his school record this boy is intelligent. He has done his job as thoroughly as any other intelligent person!

Here you can see the selection of a symptom; the way he attacks at the vulnerable point in order to reach his goal. At school he only expected to be reprimanded. If I expected such treatment I should certainly not go to school either. This choice of a symptom is intelligent, apt and forceful. He ran away from home because his father was strict and because if he brought home bad reports his father beat him, his mother cried and became unfriendly. He ran away to touch his mother's heart. So you see how in each of his symptoms there is more than meets the eye; there is always the one Leitmotiv. He thieves to bribe others, he runs away to frighten his mother and win her affection, and he rejects

school work as a protest against his teacher's lack of affection. These symptoms are all part of a striving to get warmth, to be pampered. In this case I also want to show you how the psychic constitution stretches far back into this boy's childhood. I will do this by giving two of his earliest recollections because, as I explained on other occasions, his recollections will tell us just which of the many incidents in his life have made an impression upon his memory:

"When I was four years old my father sent me to get a paper, but—".

Already we can comment on this. The word "but" is enough to tell us that this child is about to try and circumvent the demands made upon him by his strict father. He is not interested in his father's wants, just as later he was not interested in the strict teacher. The recollection ended as follows:

"But I went to my uncle who gave me some cakes which I took home to my mother."

When we follow this plan of procedure we are able to see that the child is only interested in his mother and will only be partial to another person—be it man or woman—if that person coddles him "like his mother". Without coddling he never goes ahead.

In regard to treatment for this child we can see that he cannot be influenced *unless he is pampered first*; and this fact can only be comprehended if one has really grasped his whole life-style. We certainly won't achieve anything only by pampering him; it is the same treatment as he has had before. But unless we pamper and "warm" him at the *beginning* he will not become receptive. This fact was realized by the teacher in the reformatory who began by handling the child along these lines.

Another of this child's recollections was:

"I was at a railway station and a freight-car caught fire. In the car there were a lot of children's toy balls. The workmen tried to save these balls from being burnt and threw them out in the open. A whole crowd of children and grown-ups were standing around and took the balls when they were thrown out."

We see that when he was only three years old thieving had become something that could be done easily and presented real possibilities. It is easy for a child to conclude from such an event that things may be come by lightly, without difficulty, without cooperation, without personal accomplishment—simply by letting others do all the work. One is assured of the help of others and may partake of the fruit of their labors.

I want to give another example, not a complicated one, but one that expresses very clearly the process of symptom-selection. In reading it I will ask you to remember something I mentioned before; that pampered children are cowardly and anxious, because they are always accustomed to being supported, and thus when they find themselves in a threatening situation they always exhibit anxiety-symptoms.

Case 2. A boy who, at the age of five, was one of the most refractory children imaginable. He demanded so much of his mother that she was always in a state of exhaustion. He would climb onto the table with his shoes on, put his hands into the soup-tureen, take a screw-driver and remove all the screws from the bed-frame, smash all his toys, etc. If his mother wanted to read he would put all the lights out, if she played the piano he shut his ears and began to scream at the top of his voice. Obviously he was a terrible burden and the parents did everything they could to reform him. We can tell already that this naughtiness is obviously the result of the child having been put to the test in some way or other; he has come up against something he cannot face. The parents were given any amount of advice and were told to send him out with other boys. When they did so the boy got hold of innumerable smutty expressions and always came home filthy.

His father took him to the Zoo to divert his mind. For a long time the boy had gained the attention of his parents by sleeping troublesomely, screaming out at night (as pampered children often do) and even walking in his sleep sometimes. After he had been to the Zoo he screamed still more at night and made a lot of bother about going to bed; he couldn't shut his eyes because as soon as he did he saw the snakes his father had shown him at the Zoo. So you see, one can take this child to the Zoo—and he will simply utilize that institution according to the dictates of his life-style. He had been put to the test when his younger brother was born; as a result of this birth his sphere of power was narrowed, and he tried by every possible means to extend it again so as to be the central figure once more.

We see that this child selected *anxiety* as a symptom. Why did he not choose to wet his bed? Why did he not choose to make trouble over defecation? Has he perhaps a different inherited disposition? Has he other "erogenous zones"? I reply that should you wish I could *make* this child a bed-wetter and cultivate in him a tendency to make trouble over evacuating his bowels. No, we must conclude that his mother gave little attention to questions of urination and bowel-evacuation, so that the child never had occasion to realize that they too would be good weapons to employ.

The problem of symptom-selection cannot be understood if it is treated like a problem in mathematics which demands no more than a formula for its solution. We must reject all formulae. We must realize that:—To understand is to find proof of what you are able to guess at by virtue of far-reaching experience.

One must, of course, employ the general diagnosis of Individual Psychology, but that in itself is not nearly enough and must be followed up with a special diagnosis until the totality, the personality, of the individual has been revealed.

Hence the name: "Individual Psychology".