

INTRODUCTION

TO THE PAPERS BY ADLER, SINNOTT, AND CANTRIL

A summary statement of Individual Psychology seems to be an appropriate beginning for this issue, the first in the new editorial policy of approaching a wider readership. We were fortunate in finding such a summary in a paper by Adler himself which appears below for the first time in English translation. It must be considered Adler's final word, having been published originally in 1937, the year of his death.

The summary takes the form of a set of six basic assumptions, which are: the holistic unity and self-consistency of the individual; the importance of the subjective reality of the individual, that is, of his opinion of himself and of the world, in determining his behavior; the striving for a subjectively conceived goal of success as the basic dynamic force; the unique, self-consistent style of life as the representation of the personality structure; the creativity of the individual as opposed to strict determination; and the human potentiality for social interest.

In addition, Adler's paper contains a declaration of his faith in the progress of mankind through the further development of social interest. This faith, which is supported by three homely considerations, leads Adler to the qualification of Individual Psychology as an optimistic science.

The next two papers in this issue, by Edmund W. Sinnott and by Hadley Cantril, in addition to their intrinsic value, by coincidence indicate similar basic assumptions and lead to a similar faith, although the authors were quite unaware of Adler at the time of their writing. It is the communality of the three papers which prompted these introductory remarks.

Sinnott complements and supports three of Adler's postulates, namely, unity and self-consistency, goal striving, and creativity. Writing as a biologist on teleology, Sinnott finds "that in every part of an individual, and probably in every one of its cells, there is something that *represents the whole organism*. This is more than the complements of genes," for it has a coordinating function. It is a normative mechanism which presides, so to speak, over the development of the organism.

"There is a norm, planted in living stuff," to which the self-regulatory activity of the organism conforms as to an end. This would

include the human striving for success, which Adler describes in parallel fashion as being "anchored in the very structure of life." Sinnott warns that the end of the goal-seeking is not necessarily useful to the organism, where useful is understood objectively in terms of survival value. And again this parallels a contention of Adler, not expressed in his present paper, that the individual's goal or concept of success may very well and often does lead to failure in life.

In his conclusion, Sinnott thinks of life everywhere as a creative process which "reaches its climax in the imaginative power of man, which may perhaps be looked upon as the highest expression of biological teleology."

Cantril, from the point of view of social psychology, offers in a paper on faith support to the remaining of Adler's assumptions—the decisive importance of the personal reality world, the uniqueness of the individual expressed in his style of life, and the significance of social interest—and to Adler's faith. But there is actually further agreement between Cantril and Adler, and also much agreement between Cantril and Sinnott.

Man is characterized by Cantril as creating for himself, out of his craving for certainty, "a subjective reality world—a system of interpretations." "We *create constancies* . . . so that we shall be provided with enough interpretation to guess with fair accuracy what the significances and meanings are of the variety of signals that reach our sense organs . . . All of these significances . . . fuse and orchestrate together to give us our own unique reality world." These are the same thoughts which Adler expressed when he spoke in his early writing of the guiding lines we form to be able better to cope with the ever-changing problems of life, and when he said later that each individual sees the world "through a stable schema of apperception." In the present paper Adler refers to these concepts as opinion of one self and the environment, and as style of life.

Faith is never mentioned by Adler, but it seems certain that he would agree with Cantril's contention of the need for faith and with his definition that it is "a bet on, or a commitment to . . . the worthwhileness of a personal reality system composed of constancies that serve as guides to purposive action." While Adler does not mention faith, he does express, in his present paper, a faith in the necessary and continuous higher development of social interest. When Cantril examines the content of various faiths for their best survival value in a scientific age, he too arrives at the faith in one's fellow men. "The

question of faith seems to be becoming more and more a question of how to acquire faith in other people. . . . It is the ancient problem of acquiring and demonstrating compassion, charity, and love." In support of such a faith Cantril finally presents the very same consideration as Adler does, namely, that whatever "immortality" we may have is to be found in "the effect of our behavior on others and on the others yet to come in the long line of humanity ahead."

The three papers together may well be seen as forming a symposium even though they were not conceived for any such purpose, and Adler's paper was written twenty years earlier than those by Sinnott and by Cantril. This quasi symposium might perhaps be given the title "The Forward-looking Nature of Man." As we have seen, there is a great deal of agreement with the outline sketched by the senior author, and thus the symposium may be considered as being in his honor.

These three papers, in the consensus which they represent, are then offered as this Journal's observance of the 20th anniversary of Alfred Adler's death on May 28, 1937.

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