

ADLER AND THE BEGINNING STUDENT

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Professor Swartz (3), in his recently published introductory textbook of psychology (reviewed in this Journal, 1963, 19, 238-239), presents three personality theories, in addition to his own biosocial approach, namely those of Freud, Adler, and Allport. Since this is the first time, to our knowledge, that Adler has been brought so prominently to the attention of the beginning student, we asked Professor Swartz to discuss in our pages how he had come to include Adler in his selection of three. The following is his response.

In my approach to the beginning course in psychology I have always believed it essential to help the student evolve an appreciation of the historical character of psychological knowledge. This requires, obviously, some exposure to the great ideas of our discipline as these were *originally* expressed. My own preference is to concentrate this contact in the personality segment of the beginning course. For materials I use the elements of psychoanalysis and Individual Psychology, in this way acquainting the student with pioneering work in two quite different traditions in personality theory.

My acquaintance with Adler's work began when, as a high school student, I read *Understanding Human Nature*. The book was part of my father's library, and together with Freud's *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, a second home item, provided my first contact with the literature of psychology. Beyond this early exposure, however, I did not go, until my adoption of the psychology of personality as a teaching area necessitated an intensive study of Adlerian thinking.

Neither as part of my undergraduate instruction in psychology, nor in the general-experimental program in which I pursued graduate work, did Adler ever receive more than cursory treatment.

When the moment arose in the preparation of my text to select a pioneering personality theorist in opposition to Freud, the choice of Adler was well-nigh automatic. Historically, no other choice makes such eminent good sense. The Ansbachers put the point well: "After an initial close association with Freud, Adler, in the course of his development, not only separated from him, but provided what one might call the antithesis to Freud's theory all along the line" (1, p. vi). Specifically, "Adler may be regarded as the original field theorist

in a dynamic or depth psychology which has a social-science and 'subjectivistic' orientation" (1, p. vi).

Joined to this factor in dictating the selection of Adler were two other considerations. First, Adler's emphasis on social factors in development is a point of view I share. Since, as one reviewer (2) made explicit, mine "is an intensely personal book," preferred orientations were favored for inclusion.

Second, Adler's stature as a personality theorist continues to grow. Some of the most exciting recent developments in psychology have as a principal tributary the orientation he pioneered. I refer to the eruption in American psychology of an existential line of thought, and to the related, growing recognition among students of motivation that whatever else is true of man, there is rooted in his psychological being an urge to effectiveness in dealing with the world.

In retrospect, Adler deserved more pages than were allotted to him in my book.

REFERENCES

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2. MOUNTJOY, P. T. Review of P. Swartz, *Psychology: the study of behavior*. *Psychol. Rec.*, 1963, 13, 373-374.
3. SWARTZ, P. *Psychology: the study of behavior*. Princeton, N. J.: Van Nostrand, 1963.