

## TRIBUTES TO ALFRED ADLER ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

*As part of the celebration by the American Society of Adlerian Psychology of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Alfred Adler, during the centennial year 1970, a few psychologists and psychiatrists known to be sympathetic to his Individual Psychology were asked for "a short statement of their opinion of Adler's place in psychology and the relevance of his ideas to the 1970's." These opinions were gathered by Mrs. Anne Kaufman, director of public information, Alfred Adler Centennial. Several further opinions were obtained by the editors of this Journal. These statements are presented below in alphabetical order of their authors.*

### HUMANITARIANISM, COMMON SENSE, HOPE

LEDFORD J. BISCHOF, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

Alfred Adler is one of the most concerned humanitarians this world has known. He truly served the poor and destitute long before it was considered the thing to do. He did this for his fellow man on his own, without additional funds or grants as is so often the case these days.

Probably one of the things I enjoy most in following his work is the "face validity" that one continuously finds in his writing. Who else says so much and yet is easy to understand and certainly not esoteric-bound?

I think Adler not only gave hope to man; he had hope for man. One of the keystones of any human character is the ability to change, the ability to proceed when new evidence comes along which must be recognized, the ability not necessarily to change one's mind but to incorporate newer findings as they become available and are recognized. This Adler could do and did. And he had hope that the patient could do this too if the situation is presented to him in the light of Individual Psychology.

### FUTURE EXPECTATION, SOCIAL ORIENTATION, SIMPLE LANGUAGE

JAMES E. CHAPMAN, President, National Association of Mental Health, New York, N. Y.

It is often overlooked by professionals and laymen alike that many of the psychological ideas currently accepted by almost everyone, such as the importance of school mental health services and the

important role of social forces in determining behavior, came into our thinking not so much from Sigmund Freud as from Alfred Adler. While there is no doubt that Freud is currently considered the major figure in 20th century psychiatry, there is also no doubt that a great many of the ideas that we consider modern are actually Adlerian. The innate social needs of man, the fact that human behavior is determined as much by future expectations as by past experience, the emphasis on aggressive drive as being at least as important as the sexual drive, the orientation that man is basically social—all of these are important in our current system of ideas, even though we have forgotten their source.

Perhaps Adler's major handicap was that he wrote clearly and simply and was easily understood by the average educated layman. This characteristic was not appreciated during an era that emphasized the hidden roots of our behavior. Probably the importance of understanding ourselves without elaborate techniques will be more appreciated in the future, now that most scientific workers are beginning to question some of the basic assumptions held sacred during the last forty or fifty years.

#### HUMANISM, VALUES, RATIONALITY

ALBERT ELLIS, Ph.D., Director, Institute for Rational Living, New York, N.Y.

Alfred Adler, more than even Freud, is probably the true father of modern psychotherapy. Some of the reasons are:

1. He founded ego psychology, which Freudians only recently rediscovered.
2. He was one of the first humanistic psychologists.
3. He emphasized and actually called his system of psychotherapy, Individual Psychology, and was, along with Jung, the originator of the theory of individuation.
4. He stressed holism, goal-seeking, and the enormous importance of values in human thinking, emoting, and acting.
5. He correctly saw that sexual drives and behavior, while having great importance in human affairs, are largely the result rather than the cause of man's non-sexual philosophies.

For these and other reasons Adler strongly influenced the work of Sullivan, Horney, Fromm, Rogers, May, Maslow and many other writers on psychotherapy, some of whom are often wrongly called neo-Freudians, when they more correctly could be called neo-Adlerians.

My own system of rational-emotive psychotherapy was profoundly influenced by Adler; and the public demonstrations of psychotherapy which are so often given today by Moreno, the late Perls, Schutz, Dreikurs, Ackerman, myself, and many other therapists also owe much to Adler's pioneering methods.

It is difficult to find any leading therapist today who in some respect does not owe a great debt to the Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler.

#### FORE-RUNNER OF EXISTENTIAL PSYCHIATRY

VIKTOR E. FRANKL, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry, University of Vienna Medical School.

I met Alfred Adler in 1924. How, then, could I but love him as a person?

And I worked with him until 1927. How, then, could I but admire him as a scientist?

In Alfred Adler I see the man who was the first creatively to oppose Sigmund Freud. What he, in so doing, achieved and accomplished was no less than a Copernican switch. No longer could man be considered as the product, pawn and victim of drives and instincts; on the contrary, drives and instincts form the material that serves man in expression and in action.

Beyond this, Alfred Adler may well be regarded as an existential thinker and as a fore-runner of the existential-psychiatric movement.

#### CLINICAL USEFULNESS

GLEN A. HOLLAND, Ph.D., Psychotherapist, Los Angeles, California.

After fifteen years of varied clinical practice with an eclectic theoretical orientation, I continue to find Adlerian psychology the most useful of the classical clinical psychologies (Jungian, Freudian, and Adlerian) and indeed unparalleled by any modern theory except the Transactional Analysis of Eric Berne.

When I describe Adlerian psychology as "most useful" I have in mind two specific criteria.

1. Sufficient theoretical comprehensiveness to permit an adequate diagnosis of a wide variety of clinical problems, and indication of the corrective procedures called for in a given situation. This can, I think, be said for Adlerian psychology alone, that when the situation presented has been evaluated by Adlerian principles, the corrective course of action is already evident.

2. Communicative usefulness, for which the need arises from the consideration that regardless of how well a psychotherapist understands a given clinical case or situation, little in the direction of alleviation can be achieved until this understanding is effectively shared with the persons principally involved. Here again Adlerian psychology is outstanding for its usefulness. Concepts such as "social interest," the need for courage and encouragement (putting heart into a person), responsibility, socially useful and useless behaviors and life styles readily become meaningful to ordinary people in the sense of serving as useful guides for their own thinking and behavior. Stealing, cheating, and other forms of deception are readily seen as undesirable, not because of traditional commandments, but because of the failure of such behavior to advance the general welfare of mankind—running contrary to the social interest.

These suppositions about the usefulness of Adlerian psychology were recently confirmed for me when I was able to persuade my wife, a teacher of children with learning problems, to read Adler's *The Problem Child* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963). When I asked her what she was doing with the book several days later, she replied, "I'm going through it and identifying the children I work with." That, my friends and colleagues, is what I mean by the usefulness of Adler's theory.

#### HOLISTIC EMPHASIS

ABRAHAM H. MASLOW, Ph.D., Resident Fellow, W. P. Laughlin Charitable Foundation, Menlo Park, California.

For me Alfred Adler becomes more and more correct year by year. As the facts come in, they give stronger and stronger support to his image of man.

I should say that in one respect especially the times have not yet caught up with him. I refer to his holistic emphasis. This is certainly a task for the seventies.

#### MYTH AND GUIDING FICTION

ROLLO MAY, Ph.D., Psychotherapist, New York, N.Y.

My concept of myth is very much what Adler had in mind by guiding fiction. As a matter of fact, I appreciate Adler more and more (after my tendency to overlook him for a few years). Adler's thoughts as I learned them in studying with him in Vienna in the Summers of 1932 and 1933 led me indirectly into psychology, and were very influential in the later work in this country of Sullivan and William Alanson White, etc.

## PERVASIVENESS OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

JOOST A. M. MEERLOO, M.D., Ph.D., psychiatrist, formerly New York School of Psychiatry, now Amsterdam, Holland.

The author was not a student of Adler, but studying his works influenced him. As a matter of fact, the whole body of psychoanalysis and psychiatry is imbued with Adler's ideas, although few want to acknowledge this fact. We are all plagiarists, though we hate to confess it. Adler's terms and concepts are even used by those who defy him: inferiority complex, compensation, childhood memories, masculine protest, life style. These are only a few. The whole body of social psychiatry would have been impossible without Adler's pioneering zest.

## FULFILLMENT OF ONE'S INDIVIDUALITY AND MILIEU

GARDNER MURPHY, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

The emergence of biology as a systematic science during the nineteenth century was expressed both by the theory of organic evolution and by laboratory studies involving genetics, biochemistry, etc., related to the processes and energies which could be immediately and exactly examined. These forces expressed themselves philosophically as in Friedrich Nietzsche and scientifically as in Helmholtz. The medical men in the German-speaking world of the late nineteenth century began to see the implications for studies of human nature rooted in evolutionary biology.

I think of Alfred Adler as one of the first to grasp the convergence and concordance of the philosophical message and the exact science message. He saw the nature of life energies and of drive, and their implications for psychiatric diagnosis and therapy.

Much had been done by his predecessors and, of course, by Sigmund Freud; but it is, I think, inappropriate to think of Adler as a pupil of Freud in the sense in which, for example, Kris was his pupil.

Adler organized his own idea in terms of an extended conception of *power*. This emphasis on power does not mean an emphasis upon aggression; rather, it relates to fulfillment of one's individuality and one's milieu.

Since the milieu is highly individualized even for the different members of the same family and certainly from community to community, there is not only the need for an individual psychology based on individual biology; there is also an individual response to the unique individual environment. Adler saw this and deserves

major and permanent credit for his recognition of the social-science perspective of all problems of health and disease, especially for the psychological problems of neurosis and the neurotic character.

Adler had a positive message in terms of the restoration of social feeling. It is not surprising that there is a revival of his message in an era in which this desperately needed social-science perspective is slowly being met.

I believe that in the decade of the seventies there will be more and more recognition and application of the basic Adlerian conception of the need of the living individual to fulfill and complete itself in an environment which can be less competitive and less hostile; less impersonal; more and more genuine and socially meaningful.

#### PERSONAL CONCERN AND INTEGRITY

IRA PROGOFF, Ph.D., Psychotherapist, New York, N.Y.

I have never met Alfred Adler, but I cannot avoid the feeling of knowing him and of being known. One feels in his writings a tremendous quality of caring, a concern for his fellow human beings. Because Adler was interested in persons rather than in theories, he did not recommend things that were not really possible in actuality. His honest and personal concern led him to consider seriously the integral connection between the historical condition of society and the psychological condition of the individual human being. There was no falsity in Adler. Therefore he would not pretend to be healing troubled human beings as though they were living in a social vacuum. He felt rather that the individual's quest for meaning has to be respected seriously and treated with social realism. In this respect he has been for me a beacon of integrity in the psychotherapeutic field.

#### AHEAD OF HIS TIME

WILLIAM S. SAHAKIAN, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Philosophy, Suffolk University, Boston, Mass.

The psychology of Alfred Adler was ahead of its time, and, despite the popularity it has enjoyed, the psychological community has yet to feel the full impact of its significance and value. Like the distinguished American philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, which in recent years has been revived and highly prized, the psychology of Adler is due for a comparable resurgence, owing to a renewed appreciation of the viability of its profundity and originality.

## THEORY FOR PRESENT-DAY SOCIAL EVENTS

WILBERT R. SYKES, M.D., Psychiatrist, New York, N.Y.

The explanatory power of any theory is tested by its applicability not only to the data from which it came, nor only to the time at which it was proposed, but also to new facts and future times.

We are confronted in the 70's with explaining the rebellion of youths against establishments. We must interrelate the emotional responses of young people with the derogated values of their social milieu. We must do so in such a way as to include the creative and positive aspects of their behavior. We must take seriously what they see themselves as becoming, namely, what a technological establishment proposes for them; their actualized repudiation of such goals; and their expressed preference for their own goals.

Further, we must regard the progressing diminishment of man by machines, and attend to the resulting ennui and his turning into and against himself for personal solace.

We must ablate the bombast and cruelty of man striving against man, subjugation sought ultimately for its own sake. All this and more.

And yet, if we were to construct theories to conceptualize these very current and future events we could not do better than Alfred Adler did several decades ago.

## COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AND FAMILY THERAPY

LEWIS R. WOLBERG, M.D., Dean and Medical Director, Postgraduate Center for Mental Health, New York, N.Y.

Genius is rarely acknowledged during the lifetime of an innovator. While Alfred Adler received acknowledgment for his courage and contributions from many of his contemporaries, the full significance of his work has never until recently been fully appreciated. It is a matter of great amazement to discover, from the inspired writings of Adler, how many so-called modern trends in mental health parallel Adlerian theories and methods. Our present-day focus on community mental health embodies a good deal of the emphasis that Adler gave to social vectors. Similarly, educational methodologies, family therapy and social therapy, which some of us consider unique contrivances of our present time, have been elaborated in detail by Adler. We are deeply indebted to him for these and many other contributions which have proven to be of benefit for all mankind.