

PROCEEDINGS OF SESSION AT THE 123RD ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

SAN FRANCISCO, MAY 13, 1970

“ALFRED ADLER — 100 YEARS LATER”

The chairman was Wilmer L. Pew, M.D. Co-chairman was to have been Leonard Lapinsohn, M.D.; but this was prevented by his untimely death shortly before the meeting. Zoltan Wisinger, M.D., substituted for Edmund Kal, M.D., as secretary. The session was organized by Bernard H. Shulman, M.D. Approximately 600 persons attended the session which took place from 2:00 to 5:00 pm and concluded with a general discussion.

Alfred Adler: A Historical Perspective. HEINZ L. ANSBACHER, Ph.D., *University of Vermont*.

As the 100th anniversary of his birth is observed this year, Alfred Adler can be appreciated better than at any time before.

1. His relation to Freud is seen in a different light: Whereas Adler had generally been considered a psychoanalytic deviant, he emerges today fully independent.

2. His formulations have become more meaningful as many of his expressions have captured concepts of current professional discussion. E.g., by “failure in life” he challenged the medical model of mental disorder; by “masculine protest” he anticipated concepts and problems of gender role and gender identification; by “man’s creative power” he foreshadowed existential and humanistic concepts.

3. His approach has received what amounts to consensual validation, inasmuch as numerous leaders are acknowledging that “as the facts come in, they give stronger and stronger support to his image of man” (Maslow) and to other formulations.

4. His humanistic orientation has virtually become the call of the hour. Adler placed individually created values and goals ahead of drives. He also recognized the necessity for judging the excellency of goals, in line with mankind’s age-old strivings. The better personal goals, found in mental health, may well be nonconforming to present norms but would include ultimate social usefulness. They depend on a well-developed aptitude for social interest or communal feeling. This conception is Adler’s crowning achievement, the full recognition and utilization of which lies still in the future.

The complete paper will be published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, December 1970.

The Relevance of Adler's Psychology to Present-Day Practice. ALEXANDRA ADLER, M.D., *Alfred Adler Mental Hygiene Clinic, New York.*

Alfred Adler anticipated many present-day trends in psychotherapy. E.g., Adlerian therapists have always accepted schizophrenic patients on an ambulatory basis. Adler's psychology stressing, as it does, work and social relations, as well as sex, has been instrumental in bringing reality closer to the schizophrenic's way of thinking and feeling. In this way Adlerians helped to lay the groundwork for present-day efforts to keep schizophrenic patients out of institutions, through the establishment of social clubs, group therapy, and day hospitals. In an early paper, Adler pointed out that the use of force in treating schizophrenics was "like poison to them," since they have an all-pervading fear of anything stronger than themselves. Adlerians aim, however, to encourage self-confidence not only in schizophrenics but in all categories of psychiatric patients.

In the treatment of children and adolescents, Adler pioneered a new approach when, from 1918 on, he opened some 30 child guidance clinics in Vienna where he conducted group sessions for parents and teachers, often in the presence of the child, in an effort to make him realize that his problems were not personal only but pertained to the community as a whole. Thus he anticipated present-day endeavors such as group therapy, family therapy, and community psychiatry.

The Relevance of Adler's Psychology to Present-Day Theory. KURT A. ADLER, Ph.D., M.D., *Alfred Adler Institute, New York, and Jamaica Center of Psychotherapy, New York.*

Adler chose the term Individual Psychology to show his determination to rescue the individual, as an active agent, the master of his own fate, from the concept of an instinct-ridden object, as conceived by his psychoanalytic colleagues. Instincts and heredity, the environment and all the individual's personal experiences are considered only the materials used by the individual for the construction of his personality. The important thing is his subjective evaluation of all these, an evaluation which may stand in a "strange relation to reality." In this way Adler obviated the old heredity-environment dichotomy, just as he had earlier obviated the soma-psyche dichotomy by his statements on the unity of the personality and the psychic compensation for organic inferiorities, pre-dating by 25 years psychosomatic medicine.

Adler conceived of the necessity for adaptation to the physical and social environment in human beings, as the "striving for mastery, for overcoming, for superiority." This principle of self-constructed, goal-directed striving has in the past 30 years been adopted by scores of schools of psychology. For Adler, where a patient intends to go was more important than where he came from.

The second basis of Individual Psychology is its stress on man's social nature, making Adler's the first system developed in a "social science direction." The one unchangeable value judgment in his system is the welfare and progress of mankind, for which he considered social interest, co-operation, and the equality of races, nations, and sexes a *sine qua non*. In his writings he supported struggles for freedom, against war, for better education, against exploitation, for real rehabilitation of criminals, against the death penalty, and many others. And

although he died long before the advent of the atom bomb, he warned that mankind may be doomed unless it decided on a course where greater community feeling among all people prevails.

The complete paper will be published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, December 1970.

Adler's Psychology and Group Psychotherapy. HELENE PAPANEK, M.D., *Alfred Adler Institute, New York.*

After 1918 Adler started in Vienna his well-known child guidance clinics where the child, presenting professionals, and an interested audience joined in discussing the child's problems and possible solutions. This technique evolved from Adler's conviction that a person's problems can be understood and treated best in a social context and that a democratic group, in a spirit of cooperation and helpfulness, had useful therapeutic leverage. The many forms of psychotherapeutic group techniques which have been used more and more frequently for the last 30 years all have benefited from Adlerian ideas and experiences.

The basis for all such approaches is the recognition of man's social nature, his need for social contact, his pleasure in social exchange and communication, his "social feeling." In a sense, the therapeutic dyad is just a small and comparatively rigid group. Any "real" group enables its members to observe themselves and others as they mutually interact. By expressing himself readily in the free atmosphere of the group, a person's life style becomes observable to himself and the others.

We consider the group an open system that is different from the sum of its units, the individual members. Any change in the group is followed by a change in the individual, and vice versa. The patients learn to see choices and alternatives to their unsatisfactory behavior, so that the incongruity between life style and social demands diminishes and finally disappears. New behavior emerges when the dangerous consequences anticipated in their faulty cognitive schemas do not occur. In the therapeutic environment of the group, social feeling surrounds the patient, and at the same time, by developing inside him, promotes his growth and emotional health. Then he not only accepts demands of society, but becomes able to enjoy his contributions to the community.

Diagnosis of the "Life Style" through Early Recollections. RUDOLF DREIKURS, M.D., *Chicago Medical School*, and BERNARD H. SHULMAN, M.D., *Northwestern University Medical School.*

The term and the concept of life style were developed by Alfred Adler in the early 1920's. He believed that the child, who tries to find his place in life, establishes by trial and error the role he can play within his given family constellation. He is not merely a passive victim of forces from within and without, but actively participates with parents and siblings in forming his own role, in alliance with or opposition to other members of the family.

Adler provides a means by which the perception of the total personality is made quickly possible—the analysis of earliest childhood recollections, probably his most interesting and dramatic diagnostic technique. Such recollections are

not viewed as screen memories but as selective recall which serves to reinforce the current apperceptive bias of the individual.

After this brief introduction, the main part of the period consisted of a demonstration of this technique. Members of the audience had been invited to relate their early recollections. Several of these were interpreted by Drs. Dreikurs and Shulman, working jointly, constructing the individual's life style from the recollections.

THE PROCEEDINGS OF TUTORIAL SESSION AT EIGHTH ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE
ASSOCIATION FOR HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY
MIAMI BEACH, SEPTEMBER 2, 1970

Alfred Adler and Humanistic Psychology. HEINZ L. ANSBACHER, *University of Vermont.*

Despite Adler's important position in Humanistic Psychology this has never been made the topic of a specific presentation. To do so is the purpose of this paper, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Adler's birth, February 7, 1970. The point of departure is the inspiring presidential address by Floyd W. Matson at the meeting of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, August 29, 1969.

1. The basic premises of Adler's Individual Psychology are indeed essentially the same as those stated by Matson for today's Humanistic Psychology. These are discussed in a grouping of six, as derived from Matson's paper, while terms by Adler have been used for some of the headings. They are: (a) man's creative power, (b) anthropomorphic model of man, (c) purposes instead of causes, (d) holism and life style, (e) subjectivity, and (f) psychotherapy as good human relations.

2. The movement of Humanistic Psychology, by its emphasis on the self and absence of a concept of social usefulness has recently tended to attract self-seeking groups to the dismay of its responsible leaders. Matson described the urgent necessity for "a sense of purpose, and a sense of direction" to combat a threatening "failure of nerve," and to guide the future growth of Humanistic Psychology and humanity in general. It is exactly this which Adler offered through his concept of social interest, or community feeling, which he described specifically as "direction-giving." In this respect Adler's psychology still has a contribution to make.

The complete paper will be published in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Spring 1971.