

ADLER, 1964: FOUR SPECIAL REVIEWS

The past year was a memorable one for Individual Psychology in that during the second half, four books by Adler were published: one, a new selection of late and partly untranslated papers including Adler's essay on religion, together with a new biographical essay and bibliography; the others, paperback reprints of books two of which have long been out of print.

The fact of these publications would seem to indicate a corresponding demand for the works of Adler. The following reviews of these books by four psychologists and one psychiatrist represent in their totality an overview, based on an extensive sampling of Adler's writings, of what specifically it is that Adler has to offer to the contemporary reader, and of what holds his interest.

We should like to note that two of the reviews, of the books which we are inclined to consider the generally more important ones, end with a call for Adler scholars to give a critical evaluation of his thought, and to bring his system abreast of contemporary findings.

"SUPERIORITY AND SOCIAL INTEREST"¹

Reviewed by HENRI F. ELLENBERGER, M.D., *University of Montreal*

This is the most important book on Individual Psychology to appear since the publication by the editors of *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* eight years ago. The present volume brings important complements to the previous one.

The introduction by the principal editor is a short but substantial account of the increasing recognition given to Adler during the last several years. Personality theory incorporates the Adlerian concepts of life style and social interest. Existential psychology and psychotherapy are shown to be for a good part a rediscovery of Individual Psychology. Neo-Freudian psychoanalysis would more correctly be termed "neo-Adlerian," and Freudian psychoanalysis in its latest developments is in the process of catching up with Adler. Personality diagnosis makes use of the interpretation of the first memories and of dream interpretation in Adlerian style. The esteem for Adler's principles is rising among psychotherapists. Adler's notion of mental

¹ALFRED ADLER. *Superiority and Social Interest: A Collection of Later Writings*. Edited by Heinz L. and Rowena R. Ansbacher, with a Biographical Essay by Carl Furtmüller. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964. Pp. xxi + 432. \$8.95.

health is also increasingly appreciated, and certain of his other concepts find growing acceptance among anthropologists.

The bulk of the book is a collection of twenty-one papers by Alfred Adler, nine of which are translated for the first time into English. As indicated by the title of the book, these papers belong to the last period of the founder of Individual Psychology. It was appropriate to open the series with one of Adler's very last articles, "The Progress of Mankind" (pp. 23-28), in which he summarizes some of his basic assumptions: the unity and self-consistency of the organism, the guiding fiction, the striving for success, social interest, the style of life and the creative power from which it originates.

The papers illuminate many little-known aspects of Adler's methods and teachings; here are a few instances: Social interest should not be opposed to the striving for superiority as an antagonistic pair; it is a normative ideal which gives direction to the striving for superiority (pp. 28-40). The opposite of social interest is rather "private intelligence" (pp. 44-46) as found in neurotics, and which stands on the "useless side of life." In regard to inferiority feelings, Adler revised his former teachings: he no longer considered them as primary (and the striving for superiority as their compensation); on the contrary, he now understood feelings of inferiority as being secondary to the striving for superiority (pp. 51-56). Another important innovation in Adler's later teachings is the concept of "degree of activity" in problem children; the difference in degree of activity determines differences in the later psychopathological outcome in the adult; it also determines correspondingly different measures of education (pp. 62-65).

In regard to the theory of neuroses, Adler's later papers repeat certain statements with increased emphasis on the creative power of the individual (pp. 83-95). The neurotic picture of the world is illustrated with one case history (pp. 96-111). Compulsion neurosis, which Adler apparently considered the prototype of neurosis, is discussed with reference to twelve case histories (pp. 112-138). The various attitudes of the neurotic toward death are discussed in another paper (pp. 239-247).

The treatment technique is considered in one paper (pp. 191-201) and illustrated in two others devoted to clinical cases. It is noteworthy that, at one point, Adler says that he is trying to get the patient into a trap—i.e., using the old dialectic method applied by Socrates in his discussions with the Sophists.

The paper on the structure and prevention of delinquency (pp. 253-268) will be particularly welcome. Characteristic features of the delinquent are a pampered-child style of life, hence an underdeveloped social interest allied with a high degree of activity and a conviction of his superiority. The process of "goading" oneself to commit the crime through exhausting one's social interest calls to mind de Greeff's description of the criminogenic process. Etienne de Greeff, a Belgian criminologist not well known outside his country, who died a few years ago, developed the theory that the criminal must first "de-sublimate" himself before he can commit his crime.

A paper on the differences between Individual Psychology and psychoanalysis, with an Adlerian interpretation of psychoanalytic terms, is also of great interest (pp. 205-218).

Adler's general concept of man is sidelighted at various places. In his later papers, he shows himself a forerunner of existentialism through his emphasis on the uniqueness of the individual (p. 67) and his mention of death as the inevitable outcome of human existence (p. 54). A quotation of Pestalozzi used by Adler, "The environment molds man, but man molds the environment" (p. 321), aptly illustrates one of Adler's basic ideas about man's relation to nature; it also shows the principles which Adler shared with Marx. Finally, Adler's essay on "Religion and Individual Psychology" is translated for the first time and included in the book together with a preface written by the Rev. Jahn for the present publication (pp. 271-308). Adler's essay had originally appeared in a joint volume where it followed an essay by Jahn on "The Psychotherapy of Christianity."

A large part of the book consists in a biographical essay on Adler by Carl Furtmüller, long-time friend and early co-worker (pp. 311-393). This essay was written in 1946 in the United States, far from Vienna and from the main biographical sources. This may explain why it contains a number of gaps (for instance about Adler's activity during World War I) and a few inaccuracies which are for the most part corrected in the editors' footnotes. To name but one instance, the *Neue Freie Presse* never published a review of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, nor is it factual that this paper used to "ridicule every new phenomenon in art, literature, or science" (this must be a confusion with another newspaper). On the other hand, Furtmüller contributes interesting statements in regard to Adler's relation to the Socialist movement.

The last part of the book is a bibliography of Alfred Adler, which

(though perhaps not yet exhaustive) is certainly the most complete published to this day.

Northwestern University Press is to be complimented on an admirable production including the frontispiece, a fine picture of a plaque showing Adler in profile, in itself a real contribution.

On the whole, this volume should be most welcome, not only to Individual Psychologists, but to every psychologist, psychiatrist and psychotherapist.

“THE INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY OF ALFRED ADLER”²

Reviewed by HUGH B. URBAN and DONALD H. FORD, *Pennsylvania State University*

American students have been handicapped in their appreciation and knowledge of Alfred Adler's system of Individual Psychology. For sundry reasons the typical student of personality theory has been dependent upon cursory treatments of Adler's point of view in secondary sources. These compendia of personality theory have characteristically mentioned Adler, representing him as an early antagonist to the Freudian position and thus of some historical interest. A certain number of concepts became routinely associated with Adler's name, such as life style, birth order, or masculine protest, which students dutifully learned in rote fashion. Other concepts such as compensation, sibling rivalry, and feelings of inferiority have become part of the general lexicon of psychology at large, and their relationship to the system which generated them had all but become lost.

The inadequacies in this treatment of Adler's place in personality theory became starkly apparent with the publication in 1956 of Heinz and Rowena Ansbacher's volume, *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*. In the hands of these two scholars it became convincingly clear that Adler had indeed provided not only a distinctive framework for the analysis of human behavior, but also a significant contribution to our developing knowledge of how the human person grows and develops, thinks and perceives, and in general fashions the course of his life.

With the Ansbachers' analysis, Adler assumed his place as one of the first to emphasize the study of human behavior from the vantage point of the behaving person. It undoubtedly came as a surprise to

²ALFRED ADLER. *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: A Systematic Presentation in Selections from his Writings* (1956). Edited and annotated by Heinz L. Ansbacher and Rowena R. Ansbacher. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964. Pp. xxiv + 503. \$2.95 paper.

many that Adler was a progenitor of the popular phenomenological position. In contrast to many contemporary psychological theorists who think of behavior as being "pulled out" of the organism by situational events, or being "pushed out" by inner events (facetiously referred to by Kelly as "carrot and stick theories of motivation") Adler's emphasis upon another set of antecedents to behavior comes as a refreshing contrast. He proposed that behavior can be determined by one's ideas about future events, that humans can develop anticipations of events and can order their behavior in order to arrive at these "goals." Indeed he argued that these may become the most significant of all the determinants of the way an individual comes to behave. Cofer and Appley in their recent book, *Motivation: Theory and Research*, arrive at a similar hypothesis by traveling quite a different route. Although science must proceed in the direction of analysis of individual units of behavior, Adler's emphasis upon the organized interrelationships which become formed between one aspect of behavior and another (the "unity of behavior") represents an important antidote to the insidious temptation to parcel up the human into digestible pieces, becoming preoccupied with their study, and forgetting to put the "picture" back together again. Then again, one cannot fail to be impressed with the manner in which Adler stressed the social context, repeatedly calling attention to the fact that one cannot study human behavior independent of the interpersonal events to which it is related.

These are but a few of the emphases which characterize Adler's system, each representing important contributions to the domain of personality theory. They came into light by way of the Ansbachers' volume, and especial qualifications were required for it to have become accomplished. It required the work of persons personally acquainted with Adler in the course of his professional life. It required persons equipped to translate the writings of Adler which remained in German—almost half of the selections in the volume were translated by the authors either because the material had not appeared in English before or because the existing translations were considered inadequate. Finally, it required an act of organization and systematization since Adler had presented his conceptions unsystematically, scattered hither and yon throughout his extensive writings.

The book is composed of direct quotations from the writings of Adler, and is thus an authentic primary source. But more than that, the Ansbachers have successfully abstracted and systematically

arranged his most lucid statements on critical issues, so that what emerges is the Adlerian system at its best.

They begin with his early writings which represent the beginnings of his conceptions of behavior, the elaboration of the philosophical basis of his point of view, and his disagreements with and subsequent separation from Freud. In these selections the reader will become impressed with the stature of Adler's thinking early in his career, with the original and important contributions he made to the Freudian system, and will see that the ultimate split with Freud was less a matter of personalities, or of slight differences in emphasis (views that some writers have inaccurately promulgated) but "about as fundamental and far-reaching as is possible within a given area."

This section is followed by the presentation of Adler's theory of normal personality development, comprising five chapters. Here the editors wisely elected to present Adler's conceptions in their finished form, choosing from among his latest writings those which present his theory most comprehensively. The book then proceeds to a representation of his theory of disorder, and the application of these conceptions to the modification of disordered behavior. Here become explicit the suggestions with respect to treatment and technique which Adler was at pains to develop. These are followed in turn by several chapters on the social factors of early childhood, as well as childhood disorders and their treatment. The remaining chapters deal with crime and deviant behavior, problems of everyday living, and finally with behavioral patterns at the social level, including social prejudice, and the social institutions of war and religion.

The editors explicitly allocated to themselves the reportorial role, *i.e.* the presentation and clarification of Adler's work. This they have done by interspersing their selections with comments, designed to clarify the interpretation of a selection, relate it to other writings by Adler at a different point in time, and to fit the selections into an historical context where doing so would enhance one's understanding of the material.

Their selection of Adler's own statements also reveal something of the man. He was an energetic, gregarious, personable fellow who lectured widely to lay audiences, trying to make his ideas applicable to important social institutions, such as education. Thus, he was often not the rigorous scholar carefully qualifying his notions as hypotheses, and rationally marshaling the evidence, pro and con. Rather, he was somewhat more of a salesman of his view, and prone to enthusiastic

overgeneralization. One famous example is his statement that "Anyone can do anything." What his views lacked in rigor, however, they made up in imaginative proposals.

In this volume, the Ansbachers have succeeded in doing what Adler himself had been unable to do, viz. representing his best ideas in orderly and systematic fashion. In doing so they have made it possible for others to examine the system, to polish, correct, or change it, and thus have contributed to a renaissance of interest in Adler's system. They have made it viable.

Now, the same volume with minor corrections has become available in paperback form, having been selected by the Academy Library of Harper and Row, publishers. Those interested in the rapid development of the field of personality theory, psychopathology, and psychotherapy can applaud this most recent publication, since it renders an excellent piece of scholarship with respect to an important personality theorist more readily accessible. The book can now take its place in a list of primary source materials for students in courses in each of the foregoing areas. It deserves to be widely used.

It is also a book which succeeds in whetting one's appetite as one proceeds through its pages. Adler was indeed responsible for a collection of fundamental ideas concerning the analysis of human behavior, but his system of Individual Psychology had many shortcomings as well. The reader will find himself impatient for a deliberate critical evaluation of the conceptual and propositional aspects of Adler's system. He will be disappointed, for they are not there. By the same token the reader will regret the general absence of material which relates Adler's ideas to the ongoing stream of the behavioral sciences. The book begins with an excellent chapter briefly comparing Adler's point of view with that of the major positions in personality theory—the objectivist view of Freud, Gestalt and field conceptions such as those of Lewin, phenomenological positions such as those of Rogers and Snygg and Combs. But the reader has just begun to perceive the value of such an approach, when it is discontinued and followed by the Adlerian system itself.

The Ansbachers cannot be held accountable, since both of these tasks lay beyond the scope of their book. However, their volume provides a convenient foundation for anyone who wishes to proceed further. It made possible a recent critical analysis of the Adlerian system by the authors of this review. Sophistication concerning theory construction and therapeutic practice has progressed con-

siderably since the time in which Adler worked. Now that his system has been revived by the Ansbachers, its many deficiencies must be repaired and its several gaps must be filled in. Moreover, it must be brought abreast of contemporary findings in the behavioral sciences, if the system as a system is to continue to remain alive. This volume provides a foundation for Adlerians to do just that, if they wish to.

“SOCIAL INTEREST: A CHALLENGE TO MANKIND”³

Reviewed by PAUL SWARTZ, *Wichita State University*

Alfred Adler contributed “to the whole.” Common man and psychologist alike share in his estate. In Adler the artist and the scientist combined to make the complete clinician. He left, in equal portion, for the mass a philosophy of life, for the specialist a theory of personality and a system of therapy.

Social Interest: A Challenge to Mankind is the last book of various papers published while Adler was still alive. It appeared in 1933, in German, under the title *Der Sinn des Lebens*. The first English edition was published in 1938. Out of print for many years, the English translation is again available, as a Capricorn paperback.

The best preparation for reading Adler on social feeling is Freud’s *Civilization and Its Discontents*. “Nothing,” Freud judges, “is so completely at variance with original human nature” as culture’s “ideal command to love one’s neighbor as oneself” (Anchor Books, p. 62). The order, while our most powerful protection against human aggression, is, he avers, a supreme instance “of the unpsychological attitude of the cultural super-ego” (p. 102). It cannot be fulfilled. The value of love can only be lowered by inflating it to such proportions, and the evil left unremedied. What is civilization’s response to this? Simply to turn a blind eye, and babble that the more difficult it is to follow the command the more praiseworthy the obedience. Yet the truth is, Freud warns, that the person who adopts such a code at this stage in human history only disadvantages himself alongside all who do not.

Enthusiasts of psychoanalysis might compare Freud’s argument with the apotheosis of the I of Ayn Rand, novelist and amateur philosopher. If the suggestion is chilling, the “shock of recognition” will be chillier. A yard cut from the skein of ethical solipsism, what-

³ALFRED ADLER. *Social Interest: A Challenge to Mankind* (1933). Translated by John Linton and Richard Vaughan. New York: Capricorn Books, 1964. Pp. 313. \$1.45 paper.

ever the pattern into which it is woven, is still a yard of ethical solipsism.

Adler stands opposed to the Freudian philosophy. "The only thing," he asserts, "that can save us from being crucified on a harmful fiction or from clinging to a scheme of life based on a harmful fiction is the guiding star of universal welfare" (p. 278). The pursuit of this goal is the expression of *social feeling*. In its most profound sense,

Social feeling means above all a struggle for a communal form that must be thought of as eternally applicable, such as, say, could be thought of when humanity has attained its goal of perfection. It is not a question of any present-day community or society, or of political or religious forms. On the contrary, the goal that is best suited for perfection must be a goal that stands for an ideal society amongst all mankind, the ultimate fulfilment of evolution (p. 275).

Life is constantly measuring us for our degree of social feeling. Lacking an adequate amount we cannot solve the three major tasks that universally challenge man: "the problems of communal life, of work, and of love."

Contemporary thought appears to favor Adler in this controversy. In particular, Erich Fromm's work makes obvious the weaknesses inherent in the Freudian concept of love.

Adler speaks from a former generation. Yet it is only of late that his importance as a personality theorist has begun to be generally appreciated. This book should hasten the recognition. The treatment is broad, including in its sweep a discussion of such significant matters as causality, style of life, masculine protest, organic inferiority, the feeling of inferiority, the inferiority complex, the superiority complex, pampering, neurosis, sexual perversions, dreaming, and the meaning of life. I find the book well suited for a presentation of Adler's point of view in the first course in personality.

No one can undertake to construct a comprehensive theory of personality without committing some excesses. Surely Adler is no exception to this principle. A case in point is the extremely heavy burden he causes pampering to bear as a source of developmental warp. Does evidence really exist to warrant the assertion "that in the majority of cases one finds that law-breakers have been pampered or have had a craving for pampering when they were children" (p. 217)? Or, more generally, "that the vast majority of childish mistakes are due to the pampering that continuously intensifies the child's emotional struggle and thus leads him constantly into temptation" (p. 298)?

Is not the time right, almost 30 years after his death, for Adler scholars critically to assess the whole body of his thought?

"PROBLEMS OF NEUROSIS"⁴

Reviewed by LEDFORD J. BISCHOF, Northern Illinois University

This small book is a reworking of the original *Problems of Neurosis* published first in hard back in 1929. The current work is an improvement in organization and useability.

The book is based on Adler's own notes and stenographed or written reports by "enthusiasts," of lectures given in English which were ably edited by Philip Mairet. The book is neither pure "handwritten" Adler nor can it ever be considered a gross interpretation.

There are eleven chapters which include information regarding some 37 cases, and an index. Also included in the present volume is an up-to-date bibliography of Adlerian books. So much for the technical aspects of this new/old contribution to Individual Psychology.

Some books can be read without recourse to the introductory material. Not so this book. There is an excellent precis about Adler, the position of Individual Psychology in the current scene, and how the book came to be written, all of which is the work of Heinz L. Ansbacher. No matter how sophisticated an Adlerian the reader may be, he cannot afford to begin *Problems of Neurosis* unless he begins at the beginning: the introduction.

Here now in the body of the text is all that is pertinent and good about the concepts Alfred Adler left for us. The present reviewer had the comfortable feeling that he was sitting in some seminar room or before the fire in a spacious living room and just listening to Adler talk. Mairet does a good job in his re-creative efforts. The "talk" is spontaneous and impromptu. There is the gift of Adler's "pertinent simplicity"; the absence of jargon; and above all, the opportunity to see through the "diagnostic eye" of Alfred Adler. This is not a technical manual or a convoluted system of thought more and more confusing as it attempts to unravel the esoterics of the previous concepts. This is a short little book about human beings and how some of them get problems and solve these problems.

A difficulty arises from the non-technical manner in which cases are presented and discussed in lay language. Sometimes the reader gets the feeling that the cases are almost too simple to see and solve. It all looks to be so easy.

⁴ALFRED ADLER. *Problems of Neurosis: A Book of Case Histories* (1929). Edited by Philip Mairet. Introduction to the Torchbook Edition by Heinz L. Ansbacher. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964. Pp. xxvi + 180. \$1.75 paper.

Problems of Neurosis manages to cover the salient features in the Adlerian system of theory and therapy. It is all in the book in capsule form: effect of birth order, style of life, organ inferiority, superiority strivings, dangers of pampering children, significance of early recollections, and even dream analysis as prophesy and preparation for the future. You get your money's worth and a short course in Adler with *Problems of Neurosis*.

In addition to the above concise compendium of the Adlerian position there are these, and more, short little explosive sentences that bring the reader up. He reads and then either senses an insight into behavior or wants to stop and argue. This reviewer experienced both reactions. Witness these quotes:

Crying is usually an accusation against another person (p. 23).—Thus neurosis is the weapon of the coward, and the weapon most used by the weak (p. 80).—I have found that the purpose of most masochistic subjects is to escape love and marriage, because they do not feel strong enough to risk a defeat (p. 131).—One way of attaining superior-feelings is by the irritation of others (p. 131).—The three problems of life . . . No one can escape a definite answer to the question of society, or of cooperation, or of sex (p. 20).—We can always detect by the way in which an individual gives his hand whether he has social feeling and likes to be connected with others. A perfectly normal handshake is rather rare (p. 151).

For those readers interested in how Adler actually conducted therapy and his method, there are a number of factual contributions. To arouse curiosity, we quote the beginning of one example: "After establishing a sympathetic relation I give suggestions for a change of conduct in two stages" (p. 25). Another time Adler begins: "My own practice, after hearing the patient's complaints, is to proceed in one of two ways" (pp. 70-71).

Problems of Neurosis is a good little book. As such it is a valuable addition to the Adlerian literature. This reviewer is happy to possess his copy. For a fuller treatment one should not ignore or replace his copy of *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*, or *Understanding Human Nature*. For my own preference, if held to owning a single volume, I should not want to part with the Ansbacher-edited *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*.

Problems of Neurosis is a welcome re-issue and we thank Harper Torchbooks for bringing it back. However, read the introduction first so that the book may take its proper perspective place in the literature on Individual Psychology.