

LIFE STYLE: A HISTORICAL AND SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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The term life style, which has for 40 years described a central concept of Adlerian psychology, has recently gained greatly among psychologists and sociologists in general and has even become part of the everyday vocabulary. It has now been included in the glossary of an important introductory psychology textbook (61); it is to be found in the new Webster International Dictionary (72); a recent newsmagazine story referred to the "hippies" as "more than a choice of life style" (40); and a whimsical newspaper headline spoke of "the life style of some favorite inhabitants of the Zoo" (52).

In view of this new importance we propose here to trace the origin and history of the term, review in outline form its various uses, show what they have in common, and conclude with observations regarding the theoretical significance of this development.

ADLER'S CONCEPT OF LIFE STYLE

For Adler life style represented the organismic ideas of the individual as an actor rather than a re-actor; of the purposiveness, goal-directedness, unity, self-consistency and uniqueness of the individual; and of the ultimately subjective determination of his actions. The following quotations may illustrate this.

We must refute the causal significance of situation, milieu, or experiences of the child. Their significance and effectiveness develop only in the intermediary psychological metabolism, so to speak. They are assimilated by the early derived style of life of the child (19, p. 178). In considering the structure of a personality, the chief difficulty is that its unity, its particular style of life and goal, is not built upon objective reality, but upon the subjective view the individual takes of the facts of life (19, p. 183). The goal of superiority with each individual is personal and unique. It depends upon the meaning he gives to life. This meaning . . . is built up in his style of life and runs through it like a strange melody of his own creation (19, p. 181).

From the concept of unity there followed the principle that specific manifestations must be considered with reference to the context (*Zusammenhang*) of the whole individual. Disregard for this context, or coherence, was one of Adler's main quarrels with psychoanalysis. Thus he stated:

To deny the context (*Zusammenhang*) is like picking single notes out of a melody to examine them for their significance, their meaning. A better understanding of

this coherence is shown by Gestalt psychology which uses this metaphor frequently, as we do. The difference is only that we are not satisfied with the "Gestalt," or as we prefer to say with the "whole," when we refer all the notes to the melody. We are satisfied only when we have recognized in the melody the originator and his attitudes as well, for example Bach, Bach's life style (8, p. 205).

The relationship of life style to style in general is expressed in the passage, "The life style can come about only through elimination of less suitable forms of expression, through acts of abstraction. This is the same as in the style in painting, architecture, or music" (8, p. 203).

In the opening paragraph of a chapter on "Psychological Means and Ways for the Investigation of the Life Style" Adler points out that poets have in fact always described life styles, although what they did was not formulated in this way.

Our knowledge of the individual is very old. To name only a few instances, the historical and personality descriptions of the ancient peoples, the Bible, Homer, Plutarch, all the Greek and Roman poets, sagas, fairy tales, and myths, show a brilliant understanding of personality. Until recent times it was chiefly the poets who best succeeded in getting the clue to a person's life style. Their ability to show the individual living, acting, and dying as an *indivisible* whole in closest context with the tasks of his sphere of life rouses our admiration for their work to the highest degree (10, pp. 32-33; translation modified from 9, p. 20).

Adler generally prided himself in not having made any new "discoveries" but only in having contributed toward "understanding what mankind had known in the main parts long ago" (11).

But beyond personality description and comprehension, Adler was primarily concerned with personality change, and the concept of life style permeates his writings on psychotherapy (19, pp. 326-336). Dreikurs, describing how the concept of life style is employed in Adlerian psychotherapy, makes in this respect a distinction between counseling and psychotherapy. "In counseling we remain on the present level of functioning" whereas in psychotherapy we start with the exploration of the patient's "present field of action and then proceed to his general movement through life, to his life style" from childhood on (28, p. 89). Within a given life style and its long-range goals many sub-goals or immediate goals and a wide choice of actions are possible (28a).

Whereas Adler stressed the individual uniqueness, he nevertheless recognized similarities among individuals and their life styles. Thus he used life style also as a generic term, especially in reference to mental disturbances. "The nervous individual formulates his style of life more rigidly, more narrowly; he is nailed to the cross of his

narrow, personal, noncooperative fiction" (19, p. 279). Generic uses of life style by Adler and others are reported below.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT IN ADLER

Adler's active career in psychology can be said to have extended over the 30-year period from 1907 when he published his *Study of Organ Inferiority* until his death in 1937. It was not until 1926 that the term life style appears in his writings, roughly the last third of this period, although the main thoughts referred to by this term were present from the beginning. These were the assumptions of the unity of the organism, and its continuous forward orientation. The latter is often described as the striving toward a goal—a "fictitious" goal in the sense that it is the creation of the subject, or perhaps the inference of the psychologist (19, pp. 87-100). Every expression of the individual would be influenced by his guiding principle.

Guiding Image

Adler used a series of terms to express these ideas, the first of which probably was that of the "guiding image" (*Leitbild*). He wrote in 1912:

Toward the end of infancy when the child has become capable of achieving independent, goal-directed actions which do not merely aim at drive satisfaction, when he occupies his place in the family and arranges himself in his environment, he has already acquired certain skills, psychological gestures and readineses. Furthermore his action has become unified and one sees him on the way to conquer for himself a place in the world. Such unified action can be understood only if one assumes that the child has found a fixed point outside himself toward which he strives with his psychological growth energies. In other words the child must have formed a guiding line (*Leitlinie*), a guiding image (*Leitbild*) in the expectation thus best to be able to orient himself in his environment and to achieve satisfaction of his needs, the avoidance of displeasure, and the attainment of pleasure (1, p. 33).

The term *Leitbild* was used six years earlier by Ludwig Klages (43).¹ According to Klages, who was interested in the interpretation of expressive movements, primarily handwriting, certain strivings press for expression which they achieve through selecting kindred forms and movements. The constant in this selection process is what Klages calls "the personal guiding image." The final formulation of his doctrine of the expressive principle was: "Every spontaneous movement of man is unconsciously co-determined by his personal guiding image" (44, p. 38).

¹We became aware of this through a paper by Adolf Däumling (25) in which he compares four individual guiding-image theories, those of Klages, Adler, Spranger and Jung; and discusses three kinds of collective guiding images (social, public and of a period).

Adler was well acquainted with the work of Klages and greatly admired it. He concluded his paper on "Organ Dialect" by reprinting over three pages (about 1200 words) from Klages on the interpretation of expressive movements, introducing them with the tribute: "Already in 1905 (42, pp. 7-8) this scholar developed thoughts regarding the personal form of expression which we want to present here, with the author's consent, on account of their significance and classical form" (2, p. 136).² In view of this relationship it seems reasonable to assume that Adler adopted the term guiding image from Klages.

Guiding Line

But Adler was very sensitive to the danger of the reification of a term and thus tended to use different terms simultaneously and over a period of time to express the same concept. In the first passage quoted in the preceding section we find guiding line (*Leitlinie*) used interchangeably with guiding image (*Leitbild*), and the chapter from which the passage is taken carries the term guiding idea (*leitende Idee*) in its title (1, p. 33), a third term.

Two years later Adler speaks no longer of a guiding line as the principle of unity of the individual. Instead he says that in order to arrive at a unified conception of a particular person one must compare his various traits and bring them down to their common base line (3, p. 1). The unifying principle is "the line which a person pursues" (*die Linie, die einer verfolgt*) (3, p. 2).

Life Plan

In the same paper Adler also speaks of life plan (*Lebensplan*), a term subsequently used extensively by him. "Once I have recognized the goal of a psychological movement, of a life plan, I must expect that all partial movements will correspond to the goal and the life plan" (3, p. 4). And reciprocally: "The partial movements properly understood must in their coherence give an image of a unitary life plan and its final goal" (3, p. 4).

Life plan was then used in some of Adler's most important writings (4, pp. 37, 41, 42, 100-103, 106, 108). But at times he also used such

²Part of this selection from Klages by Adler has been translated elsewhere (19, pp. 220-221).

terms as life line, line of movement, total life attitude, total personality (*Lebenslinie*, *Bewegungslinie*, *Gesamtlebenshaltung*, *Gesamtpersönlichkeit*), all these terms, incidentally, within three pages of one publication (5, pp. 20-22).

While the term life plan was later de-activated by Adler, it has recently assumed new significance. In their provocative book, *Plans and the Structure of Behavior*, the authors Miller, Galanter and Pribram present the thesis that the notion of a plan which guides behavior is "quite similar to the notion of a program that guides an electronic computer" (48, p. 2), although, as we would add, the computer, in contrast to the human organism, does not write its own program. A plan is defined simply as "any hierarchical process in the organism that can control the order in which a sequence of operations is to be performed" (48, p. 16).

Life Style

In 1929 Adler formally and cryptically announced that he now preferred style of life (*Lebensstil*) to life plan (*Lebensplan*). "Individual Psychology has long called the consistent movement toward the goal a plan of life. But because this name has sometimes led to mistakes among students, it is now called a style of life" (19, p. 173).

To our knowledge, Adler used the term for the first time, informally, in 1926. The particular circumstances under which this occurred will be described in the section after the following.

Adler decided on life style probably because it was the broader term under which all the others could well be subsumed. Thus he once defined the individual's life style rightly conceived as "the wholeness of his individuality" (10, p. 189). Another advantage of this term is that it should be most resistant to reification, style of life being easily changed to style of living, which becomes very similar to the existentialists' mode-of-being in the world. In this endeavor to avoid reification Adler occasionally also modified the phrasing as in the epitome, "Not heredity and not environment are determining factors. Both are giving only the frame and the influences which are answered by the individual in regard to his styled creative power" (19, frontispiece). Finally, life style is more organismic and humanistic than life plan which it superseded. While a computer can be said to proceed according to a plan, one would not say that it is prone to develop its own particular style.

FROM MAX WEBER VIA FOLKERT WILKEN TO ADLER

When and how the term life style originated has not yet become clear. Already 200 years ago the French naturalist and writer Georges-Louis de Buffon (1707-1788) stated, "The style is the man himself" (*Le style est l'homme même*). And still another 150 years earlier the English philosopher and author, Robert Burton (1577-1640) observed, "It is most true, *stylus virum arguit*—our style betrays us" (20, p. 122). These statements presuppose an underlying personality style or life style corresponding to style in the sense of "manner of expression." The actual phrase "stile of living" is found in the foreword of the English translation, dated 1811, of *Moralische Geschichten* by a quite obscure German author named Adlerjung, "stile" being an older way for style.³

Max Weber

In more recent times it was the sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) who used the term life style before Adler. However, Weber used life style collectively so that its meaning was quite similar to that of subculture.

In the absence of a specific definition we shall show the contexts in which the term is found. Differences in life styles of groups are determined "chiefly by differences in education" (70, p. 300). The most important source of development of distinct social strata is "the development of a peculiar style of life including, particularly, the type of occupation pursued" (71, p. 429). On the other hand, speaking about status, Weber notes that this "is normally expressed by . . . a specific style of life [of] all those who wish to belong to the circle" (70, p. 187). A given status group develops a specific life style and demands its members to adhere to it. "All 'stylization' of life either originates in status groups or is at least conserved by them" (70, p. 191).

Although Weber, the sociologist, was concerned with collective life styles and the concept was of only minor importance in his writings, whereas Adler, the psychologist, was concerned with individual life styles as the most central concept in his system, they both built their theories on essentially the same methodological foundations, the same basic assumptions. Thus it also turns out that the

³Personal communication, December 23, 1961, by Paul Rom who found this book in the British Museum.

two concepts of life style are not as different as might appear at first, but are rather the extension of the same concept from one area to another.

Like Adler, Weber was concerned with understanding human action, that is, behavior which has a "teleological orientation" (71, p. 94), an "intended purpose" (71, p. 93), a subjectively intended meaning for the actor (71, p. 93). Furthermore, "In no case does meaning refer to an objectively 'correct' meaning or one which is 'true' in some metaphysical sense" (71, p. 89). Consequently also, the presence of objective factors such as "hereditary biological constitution" does not in the least alter the specific task of any of the sciences of action, which is "the interpretation of action in terms of its subjective meaning" (71, p. 94).

Understanding involves observation of the subjectivity of the actor and the motivational interpretation of the action. What counts in the interpretation is the operational applicability of the "subjective categories" which the investigator has developed, not whether these are "true," as just stated, or whether the actor is conscious of the meanings that have been imputed to him, or whether he had "intended" in the ordinary sense a given course of action. Thus Weber is quite pragmatic, like Adler (see 18).

Interpretation in terms of motive, which is also called explanatory understanding, is achieved by "placing the act in an intelligible and more inclusive context of meaning" (71, p. 95). The German term for context is *Zusammenhang*. The necessity for regarding individual manifestations of action in their *Zusammenhang* was, of course, also greatly stressed by Adler as his principal methodological tool (18, p. 347). Correspondingly, "Weber found of no use for his purposes" a concept such as instinct (53, p. 26). If one explains on the basis of instinct one is likely to disregard the particular context of a phenomenon.

This may suffice to support the contention that in the distinction between objectifying and subjectifying psychology established by Jaspers, Weber, like Adler, belongs to the second alternative where we find an organismic conception, immanent teleology, a holistic approach, phenomenological description, field theory, and "soft" determinism (19, pp. 4-5)—altogether what is today often designated as organismic-humanistic psychology.

The principal translator and interpreter of Weber has been Talcott Parsons (53, 71) who has had a considerable influence on

American sociology. Life style is frequently used by present-day sociologists who have had some relationship to Parsons.

Folkert Wilken

In 1926 a handbook of Individual Psychology (73) was published, edited by Erwin Wexberg. It contained a paper by Folkert Wilken (76), then lecturer (*Privatdozent*) in political science at the University of Freiburg, which was essentially concerned with the problem of the mental health hazard represented by the increasing liberation of modern man from the communal ties of previous ages.

The author had become interested in Individual Psychology through Leonhard Seif in Munich with whom he was in treatment in 1918. When Max Weber came to the University of Munich in 1919, Wilken, having been a great admirer of his, began his doctoral dissertation under him. This was interrupted through Weber's untimely death in 1920, but the study eventually became Wilken's *Habilitationsschrift* at Freiburg and was published under the title of *Outline of a Personalistic Value Theory* (75).⁴

In Wilken's handbook article the term life style is frequently used, always in the sense of Weber, referring to a collective phenomenon. It is introduced through the sentence: "Modern times have developed their own life style which reflects how mankind has undertaken to found its autonomy of personality" (76, p. 72); this must be followed by a new kind of community (76, p. 73). From then on Wilken speaks of the "modern life style" (*der neuzeitliche Lebensstil*), using also the terms "nervous life style" (76, p. 83) and "materialistic life style" (76, p. 87). He refers to Weber's writings several times, once with the footnote: "Regarding the recognition of the significance of rationality in the modern life style first of all the writings of Max Weber must be mentioned" (76, p. 74).

The following year a monograph by Wilken on neurosis and present-day culture (77) appeared in a series, *Individuum und Gemeinschaft*, edited by Adler, Seif, and Otto Kaus, with chapters on "The Formative Forces of the Modern Life Style," and "The Nervous Basic Attitude as a First but Failing Attempt to Overcome the Modern Life Style."

⁴These data were kindly supplied to us by Professor Wilken in a personal communication, June 28, 1967. The larger part of the career of Professor Wilken, who was born in 1890, was centered in Freiburg where, since 1932, he was full professor of political science and sociology, until his retirement in 1958.

Most interestingly when in the handbook article he mentions Adler, Wilken uses not "life style," but "life plan"—the term which Adler three years later replaced by life style (see above). Wilken credits Adler for having found that in the case of neurosis "the life plan . . . contains the characteristic roots of the entire disturbance" (76, p. 69).

Adler

The handbook in which Wilken's paper appeared is a work of nearly 900 pages by some 30 contributors, and Wilken mentioned life style on at least 15 pages. Still the term is not to be found in the index. This would indicate that the index was not too carefully made, but certainly also that "life style" was not yet a concept in Individual Psychology. Else such an oversight would be unthinkable. What we do find in the index instead are numerous entries under life plan, life line, and guiding line.

And yet, it is Adler in addition to Wilken who uses the term life style—once, and perhaps for the first time, in the introduction to the handbook, as follows:

It is always a matter of comprehending the individual life style which results in a formal line of movement. We arrive at it when we divest the forms of expression, which we have come to know, of their content, because all comprehensible psychological phenomena are in the last analysis concretizations of the unitary action line of the individual. From the level he reaches in this creative activity of concretizing, and from the extent to which this falls on the side of the generally useful, each individual draws his feeling of personal worth (6, p. vi).

From these circumstances we venture the hypothesis that the work of Wilken, the student and admirer of Weber, was somehow instrumental in Adler's adopting the term life style. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that Adler speaks of "individual life style," which would be in distinction to the previous usage of the term as collective life style.

Adler may have become aware of the new term not only through Wilken's writing but also through personal contact. As Wilken recalls today: "At that time I was very active in Individual Psychological circles, gave many talks and . . . had personal contacts and conversations with Adler. Thus it is possible that the phrase of the modern life style, which I used, informally entered the many talks given by Adler. This was actually not remarkable since the concept of life style was not a particular neologism, or was at least not regarded by me as such."⁵

⁵F. Wilken, personal communication, June 14, 1967.

DIFFERENT USES OF LIFE STYLE

The concept of life style can be used in three different ways according to who is the actor or author. This may be an individual; or a group, where the members bear a psychological relationship to each other, and which has stability over time; or a class or category, where the members have only the property in common on the basis of which they are classified. The concept may vary further with regard to content, inclusiveness, and centrality in the theory of the user.

Individual Life Style

This is, of course, the way the term is used in Adlerian psychology, but by other psychologists as well.

Allport describes the individual life style as functionally autonomous and as the highest level of organization of a personality, "the complex propiate organization that determines the 'total posture' of a mature life-system." The life style "evolves gradually in the course of life, and day by day guides and unifies all, or at least many, of a person's transactions with life" (15, p. 237).

Coleman holds that "the individual's pattern of assumptions leads to consistent ways of perceiving, thinking, and acting—to a characteristic *modus operandi* or *life style*" (24, p. 63). "Each individual tends to establish a unique relatively consistent life style. He has a characteristic way of going, thinking, reacting, and growing that tends to distinguish him from everyone else. He puts his personal stamp on every role he plays and every situation he encounters . . . consistent with his self-concept" (23, p. 69). Coleman gives as an example *The Diary of Anne Frank* where "each member is portrayed as behaving in ways consistent with his life style before the episode began" (23, p. 138).

Revers (58) connects individual and generic life style (see below) saying that at first the style of the period shapes the individuality, while the mature personality is so to speak the personalization of the interiorized life style.

Group Life Style

Life style can be used collectively in reference to the behavioral and cognitive aspects of a relatively permanent, small group, down to a dyad, where the members are interacting with one another. Life style in this sense belongs to the area of group dynamics.

"Family life style" as used by Danica Deutsch (26, 27) would be an example. It is so to speak the behavioral or action aspect of "family constellation" in the Adlerian sense as explored methodologically by Shulman (64). "Family theme" is a term used by Hess and Handel (39) which Ferreira (31) considers practically equivalent to family life style, while Handel is among authors using life style itself in the generic sense below (36, 56). Finally, "family myth" described by Ferreira (31) would seem to belong here, as part of the family life style.

When Parsons speaks of the style of life of a family he has less the group-dynamic than the classificatory description in mind as he states that the husband's occupation is the primary determiner of the family's style of life and status in the community (54, p. 13).

Erikson, again, touches on the group-dynamic aspect, although only briefly, when he speaks of an infant participating "zestfully in the style of life of his cultural milieu" (29, p. 282). He uses the term also with regard to a loving couple where he talks of a "polarization of the two sexes within a joint life-style" (30, p. 129).⁶ Another instance of a dyadic group life style would be what is commonly called *folie à deux*.

As in the case of individual life styles, excellent examples and descriptions of group life styles are also found in good literature. Particularly the plays of Chekhov and Ibsen come to mind. Also *The Diary of Anne Frank* could be mentioned in this connection again.

Life Style as a Generic Term

Two kinds of generic uses of life style are possible: (a) referring to relatively natural categories, such as the lower class, and (b) referring to such pure abstractions as the generalized neurotic. The first use is that made by sociologists, while the second is made mostly by psychologists although by sociologists also.

1. The first generic use covers life styles of cultures, subcultures, status or occupational groups, or time-bound subcultures as mentioned by Weber and also by Wilken.

Some authors simply equate culture with life style, as does

⁶We wish to express our appreciation to Professor M. M. Nawas for having made us aware of the last three references. He also kindly read the finished manuscript and we are indebted to him for valuable suggestions.

Rothacker (60), author of the stratification theory of personality (*Schichtentheorie*). He maintains that cultures *are* life styles, emerging from a more primitive state of life-communities (*Lebensgemeinschaften*), and possibly developing into a higher state of cultural styles. Johannes Neumann (51, p. 118), an Adlerian psychotherapist, in a special connection made the analogy that culture is to the larger group what life style is to the individual.

Recent usages of life style pertaining to subcultures are to be found in papers on suburban life style (21, 22), working-class life style (36, 50), and lower-class life style as distinguished from the former (49). Without actually having used the term, a good many of the descriptions from cultural anthropology would also belong here.

2. The second generic use covers the more abstract categories of individuals in everyday life and among the mentally disturbed or problem cases. Regarding the former there are studies on the life style of the workingman's wife (56) and life styles of educated women (34).

Regarding the latter, Adler spoke of "the negative life style" of the patient in general (12, p. 192), "the life style of the compulsion neurotic" (12, p. 137), "the life style of the potential suicide" (19, pp. 323-324), and others. Greatest importance in Adler's system became attributed to the pampered life style which he found common to all neuroses (19, pp. 241-242) and crime, forming the basis of a criminal style of life (10, p. 137). Life style being the central term in Adler's theory, all generalizations about individuals were with respect to life style. Recently Kurt Adler outlined the schizophrenic life style (13).

Life style in the generic sense has come into use also by ego-oriented psychoanalysts. Thus David Shapiro recognizes among neurotics an obsessive-compulsive style, a paranoid style, a hysterical style and an impulsive style (62). Incidentally, Adler had said "What is frequently labeled the ego is nothing more than the style of the individual" (19, p. 175), so that a book by a Freudian ego psychologist on *Neurotic Styles* (62) is almost like a prophesy come true.

These generalized life styles bear a certain similarity to the character sketches of Theophrastus. But these depict "ideal types," not empirical generalizations, as Allport has pointed out (15, pp. 31 & 44) and lack the dynamic, teleological quality. The same goes for types. If, however, a typology includes dynamic principles and

is empirically derived, it comes very close to generic life style. Adler actually suggested what might be called a life-style typology. When he spoke of the ruling, leaning, getting, and avoiding types (19, pp. 167-168) he meant individuals whose styles of living in relationship to others are characterized by one of these four traits.

Content and Range

Among psychologists the concept of style may vary in range from a relatively limited segment to the totality of behavior when it becomes life style. In the restricted range, in respect to individuals, characteristic perceptual styles, also known as cognitive styles, and response styles, as well as complex response styles have been discerned. This area of investigation has been summarized by Stagner under "personality style" (65, pp. 137-155). The amount of current interest in cognitive style can be seen from the index of the *Psychological Abstracts* for 1966 which lists 32 entries under this topic, many referring to dissertations.

The broad range of life style includes cognitive style and response style. Thus according to Coleman life style is "the general pattern of assumptions, motives, cognitive styles, and coping techniques that characterize the behavior of a given individual and give it consistency" (24, p. 664). As Adler's counterpart to cognitive style one may take his "schema of apperception" (19, pp. 181-186), as counterpart to response style or coping techniques, his "law of movement" of the individual (19, pp. 195-196). But at the beginning of one of his books Adler also spoke of "style of acting, thinking and perceiving" as a patient's "way of life" (6a, p. 1). Adler's concepts are, however, more individualized than those currently in greater use.

Among sociologists the term life style itself may refer to such limited areas as cultural tastes and ideology (74); any kind of value orientation (35); "a characteristic way of distributing one's time, one's interest, and one's talent among the common social roles of adult life" (37, p. 333); "attitudes and behavior in the areas of family relationships and consumption patterns" (49, p. 13); or it may approach the broadness of subculture (50).

The concept may also be relatively central in the theory of its user as was certainly the case with Adler, or more peripheral as in the case of Weber. This is to some extent related to the broadness versus the limitation of the concept.

COMMON PROPERTIES OF LIFE STYLE

In spite of the diversity discussed above, important common properties are to be found in all the uses of life style and even simply, style. By considering these, instead of dwelling on the differences, one is moving toward an eventual, desirable synthesis. The common properties we wish to point out are the unifying, the unique, and the operational aspects.

Unifying Aspect

This is the most important aspect, overshadowing the others by far. Even with regard to cognitive or response styles which are quite particularistic, Stagner comments that they "are the sources of internal consistency and unity . . . Entirely aside from specific percepts or specific responses, the person may show a characteristic *pattern of perceiving* or of responding. . . . Particular perceptual styles and response styles help us comprehend the organized unity of the individual personality" (65, p. 137).

The word "style" includes the characteristic of cutting across ordinary boundaries and uniting what might otherwise be quite separate entities. Thus in the case of Bach, Beethoven and Mozart, if one knows their music at all, one can easily match the musical manuscripts with the composer (80). It is such self-consistency which also characterizes style or life style when used in connection with culture or subculture.

Shapiro, who was mentioned earlier, also includes the unifying aspect in his definition of style. It is "a mode of functioning . . . that is identifiable, in an individual, through a range of his specific acts" (62, p. 1). Shapiro recognizes in a footnote that "this point is emphasized in Alfred Adler's psychology also" (62, p. 17n).

It was indeed Adler's main thesis that life style is the unifying principle on which the various behaviors will depend rather than on other variables. (See the opening section of this paper.)

Thorne, who accepts the Adlerian concept of life style in his system of personality, also emphasizes the self-consistency aspect, of which he was first made aware through Lecky (45). According to Thorne, "The factor which contributes to the internal consistency and totality of behavior is the existence of a life style which organizes a unified approach to the goals of life" (66, p. 68).

Today several studies in different areas and by people of quite

diverse convictions, with different understandings of the exact meaning of life style, all support the contention that the life style determines the partial functions of the individual. Sexual behavior will be in accordance with the life style (55, 57), a finding which applies also to homosexual behavior (14, 41). Consumption choices and the use of leisure time will be in accordance with life style (35, 37, 38), as will be the response to mass media (74). Finally, people will grow old and face death in accordance with their life styles (63, 78, 79).

But also methodologically life style is unifying. Allport describes it as a "synoptic concept" which "allows for positivist principles . . . as well as for the basic formulations of existentialism" (15, p. 566).

Unique and Creative Aspects

A second important characteristic of style is a differentiating property. One style is always different from others, although there are similarities between styles. This applies whether the actor is an individual or a group; style is an idiographic concept referring to an irreproducible phenomenon which is sui generis whether it be the creation of a person or of a culture.

As the term was used in connection with artistic creations before it became a term in the social sciences, it always implied originality, spontaneity and creativity on the part of the actor. To illustrate this with an everyday example, a child learns to write according to the cultural model that is put before him, but he varies this spontaneously, developing his own style of handwriting, as a special aspect of his general style. Behavior which is spontaneous and unique involves choice on the part of the actor. And choice is a function of preferences, values, and goals which are the basis for hopes for the future. In this way, style, in anyone's usage, is likely to be associated with a forward-oriented, purposive, value psychology rather than with a causalistic, reductionistic psychology. It would be difficult to think of a robot doing his assigned work in a style of his own (see above).

Operational, Functional and Constancy Aspects

Style is very much tied to operations and actions. It was in the action theory of Weber that the term life style was used first, and it was Adler, who proclaimed a "psychology of use" (19, p. 205), who

elevated the term to a central position. The reason may be that style of life lends itself perhaps less to reification than other terms, because it can easily be made into an adverbial phrase in the form of "style of living" as pointed out above. Therefore it fits well into a truly functional psychology, a psychology of use rather than possession. Objective conditions or stimuli will be responded to, will be used, in accordance with the style of living, be it an individual style that is meant or the group style of a culture or subculture. This aspect is well reflected in the definition found in the new Webster International Dictionary as "an individual's typical way of life: his attitudes and their expression in a self-consistent manner as developing from childhood" (72).

Style as an operational characteristic has also an aspect of constancy. If a person would not typically respond in a certain way again and again on different occasions, style would not have the other functions which are attributed to it. For Adler particularly the life style was relatively constant from early childhood on (19, pp. 189-191) which is also reflected in the Webster definition above.

When the Adlerian explores a person's past, it is not so much to find out what happened to him, as it is how he typically responded to situations to which a person with another life style would have responded quite differently. This is also what Thorne means when he says that life style is the principle which accounts "for the observed reliability of behavior" (66, p. 65).

Examples

Let us take two specific instances to show that the above aspects are apparently really common to various life-style conceptions, despite different origins, or that the term life style is likely to be adopted when all these aspects are recognized.

1. Williams, principal author of a book subtitled *Styles of Life and Successful Aging* (79), writes: "The concept of style of life seems inherent in a theory of action defined as meaningful behavior. Action is a series of projects with means related to goals and governed by certain norms. The over-all pattern of the projects and their interrelationships can well be called style" (78, p. 100).

The similarity with Adler regarding the *unifying* aspect is pointed out by the author himself. "We also think of style of life as a unifying principle or, as Adler would put it, as the 'self-consistency' of the

actor" (78, p. 102). As to the aspect of *uniqueness and creativity* with its forward and goal orientation, this is represented by Williams when he speaks of "meaningful behavior" in terms of "projects" and "goals," while "the focus throughout was on the social systems of individual actors as they move and evolve through time" (78, p. 100). Regarding the *operational* aspect so important in the Adlerian conception, this is reflected in the statements by Williams of individual actors moving and evolving through time, and that "style can be most readily judged when the individual is faced with major decisions" (78, p. 101).

2. The history of the adaptation of the term life style by one research group (33) is another even more interesting example in that it shows practically the same sequence of steps that Adler had taken. The director of the group is Eli Ginzberg, an economist who has done interdisciplinary research on human resources and manpower for the past three decades. Ginzberg noted first that even sexual behavior depends on the values men live by—which realization on the part of Adler was at the root of his separation from Freud (19, pp. 64-69). Then the Ginzberg group found that various functions in a person's life are patterned—as one of Adler's later books, a collection of child-guidance cases, was entitled *The Pattern of Life* (7). This was followed by Ginzberg's use of the term life plan, until finally life style was adopted—just as with Adler, who eventually substituted for life plan the more comprehensive and more dynamic term.

Ginzberg reports that all along he tried to avoid specialized terms and that he is concerned with man's interaction with his environment, ego development, performance, and, once more, the importance of values in determining behavior. In all this, too, parallels with Adler can be seen. It is most noteworthy that from this common basis the two men quite independently and over a generation apart were led, obviously by the compelling logic of the data themselves, finally to adopt the term life style.

Parallel Constructs

Actually the concept of life style even without the use of the term is in a sense the common property of all clinical psychology where the aim of appraisal is to arrive at a self-consistent understanding of the person studied. According to McArthur the aim of

a clinical study is "to build from the data a clinical construct, . . . a 'special theory applicable to one person,' a model of the person . . . a formulation of the premises governing all of *S*'s behavior . . . with which the person being studied had learned to face the world" (46, p. 101). Similarly, the clinician's aim in personality assessment, according to Meehl, is to arrive at an "idiographic conceptualization" of the person (47, p. 139). These statements are not too different from saying that we want to arrive at a formulation of the person's unique and self-consistent life style.

Furthermore, idiographic life-style description is implicit in good literary biography, autobiography and character fiction, as Gilbert (32) has pointed out. This is also the reason why Adler, as quoted above, felt that he had learned much from the great works of literature. He did not analyze these to "discover" what were the forces underneath the actions described, but studied them for their self-consistency and goal directedness.

Finally the mode-of-being or mode-of-existence of the existentialists, mentioned earlier, runs parallel to life style in all its three aspects, as pointed out in several papers (e.g., 67). The unifying, unique and operational aspects of the mode-of-existence can be seen particularly from the description by Van Kaam. According to him, "Existence differentiates itself in various modes-of-existence. . . . Each mode-of-existence integrates various modalities-of-existence such as perceiving, feeling, touching, and thinking" (68, p. 239).

And so we find that Allport treats mode of being-in-the-world and life style quite interchangeably (16, p. 173), and judges that style, although a difficult concept to define, "is highly relevant to the morphogenesis of personality, and as such will have to be dealt with by psychology in the future" (15, p. 566n).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

With the increased general use of the term life style a review of its origin and the variety of its uses appeared called for. The term seems to have been used in modern times first by Max Weber, and was accepted by Adler replacing previous similar terms. Life style has been employed with regard to individuals, groups, or abstract categories of actors, by sociologists and psychologists. The different applications of the term have in common, reference to the unifying

functions of the individual or culture; to uniqueness, creativity, value and goal orientation; to operational description; and to individuals or groups conceived as actively shaping their lives through preferences and corresponding choices.

Growing use of the term would indicate that a corresponding concept of man is gaining. That is, an organismic, holistic and purposive conception seems to be gaining over a mechanistic, elementaristic and strictly deterministic conception. Man is increasingly understood as a self-consistent and self-directed unity whose central theme is reflected in all his actions, as forward oriented, purposive, determined by his own values rather than physiological factors, and in interaction with his environment.

In accordance with this development Weber and Adler who both advanced such a conception of man, and incidentally sponsored the term life style, are themselves gaining in recognition. Thus a recent judgment of Weber contends that "Whereas the influence of men like Marx, Nietzsche and Freud . . . appears to have passed its apex, that of Max Weber still seems to be in the ascendancy" (59, p. 6). And of Adler a recent evaluation points out that he "emphasized ego functions and . . . the individual unity of each person. In these two emphases Adler was prophetic of much current thinking" (69, p. 484).⁷

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⁷Adler's increasing recognition has been the subject of a separate review (17).

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