

A Comparison of Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory

Deborah A. Weber

Abstract

While many theories are becoming increasingly reflective of Adler's underlying philosophy, Individual Psychology has become a theory that many authors feel free to use without acknowledgement of the source. Many cognitive theorists have recognized Alfred Adler's impact on cognitive therapy. Yet, as a whole, the field of psychology does not acknowledge Adler's contribution as a major source from which many draw ideas (Ferguson, 2000; Sweeney, 1998; Watts & Carlson, 1999). Many of the basic constructs of Individual Psychology are also seen in Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Attachment motive parallels Adler's idea of social interest, and the degree to which a child is able to meet his or her needs affects his or her level of social interest and ability to complete life's tasks.

Increasingly, a large number of the theoretical foundations in modern psychology can be traced to the ideas and constructs of Alfred Adler (Sweeney, 1998; Watts & Critelli, 1997). While applied psychology is becoming more reflective of the underlying philosophy of Individual Psychology, few theories acknowledge the contributions of Alfred Adler (Ferguson, 2000; Sweeney; Watts & Carlson, 1999; Watts & Critelli). Often called one of the three pillars of psychology, Adler's influence is remarkable though often undocumented (Watts & Carlson; Watts & Critelli). According to Watts and Critelli, no other author has had such "wide-spread plagiarism" as Alfred Adler (p. 152). Adler's ideas have been borrowed by all sides, yet there is a lack of recognition and sometimes a denial of Adler's contributions. Individual Psychology has become a theory that many authors feel free to use as a basis for ideas without acknowledging the source (Sperry; Watts & Carlson; Watts & Critelli).

Despite the current movement in psychology away from individualism and toward approaches more oriented in social values and responsibility, few individuals and theories acknowledge Alfred Adler as a precursor of these "new" theoretical perspectives (Ferguson, 2000; Sperry, 1997; Watts & Critelli, 1997). Even though Adler's theory "predated his contact with Freud," many incorrectly assume he was simply a student of Freud's (Sweeney, 1998, p. 2). According to Watts and Carlson (1999), "Adler's influence has been acknowledged by—or his vision traced to the neo-Freudians, existential therapists, person-centered therapy, rational-emotive therapy, cognitive therapy,

reality therapy, and family systems approaches" (p. 5). While there is a general lack of recognition of Adler's contributions to psychology, a few individuals do credit Adler for affecting the development of various theories (Watts & Critelli; Watts & Carlson). Contemporary cognitive, cognitive-behavioral, and constructivist theories, for examples, share many ideas congruent with Individual Psychology, including therapeutic focus, collaborative therapeutic relationship, and therapeutic change through the educational model (Dowd, 1997; Sperry; Watts & Carlson). Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck are two of the few theorists who credit Adler's influence in the formation of Rational-Emotive Therapy and Cognitive Therapy (Freeman & Urschel, 1997; Sperry; Watts & Critelli). Although many cognitive theorists have recognized Adler's impact on cognitive therapy, the field of psychology in general does not acknowledge Adler's contributions as a major source from which many ideas are drawn. For many, Adler's contribution is only noticeable by its obvious omission (Watts & Critelli).

Several of the basic constructs of Individual Psychology are also seen in John Bowlby's Attachment Theory (Shulman & Watts, 1997). Attachment motive parallels Adler's ideas of social interest and Attachment Theory and Individual Psychology both emphasize innate, developed interactions with caregivers. Furthermore, the degree to which children are able to meet their needs affects future relationships with other humans, and, in essence, their level of social interest and ability to complete life's tasks.

Basic Constructs of Attachment Theory

Behavioral systems. Attachment Theory formulates a social and biological behavioral system (Searle & Meara, 1999). According to Ainsworth and Bowlby (1991), "it is an ethological approach to personality development" (p. 333). Drawing on the work of ethologists, Bowlby believed attachment behaviors were "organized into an attachment behavioral system" that led to inherent motivation and species-specific behaviors resulting in certain predictable outcomes (Cassidy, 1999, p. 5). All species possess a system of protection for the individuals that comprise the group (Ainsworth, 1989). Thus, group membership is needed for protection. Behavioral systems are not only influenced by genetics, but they are also sensitive to the environment. Attachment behavior is thought to have evolved through natural selection because it promotes survival of the infant by proximity-seeking behaviors. Thus, attachment behavior has a survival function (Alexander, 1992; Cassidy). According to Attachment Theory, humans need security, which is provided through love, touch, and warmth. Indeed, "attachment theory underscores the central role of relationships in human development from the cradle to the grave" (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999, p. 89).

The outcomes of Bowlby's research emphasized interactions of behavioral systems, causing him to discard drive theory and focus instead on developing the concept of behavioral systems (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). According to Cassidy (1999), the attachment behavior system is organized in a goal-corrected manner where relationships are regulated by a behavioral-motivational system. Bowlby believed this approach highlights the inner working models of self and the goal-corrected relationship between mother and child. Working models of self and the attachment figure are based on the relationship history. These internal working models interpret, regulate, and predict attachment behavior. Through repeated experiences with the attachment figure, infants develop cognitive/affective constructs that guide their perceptions and expectations. Called working models, these subjective expectations influence behavior in caregiving situations.

A secure child carries an internal assurance that he or she is worthy of caring and love. Secure internal working models produce a balance of self-reliance and help-seeking capacities. Bowlby (1969/1982) maintained that the most well adjusted individuals have assurance in the responsiveness and accessibility of an attachment figure. Attachment is believed to endure across the life span and is reflected in an individual's internal working model (Ainsden & Greenberg, 1987). In addition to directing feelings and behaviors, internal working models are believed to direct memory, cognition, and attention about relationships (Weinfield, Ogawa, & Sroufe, 1997).

The patterns and organization of behavior designed to maintain attachments endure throughout life and enable the individual to derive a sense of security in the bond of responsiveness and accessibility of the attachment figure. Psychological and emotional disturbances may result from the threatened or actual disruption of attachment (Ainsden & Greenberg, 1987). The disruption/loss, unresponsiveness, or unpredictability of an attachment figure may produce anger, depression, anxiety, and sadness. Defensive exclusion occurs when accessing stored experiences results in extreme anxiety. Bowlby believed sensory input is evaluated unconsciously and subject to defensive exclusion. Evidence suggesting the correlation between adverse effects on development and lack of interaction with a caregiver was intriguing to Bowlby (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Infants who spent prolonged periods in institutional care and away from primary caregivers showed persistent insecurity years after the institutional separation. Few of these infants seemed to regain secure attachments with their primary caregivers. Specific patterns of insecure attachments are produced by deficiencies in caretaking and often adversely affect the development of interpersonal relationships (Bradford & Lyddon, 1994). According to Olsen (1999), "the fact that infants are attached to parents who abuse and/or mistreat them supports the notion that the satisfaction of physiological needs is insufficient to explain the

development of attachment behavior" (p. 12). According to Cassidy (1999), it is believed that children become attached to their parents regardless of whether or not the parents are meeting their physiological needs.

Attachment. As the founder of Attachment Theory, John Bowlby intended to provide clinicians an updated version of psychoanalytical object-relations theory that was congruent with ethology and evolutionary theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). However, it was the developmental psychologists who first subscribed to Bowlby's new Attachment Theory.

According to Attachment Theory an infant needs a committed, caring attachment figure to promote healthy development (Bretherton, 1992). An attachment figure serves as a base in which an infant can explore the environment. Bowlby believed children needed a warm and intimate relationship with their mother in order to grow up mentally healthy. The development of infant security is greatly reflected by parental behavior (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Carlson, Cicchetti, Barnett, & Braunwald, 1989; Cook, 2000). Children are completely dependent upon parents for survival. Maternal sensitivity to an infant and the child's ability to form a close, intimate, and continuous relationship with the mother determines mental health (Bretherton, 1992). In breaking with Freudians, Bowlby believed that actual family experiences were the cause of emotional disturbances, not internal conflict between drives as postulated by psychoanalysis.

One of the most substantial contributors to Attachment Theory is Mary Satter Ainsworth. As a graduate student, Ainsworth worked with William Blatz, founder of security theory. Security theory held the premise that "learning itself involves insecurity" (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991, p. 335). Blatz also believed defense mechanisms were used to provide security to an individual. While Ainsworth brought parts of security theory into her work with Attachment Theory, she broke away from Blatz's security theory because she felt the theory did not adequately address defensive processes. One of Ainsworth's most famous works is her "strange situation" study involving Ganda babies and their mothers. Ainsworth observed three types of behavior patterns in the Ganda children: secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant (Page, 1999; Seattle & Meara, 1999). According to Ainsworth, secure infants are able to seek comfort and be calmed by the caregiver. Anxious-ambivalent infants engage in numerous proximity seeking behaviors and are unable or resistant to being comforted when distressed. On the other hand, avoidant infants exhibit minimal affect or distress with attachment figures and are avoidant during times that normally produce proximity seeking behavior (Carlson et al., 1989). The results of Ainsworth's Ganda study supported Bowlby's belief in attachment-seeking behaviors.

In his research, Bowlby further observed that overprotection in a mother was due to adverse family experiences with her parents. Bowlby felt such

behavior was a defensive process resulting from abandonment, rejection, illness, or death. Ainsworth and Bowlby (1991) maintained that with maturation, the infant gains insight into the interactions of the attachment figure and this "goal-corrected partnership" results from sensitive responding by the attachment figure. A secure attachment with a responsive caregiver will enable a child to develop a working model of self in which the child is valued and self-reliant. On the other hand, a child who is neglected will form an unworthy model of self. Bowlby believed these working models of self and those of the attachment figure allow children to predict behavior and plan responses. In view with modern cognitive theories, these models are complementary and salient (Bretherton, 1992).

Although securely attached individuals are more likely to be engaged in the social environment, insecure infants experiencing chronic rejection and unavailability of an attachment figure frequently experience anxiety or fear. Often this fear or anger manifests itself through aggressive behavior (Weinfield, Stroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999). According to Allen and Land (1999), insecure relationships are characterized by greater vulnerability to anger, avoidance of problem solving, greater levels of dysfunctional anger, disengagement, and pressuring tactics.

Attachment Theory applies not only to child-parent relationships, but also to romantic relationships or pair bonds. Indeed, there is strong evidence that the stability of attachment relationships is relatively constant throughout the lifespan (Ainsworth, 1989; Allen & Land, 1999; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Bradford & Lyddon, 1994; Cassidy, 1999; Genuis, 1994; Kobak, 1999; Leim & Boudewyn, 1999; Main, 1991; Olsen, 1999). The importance of early attachment bonds formed in infancy plays a vital role throughout life. Attachment styles of adults are often based on their attachment history (Kesner & Mckenny, 1998). According to Kesner, Julian, and Mckenny (1997), "individuals in adult intimate relationships are still looking for the same sense of security and support from their partners that was important in their secure attachment relationships during early childhood" (p. 213). In infancy attachment relationships are asymmetrical, whereas romantic relationships or pair bond relationships are reciprocal bonds that have profound physiological and psychological interdependence. According to Feeney (1999), Attachment Theory forms a basis for understanding conflict, anxiety, grief, and loneliness in pair bonds or romantic relationships. Research suggests that much of conflict in relationships comes from insecurities over issues of loss, love, and abandonment. Understanding and identifying attachment styles across the lifespan brings greater insight and awareness of current and future relational bonds, self-esteem (Kerns, Aspelmeier, Gentzler, & Grabill, 2001), sexual abuse (Alexander, 1992), intimate violence (Kesner & Mckenny), psychological adjustment and well-being (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Armsden & Greenberg), and different types of psychopathology

(Genuis, Kobak). Despite the rapid proliferation of research in childhood and adult attachment, a challenge for researchers interested in assessing attachment styles is the need to consider not only the theoretical assumptions underlying the instrument but the relationship domain to be examined (Crowell, Fraley, & Shaver, 1999).

A Comparison of Constructs

Attachment Theory and Individual Psychology share several basic constructs. Both social interest and attachment motive emphasize innate interactions with caregivers. Furthermore, the degree to which an individual's needs are met in early relationships affects their level of social interest and ability to complete life's tasks. Both Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory emphasize the innate necessity for relationships and social interaction that enables humans to continue to exist and evolve.

Ecology. Bowlby believed, as Adler, that organisms had instinctive, goal-corrected behaviors that, while strictly innate, possessed the ability to change with the environment (Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby was fascinated by imprinting because it alluded to the idea that social bonds are not necessarily tied to feeding and oral gratification as previously proposed by Freud (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton). According to Adler (1927/1946), social life is necessary to maintain existence. Individual Psychology maintains that species must work together in order to exist, and society influences an individual's life as well as his or her development. According to Individual Psychology, it is not in isolation but through society that an individual is able to achieve security and happiness. Adler believed social interest was vital to human existence (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Sperry, 1997).

Both Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory are built upon the theoretical premise of the importance of social interactions. According to Attachment Theory, species must work together in order to exist (Bretherton, 1992). In Individual Psychology the individual and society cannot be separated (Ferguson, 2000). Both theories support the premise that the existence of one necessitates the existence of the other. Individual Psychology asserts that during infancy, children are inferior and helpless, and seeking nurturance from others enables them to provide for their needs. A healthy child requires a healthy community, and shared responsibility and respect are necessary for long-term health. The welfare of the individual and the welfare of the group, must coincide. According to Attachment Theory, proximity-seeking behavior is also necessary for the survival of the species (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992). Both Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory view purposive behavior as fulfilling the need to belong.

Individual Psychology focuses on the external world as an important part of an individual's development because it provides the foundation for social significance and a sense of belonging. Attachment Theory emphasizes the active nature of attachment behavior and asserts that attachment behavior is goal-corrected (Ainsworth, 1989; Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). This view is congruent with Adler's (1927/1946) view of humans as unique, active, and creative participants in their formation.

Development. Bowlby's ideas regarding attachment provide a foundation for understanding child development (Page, 1999). Many of Bowlby's ideas came from various fields, including a field heavily influenced by Adler, cognitive psychology. According to Page, "attachment was conceived as a goal-directed, behavioral system, operating within a specific environment, the purpose of which was to ensure the child's safety and survival" (p. 419). Additionally, in Attachment Theory, a child's relationship with the attachment figure promotes social skills that will allow a child to expand social relationships. This statement is strikingly familiar to Individual Psychology's premise of social interest. According to Individual Psychology, family-of-origin experiences are fundamental in understanding an individual's lifestyle.

Lifestyle and attachment style. Both Adler and Bowlby considered the forming of attachments to be innate features of life connected to human relationships and bonding. Individual Psychology "conceptualize(s) human behavior in terms of a compensatory striving for superiority that originates in feelings of inferiority due to early childhood and family of origin experiences" (Jones & Lyddon, 1997, p. 201). Humans by nature desire to belong and strive to gain acceptance (Adler, 1927/1946, 1931/1998; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987). According to Adler (1931/1998), each individual has a unique lifestyle or way of coping with challenges and tasks of life. By the fifth year of life, a child has adopted a pattern of behavior and style of approaching tasks and problems that reflect his or her conception of what to expect from the world. This "private logic" assigns values and rules to the world and includes core convictions about the world and self (Watts & Carlson, 1999). Similar to Adler's concept of lifestyle, Bowlby believed by age three or four children become capable of a goal-corrected partnership in which they are able to negotiate mutual understanding and induce plans more closely aligned with their own (Ainsworth, 1991). A child's attachment style or attachment security influences his or her working model of self and others or their subjective world. A secure attachment enables an infant to explore the world, thus effecting the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of development (Carlson et al., 1989; Cook, 2000) throughout life. Additionally, Attachment Theory maintains that an individual's expectation of the attachment figure typically coincides with level of self-worth. Thus, the characteristics of the primary attachment figure

are indicative of the development of a secure attachment in an infant. Both Attachment Theory and Individual Psychology view the continuity of lifestyles or attachment styles as pervasive across the life span.

Phenomenology. According to Attachment Theory, one's level of attachment coincides with one's subjective (phenomenological) outlook of the world (Jones & Lyddon, 1997). Family-of-origin interaction is indicative of the type of attachment a person will be seeking to fulfill in life. According to Adler (1927/1946) "the first evidence of inborn social feeling unfolds in his [the child's] early search for tenderness, which leads him to seek proximity of adults" (p. 42). Proximity seeking behavior is addressed in both theories as necessary for healthy development and long term social interest. According to Watts and Carlson (1999), "social interest is the measure by which a person's movement through life, and thus the person's lifestyle, is assessed as either socially useful or socially useless" (p. 3). Individual Psychology maintains that an individual's level of social interest is indicative of empathy and identification with family, friends, and the community (Freeman & Urschel, 1997). Individual Psychology perceives self-actualization as the positive attainment of a unique identity and striving for significance. According to Dinkmeyer et al. (1987), mental health is measured by an individual's social interest. A healthy person looks outward instead of inward (Adler, 1931/1998).

Attachment Theory also holds attachment behavior as proximity seeking to an attachment figure (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992; Cassidy, 1999). Interactions between a mother and a child are known to predict later social interactions (Alexander, 1992; Carlson et al., 1989; Cook, 2000). According to Attachment theorists, children's models of self are formed by perceptions in their environment and interaction with the caregivers (Muller, Sicoli, & Lemieux, 2000). These perceptions enable children to anticipate interactions between individuals. Individual Psychology also maintains that the degree to which children's needs are met early in life affect their subsequent levels of social interest and abilities to address life's tasks. The parallel between Adler's belief that inborn social feelings will lead a child to proximity seeking behavior and Bowlby's attachment behavior as proximity seeking is unmistakable.

Social interest. Adler believed that children were completely dependent upon others (Adler, 1927/1946; Dinkmeyer et al., 1987). According to Individual Psychology, social interest first develops between mother and child (Adler; Freeman & Urschel, 1997). Cooperation, an aspect of social interest, begins between a child and an attachment figure. A secure attachment enables a child to explore the environment. An insecure attachment may cause a child to formulate a schema of insecurity and fear. Bowlby also believed children were completely dependent upon parents, as parents were dependent upon society (Bretherton, 1992). Within children "social

emotions" emerge with awareness of the world. The child who emerges with social competence and positive representational models of self and others is able to engage in social relationships and develop satisfying relationships (Page, 1999).

Both theories support the idea that attachment behavior is regulated by cultural differences and children and parents must be valued within society (Adler, 1927/1946; Bretherton, 1992). The desire to create social order often conflicts with the desire to promote one's own self and goals at the cost of someone else. Therefore, the importance of attachment relationships has not only psychological implications but moral implications as well. According to Ferguson (2000), many of the acts of seemingly random violence in society can be traced to tolerance of behavior that violated the welfare of the group and the individual. Often parents, schools, and communities ignore, permit, or foster individual disregard for the welfare of the group. According to Ferguson (2000), shared responsibility is a commitment necessary for a democratic society.

As Sweeney (1998) stated, cooperation, responsibility, and social democracy promote equality and social interest. According to Ferguson (2000), Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs believed the health of the individual and society required a democratic relationship in which to raise children. The welfare of the individual and the group must be considered in order to promote optimal health. Each must respect the other.

Family atmosphere/family-of-origin. According to Sweeney (1998), a parent's love and interest in a child are important parts of personality development. Additionally, a major ingredient of a child's development is the family atmosphere. The authoritarian parent, protective parent, submissive parent, and supportive/encouraging parent are all interaction styles that become components of a child's personality formation. Bowlby believed family experiences were an important cause of emotional disturbance, an idea that is also found in Individual Psychology (Bretherton, 1992; Carlson et al., 1989). Both Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory maintain a child's working model of self is relatively stable throughout life (Adler, 1927/1946; Muller et al., 2000). Furthermore, a parent's ability to respond to his or her child's needs and a child's attachment to the parent directly relates to the child's later social adjustment (Carlson et al., Page, 1999). According to Adler (1927/1946), "reflections of environment are usually to be found in the behavior of any child" (p. 35).

Both Attachment Theory and Individual Psychology maintain that a person's internal working models of self and others are formulated through interpersonal interactions. Children use these internal models to predict behavior and formulate their own responses. According to Attachment Theory, children internalize interactions with attachment figures and use this

information as a basis for future relationships (Carlson et al., 1989; Muller et al., 2000). Adler believed an adult could not be understood without first understanding the child (Adler, 1931/1998). One of the strongest predictors of a child's attachment is the parent's attachment style (Alexander, 1992). Adler also theorized that children who felt neglected by their mothers would spend their lives looking for the love and affection they did not have in childhood. Additionally, he described the difficulties of children who attach to only one caregiver and those who are pampered by permissive parents. Adler believed these types of family environments lead to isolation of the child similar to the adult attachment styles described in Attachment Theory.

Safeguarding tendencies. Bowlby believed internal working models could contain distorted information because of defensive distortion which protects an individual from pain, conflict, or confusion (Bretherton, 1992). According to Bowlby, a child's model of self reflects the child's perspective of his or her worth (Page, 1999). Individual Psychology also views safeguarding tendencies as a reaction to feelings of inferiority that protect an individual's self-esteem and self-worth (Jones & Lyddon, 1997; Shulman & Watts, 1997; Sperry, 1997). According to Attachment Theory, avoidance is the result of a defensive maintenance of self brought on by the fear of rejection (Muller et al., 2000). They suggested that "as children striving for security in an inconsistent or abusive environment, they tended to focus on gaining the attention of others" and not on themselves (p. 329). Children with insecure attachment styles are often angry and/or avoidant. These children may externalize problems (Finnegan, Hodges, & Perry, 1996), experience increased difficulty disengaging from conflict (Weinfield et al., 1997), and be less empathic, and noncompliant. These findings reflect Individual Psychology's belief that striving for superiority and discouragement brings about maladaptive behavior. Discouragement and low social interest are indicative of an individual who does not have the courage or development to meet the challenges of life (Watts & Critelli, 1997). Both theories support the idea that a negative self-view leads to emotional and psychosocial maladjustment.

Self-worth vs. feeling of inferiority. Attachment Theory takes a cognitive orientation when working with internal models of self (Searle & Meara, 1999). Infants who grow up in a caring and sensitive environment where their needs are met learn they have an influence on the world around them. In contrast, infants who are raised in an environment where caregivers are unresponsive to their needs learn that they are not able to affect the world around them (Weinfield et al., 1999). Securely attached individuals are more likely to explore their world actively and thus are more engaged in the social environment.

On the other hand, Individual Psychology views self-worth through an individual's ability to address life tasks. A person with low self-worth is

an individual who feels inferior and is striving for superiority. Feelings of inferiority or discouragement often lead to an underdeveloped social interest, whereas individuals who strive in life to promote the welfare of others evince social interest (Watts & Carlson, 1999). Whether having low self-worth or feelings of inferiority, in both theories the individual is viewed as lacking the appropriate level of social interest.

Therapeutic relationship. Although Individual Psychology has a clear approach to psychotherapy that is grounded in its theory, an obvious weakness of Attachment Theory is the lack of a system of therapy using Attachment Theory. The relation between individual psychotherapy and Attachment Theory has received little attention from attachment researchers or clinicians until recently (Slade, 1999). According to Berlin and Cassidy (1999), Bowlby viewed the psychotherapeutic relationship as a "potential attachment relationship" (p. 701) in which the therapist would serve as an attachment figure and secure base from which to explore the relationships. Rather than proposing a type of "Attachment Therapy," Slade (1999) contended that understanding the dynamics and nature of attachment does not define intervention and conceptualization. Rather, understanding attachment and attachment processes, such as affect regulation, defense, and the dynamics of relationships, informs and challenges clinicians to change the way they think and respond to patients. Slade went on to caution that attachment constitutes only one area of human functioning and does not define the complexity of the human.

One commonality in Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory is the belief in the importance of helping clients gain awareness of lifestyles/attachment styles (Adler, 1927/1946; Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992; Sperry, 1997; Sweeney, 1998; Watts & Carlson, 1999). While Individual Psychology focuses on social interest and life tasks, Attachment Theory focuses on early and current attachment styles. Both believe human existence occurs in the social and interpersonal context. Thus, an individual's interactions and level of social interest are important.

In Individual Psychology, an individual with a low level of social interest feels discouraged. Low social interest and discouragement are signs of maladaptation. Establishing a trusting, collaborative relationship in which the client can explore problems is a goal of Individual Psychology. According to Individual Psychology, lifestyles and early recollections are used to help bring awareness to a client's basic convictions (Sperry, 1997; Sweeney, 1998). The goal is to help the client gain insight into the problem and basic mistakes and convictions. Individual Psychology is not about changing behavior; it's about changing perceptions, beliefs, and goals. As insight helps one become more aware of behavior, practicing the new behavior and acting upon the insights with more social interest is part of the re-education phase

of therapy. In the process of reorientation it is not insight alone that changes behavior, but the individual's perceptions, beliefs, and goals in the direction of social interest that change behavior. The client can then use insight and awareness to change his or her behavior.

According to Attachment Theory, secure attachments promote empathy and a positive view of self and others (Alexander, 1992). Specifically, research indicates that failure to form secure attachments early in life is thought to contribute to later psychological problems and many of the behavioral and emotional difficulties often seen in psychotherapy (Genius, Violato, Oddone-Paolucci, Robitaille, & McBride, 2000; Lyddon, Bradford, & Nelson, 1993). According to Bowlby, the therapeutic relationship is one in which the therapist provides a secure attachment base from which to explore current relations. Bowlby believed a client's difficulties were rooted in his or her real-life experiences and the therapist serves as a guide in assessing the client's explorations of early life experiences. According to Attachment Theory, evaluating the past will enable a client to improve interpersonal relationships by revising old models of self and others (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991).

Because an obvious weakness of Attachment Theory is the lack of a system of therapy and a focus on only one area of human functioning, Attachment theorists would benefit by drawing from the clear approach to psychotherapy grounded in Individual Psychology. Additionally, given the many commonalities between the constructs of Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory, Individual Psychologists could also benefit from the extensive research that has been conducted in the field of Attachment Theory and on measures developed to assess attachment styles.

Conclusion

The theoretical foundations of Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory support the belief that humans have a need to form positive and lasting relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Furthermore, much of what humans do is related to belonging. Cultures are adapted around the psychological need to belong, yet the need to belong transcends culture and is evident throughout the world. The need to form social bonds has a survival and reproductive element. Humans seem naturally driven to seek belongingness.

Studies show that it takes very little to form an attachment early in life, a premise in which both Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory are founded. The ability of all children to form attachments (secure or insecure) is evinced through the formation of attachments across all situations including children raised in neglectful and abusive environments. Beyond the earliest

- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachment as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychology Bulletin, 117*(3), 497-529.
- Berlin, L. J., & Cassidy, J. (1999). Relations among relationships: Contributions from attachment theory and research. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 688-712). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Bowlby, J. (1982). *Attachment and Loss, Volume 1, Attachment*. New York: Basic Books. (Original work published 1969)
- Bradford, E., & Lyddon, W. J. (1994). Assessing adolescent and adult attachment: An update. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 73*, 215-219.
- Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychotherapy, 28*(5), 759-775.
- Bretherton, I., & Munholland, K. A. (1999). Internal working models in attachment relationships: A construct revisited. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 89-111). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Carlson, V., Cicchetti, D., Barnett, D., & Braunwald, K. (1989). Disorganized/disoriented attachment relationships in maltreated infants. *Developmental Psychology, 25*(4), 525-531.
- Cassidy, J. (1999). The nature of the child's ties. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 3-20). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Cook, W. (2000). Understanding attachment security in family context. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(2), 285-294.
- Crowell, J. A., Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (1999). Measurement of individual differences in adolescent and adult attachment. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 434-465). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Dinkmeyer, D. C., Dinkmeyer, D. C., Jr., & Sperry, L. (1987). *Adlerian counseling and psychotherapy* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Dowd, E. T. (1997). A cognitive reaction: Adlerian psychology, cognitive (behavior) therapy, and constructivistic psychotherapy: Three approaches in search of a center. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly, 11*, 215-219.
- Feeney, J. A. (1999). Adult-romantic attachment and couple relationships. In J. Cassidy and P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 355-377). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Ferguson, E. D. (2000). Individual psychology is ahead of its time. *The Journal of Individual Psychology, 56*(1), 14-20.
- Finnegan, R. A., Hodges, E. V. A., & Perry, D. G. (1996). Preoccupied and avoidant coping during middle childhood. *Child Development, 67*, 1318-1328.
- Freeman, A., & Urschel, J. (1997). Individual psychology and cognitive behavior therapy: A cognitive therapy perspective. *Journal of Cognitive Therapy: An International Quarterly, 11*(3), 165-179.
- Genuis, M. (1994). Long-term consequences of childhood attachment: Implications for counseling adolescents. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, 17*, 263-274.
- Genuis, M., Violato, C., Oddone-Paolucci, E., Robitaille, S., & McBride, D. (2000). Pilot study of the psychometric properties of the adolescent attachment survey (AAS). In C. Violato, E. Oddone-Paolucci, & M. Genuis (Eds.), *The changing family and child development* (pp. 256-267). England: Ashgate.
- Jones, J. V., Jr., & Lyddon, W. J. (1997). Adlerian and constructivist psychotherapies: A constructivist perspective. *Journal of Cognitive Therapy: An International Quarterly, 11*(3), 195-210.
- Kerns, K. A., Aspelmeier, J. E., Gentzler, A. L., & Grabill, C. M. (2001). *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*, 69-81.
- Kesner, J. E., Julian, T., & McKenry, P. C. (1997). Application of attachment theory to male violence toward female intimates. *Journal of Family Violence, 12*, 211-228.
- Kesner, J. E., & McKenry, P. C. (1998). The role of childhood attachment factors in predicting male violence toward female intimates. *Journal of Family Violence, 13*, 417-432.
- Kobak, R. (1999). The emotional dynamics of disruptions in attachment relationships: The implications for theory, research, and clinical intervention. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 21-43). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Leim, J. H., & Boudewyn, A. C. (1999). Contextualizing the effects of childhood sexual abuse of adult self- and social functioning: An attachment theory perspective. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 23*, 1141-1157.
- Lyddon, W. J., Bradford, E., & Nelson, J. P. (1993). Assessing adolescent and adult attachment: A review of current self-report measures. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 71*, 390-395.
- Main, M. (1991). Metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive monitoring, and singular (coherent) vs. multiple (incoherent) model of attachment: Findings and directions for future research. In C. M. Parkes, J. Stevenson-Hinde, & P. Marris (Eds.), *Attachment across the life cycle* (pp. 127-159). London: Routledge.
- Muller, R. T., Sicoli, L. A., & Lemieux, K. E. (2000). Relationship between attachment style and posttraumatic stress symptomatology among adults who report on the experience of childhood abuse. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 13*(2), 321-332.
- Olsen, D. R. (1999). Childhood attachment patterns and internalized working models of attachment: The effect of parental acceptance on

needs of proximity-seeking behavior. Bowlby believed adult attachments to society (work, groups, etc.) are indicative of the mother-child relationship. The need to belong enacts goal-directed behavior. Individual Psychology also maintains that an individual's ability to address the life tasks of spirituality, self-direction, work, friendship, and love with social interest are signs of mental health.

Both Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory support proximity-seeking attachments as a foundation to social development. Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory believe in the importance of early childhood experiences and emphasize the importance of the family of origin or family atmosphere in forming personal constructs. Both theories emphasize the importance of the past on current development. Individual Psychology uses early recollections and lifestyle interviews, and Attachment Theory explores memories and representational models in the past to facilitate understanding of the present (Searle & Meara, 1999).

Like Adler, Bowlby believed in the unified personality and theorized that information often goes through many stages before it reaches the conscious (Adler, 1927/1946; Page, 1999). Each theorist also maintained that the internal model of self and/or lifestyle is outside of an individual's awareness, although an individual can become aware of his or her lifestyle. Both theories view self-esteem as being constructed through a phenomenological perspective. Additionally, in both approaches, a child's interpretation and convictions about life and subsequent development of schemas is not always based on reality but on perceived interactions with parents and/or attachment figures.

While many differences exist between Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory, the similarities are striking. Both theoretical positions can be termed cognitive, ecological, psychodynamic and systemic (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Sperry, 1997; Watts & Carlson, 1999; Watts & Critelli, 1997). According to Watts and Critelli, Adler's influence in the formation of cognitive-behavioral theories is documented by individuals such as Ellis, Beck, Freeman, Corey, Dowd, and Kelly. According to Ainsworth and Bowlby (1991), Attachment Theory is eclectic, having drawn upon numerous disciplines and theories, including developmental, social, cognitive, personality psychology, systems theory, and biology. While using many of the terms of psychoanalysis, Bowlby himself was often accused by colleagues of being a behaviorist (Bretherton, 1992). Thus, it is understandable why so many constructs of Individual Psychology which are also found in cognitive, social, personality, systems and biology theory can also be found in Attachment Theory. According to Ellis, "Alfred Adler, more than even Freud, is probably the true father of modern psychotherapy" (as cited in Watts & Critelli, 1997, p. 150).

8

According to Ferguson (2000) and Watts and Carlson (1999), Adler was a man whose ideas were ahead of his time. Adler had a vision of social responsibility and equality. Now more than ever society is moving from individualism and placing a greater emphasis of values and social responsibility. While often not attributed to Adler, his concepts are increasingly apparent in school and organizational psychology. Understanding the balance between self-confidence and mutual respect is beginning to emerge as society is faced with acts of random violence and discord. Many struggle to understand and search for an external cause for the destructive development of the family and welfare of the children. Others realize the importance of social interest, mutual respect, responsibility, self-choice, and the need to belong (Ferguson, 2000).

Even though many individuals fail to attribute these ideas to Individual Psychology, they remain a vital part of psychology and society's future. Now more than ever, as society is searching for answers in an ever-increasing society of individualism and violence, the need for Adler's ideas is evident.

References

- Adler, A. (1946). *Understanding human nature* (W. Wolfe, Trans.). New York: Greenberg. (Original work published 1927)
- Adler, A. (1998). *What life could mean to you* (C. Brett, Trans.). Center City, MN: Hazelden. (Original work published 1931)
- Ainsworth, M. D. S. (1989). Attachments beyond infancy. *American Psychologist, 44*(4), 709-716.
- Ainsworth, M. D. S. (1991). Attachments and other affectional bonds across the life cycle. In C. M. Parks, J. Stevenson-Hinde, & P. Murriss (Eds.), *Attachment across the life cycle* (pp. 33-51). London: Routledge.
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., & Bowlby, J. (1991). An ethological approach to personality development. *American Psychologist, 46*(4), 333-341.
- Alexander, P. C. (1992). Application of attachment theory to the study of sexual abuse. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 60*(2), 185-195.
- Allen, J. P., & Land, D. (1999). Attachment in adolescence. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 319-335). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Ansbacher, H. L., & Ansbacher, R. R. (Eds.). (1956). *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 16*, 427-454.

- self-esteem and lovability. (Doctoral dissertation, Ball State University, 1999.) *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 59(10B), 5583. (UMI No. 9911685)
- Page, T. (1999). The attachment partnership as conceptual base for exploring the impact of child maltreatment. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 16(6), 419-437.
- Searle, B., & Meara, N. M. (1999). Affective dimensions of attachment styles exploring self-reported attachment styles, gender, and emotional experiences among college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 46(2), 147-158.
- Shulman, B. H., & Watts, R. E. (1997). Adlerian and constructivist psychotherapies: An Adlerian perspective. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly*, 11(3), 181-193.
- Slade, A. (1999). Attachment theory and research: Implications for the theory and practice of individual psychotherapy with adults. In J. Cassidy and P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 575-594). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Sperry, L. (1997). Adlerian psychotherapy and cognitive therapy: An Adlerian perspective. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly*, 11(3), 157-164.
- Sweeney, T. J. (1998). *Adlerian counseling: A practitioner's approach* (4th ed.). Philadelphia: Accelerated Development.
- Watts, R. E., & Carlson, J. (1999). *Interventions and strategies in counseling and psychotherapy*. Philadelphia: Accelerated Development.
- Watts, R. E., & Critelli, J. W. (1997). Roots of contemporary cognitive theories in the Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly*, 11(3), 147-156.
- Weinfield, N. S., Ogawa, J. R., & Sroufe, L. A. (1997). Early attachment as a pathway to adolescent peer competence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 7, 241-265.
- Weinfield, N. S., Sroufe, L. A., Egeland, B., & Carlson, E. A. (1999). The nature of individual differences in infant-caregiver attachment. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 68-88). New York: The Guilford Press.

Freud and Adler on Agency and Determinism in the Shaping of the Personality

L. Scott Smith

Abstract

The concepts of causality and free will are present in the theories of Freud and Adler. What is of particular note is Immanuel Kant's immense influence upon each of these thinkers. Kant desired to claim the benefits from both science and morality by dichotomizing them as separate spheres of thought, each giving rise to its own perspective. To Kant the same act could be totally determined and totally free, depending upon the perspective under which it was viewed. The effects of this epistemological disconnection were inherited by Freud and Adler. Freud the scientist, who was convinced that every physical and biological phenomenon had a determining cause, acted and spoke in a manner different from Freud the therapist, who assumed the reality of free will. On the other hand, Adler reacted against the method of Newtonian physics and the *causa efficiens* of "Kant's analytic" but paid enormous homage to "Kant's Dialectic" by formulating a theory of *causa finalis* through behavioral prototypes, culminating in the "creative self." His indeterminism, while preferable to Freud's determinism, should still be revised in light of contemporary thought and research.

Neither Sigmund Freud nor Alfred Adler, two of the founders of psychodynamic theory, believed that personality occurs accidentally. Each formulated his own theory of causality to explain the way in which personality is shaped. Both thinkers were educated and did most of their work during the long reign of Newtonian physics. Each sought to take seriously the method and conclusion of that mechanistic science while at the same time, in his own way, acknowledging a place for free will. Both were involved in a kind of balancing act, the nature of which was to establish psychiatric principles as part and parcel of a science that was readily explicable in terms of causality while, simultaneously, providing for sufficient autonomy of the will to allow the patient to benefit from psychotherapeutic insight.

Freud's and Adler's respective resolutions of the "agency-determinism" issue can with justification be viewed as a defining moment for each of them. The issue was and continues to be a pivotal one. Their separate and distinct responses to it account, in large part, for why their psychologies took radically different turns, resulting in a bitter and permanent personal rift between them.

This essay has several purposes. The first is of historical concern. I seek to explain how Freud and Adler addressed the foregoing issue and to do so by describing the general scientific and philosophic background from which their thought arose as well as the particular way in which each responded