THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADLER’S CONCEPT OF SOCIAL INTEREST: A CRITICAL STUDY

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In his “History of the Psychoanalytic Movement,” Freud (1914) accused Adler of anthropological pessimism, stating: “The view of life which is reflected in the Adlerian system is founded exclusively on the aggressive impulse; there is no room in it for love. It might surprise one that such a cheerless view of life should meet with any attention at all” (p. 347). Two years later, Putnam (1916), one of Freud’s early advocates in the United States, agreed with Freud: “Adler declares that the strivings of each person are dictated . . . by a dynamic impulse leading him to assert and maintain such a conception of his own personality as shall give him, as an individual, a sense of pre-eminence and security. . . . It is his private interests that each individual is assumed to be seeking primarily to subserve” (p. 324). “With justice did Freud say . . . that in the picture of life as Adler paints it, ‘no room is left for the passion of love. It might seem strange that so dreary an outlook as this should be able to command approval’” (p. 329).

This criticism seems absurd in the light of subsequent developments. It was Freud who soon afterwards stated: “The unworthiness of human beings, including analysts, always impressed me deeply” (Putnam, 1971, p. 188). Freud also introduced eventually the concept of the death instinct, including the innate aggressiveness and destructiveness of man. On the other hand, it was Adler who introduced the concept of social interest, and who was later recognized (e.g., by Hall & Lindzey, 1957) for having “restored to man a sense of dignity and worth that psychoanalysis had pretty largely destroyed. In place of the dreary materialistic picture which horrified and repelled many readers of Freud, Adler offered a portrait of man which was more satisfying, more hopeful, and far more complimentary to man” (p. 125). Indeed, Adler is even occasionally criticized, together with Erich Fromm and Karen Horney, for being unrealistically optimistic and not accounting for “the many forms of violence and irrationality that men display,” a view “singularly in-
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appropriate and invalid" in consideration of the wars and violence of this century (p. 154).

Because of its apparent absurdity we dismissed the Freud-Putnam criticism previously (Ansbacher, 1974, p. 46). However, the issue came back to us as a challenge when we learned more about Putnam. James Jackson Putnam, 1846-1918, professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School, was a man of many achievements, highly honored and respected, and no blind follower of Freud, although a very loyal one. Putnam (1971) had earlier shown "great respect for Adler's theories" (p. 173), accepted psychoanalysis only as a method, differed from Freud sharply in philosophical position and concept of man, and argued these differences with Freud until his death in 1918.

As an admirer of Emerson and William James, Putnam (1915) was a pragmatist and transcendentalist opposed to Freud's reductionism, and could not convince himself "that life, with all that makes it admirable, is to be explained . . . through the study of conflicts; . . . that we can study repression adequately without having . . . an adequate idea of what there is in life over and above that which is repressed" (p. 185). "We have to reckon all the time with positive rather than with negative factors in the world" (p. 186). Putnam (1914) attributed to man "tendencies of genuine disinterestedness," so that it is possible "to put aside considerations of purely personal, as contrasted with social interest" (p. 286; italics ours).

If these statements sound quite Adlerian, they are just a brief sample from Putnam's writings. And if his mention of social interest versus purely personal interest is particularly surprising, we may add that Putnam used the term "social interest" several years before Adler. Today Putnam is credited with having "anticipated some of the psychoanalytic ego psychologists" and "the existentialist schools" (Hale, 1971, p. 63). If this is the case, then Putnam first of all anticipated Adler, whose theories antedated the neo-Freudian and existential psychologies by decades (see Ansbacher, 1973). To show the extent of Putnam's anticipation of Adler would be the subject of another paper.

The difference between Adler and Putnam is essentially this: For Adler (A1933i) social interest eventually meant, "a striving for a form of community . . . as it could be thought of if mankind had reached the goal of perfection . . . never a present-day community or society" (pp. 34-35), while Putnam (1915) held: "Beyond this
humanly possible community we must believe in the existence of an ideal community” (p. 8). The difference is one between positivistic idealism, where the ideal is accepted as a useful fiction, an “as if” (Vaihinger, 1911); and transcendental idealism, where the ideal is believed actually to exist somewhere, essentially a religious position. But in practice the two positions differ little. Accordingly, Adler came to be appreciative of the religious position because it has what is so important to his psychology, “goal and direction” (A1933c, p. 277), which the mechanistic view and drive psychology lack.

We concluded that if a man like Putnam supported Freud’s criticism of Adler, it had to be taken seriously and to be examined for its validity. Thus we engaged in a search of Adler’s writings, including especially a comparison of the various editions. This led to the over-all finding that his total literary production, from 1898 to 1937, may be seen as falling neatly into four decades with regard to the development of his conception of man’s social aspect. We have named these periods as follows and have made them main sections of our presentation: Prior to an Explicit Concept of Man (1898-1907); Prior to Social Interest (1908-1917); Social Interest—Phase I: Counterforce and Social Interest (1918-1927); Phase 2: Cognitive Function (1928-1937).

To the extent that this paper is critical we want to stress that it does not alter anything of our previous presentations of Adler, but supplements these by focusing on certain aspects of his writings that have previously been minimized or overlooked entirely. While these matters are relatively minor with regard to Adler’s mature theory, we trust that once they are faced, they will facilitate its understanding by clearing away certain confusions which existed otherwise.

PRIOR TO AN EXPLICIT CONCEPT OF MAN (1898-1907)

Contrary to the criticisms of Freud and Putnam, Adler in fact probably never held a theory without “room in it for love” and compassion. Such a pessimistic view would contradict all we know about him, his interests from youth on, his actions, indeed his entire life. As a socialist he must have believed from the start in the progress of mankind, since socialism implies a concept of man that includes a readiness for socialization and ethical behavior, and in which drives must be properly directed rather than repressed. Yet, if
one examines Adler's writings between 1908 and 1917, particularly those addressed to the scientific community, one can understand how an objective, critical reader could carry away a quite different picture.

This was not the case before 1908. The writings from 1898 to 1907 show no pessimism regarding the nature of man, but they were also not concerned with strictly psychological problems. Beginning in 1898, three years after graduation from medical school, Adler wrote on issues of social medicine (see Ellenberger, 1970, p. 599-603). Shortly thereafter he wrote on problems of education (see Metzger in A1973c, A1977b), stating in one of these papers: "The most important educational aid is love. Education can be achieved only with the assistance of the child's love and affection" (A1904a, p. 204).

Adler's (A1907a) best known publication at the end of this period, the *Study of Organ Inferiority*, was a shift to "clinical medicine" (only in the original edition, p. iii). It was a physiological study emphasizing individual organs and a biological and physiological compensatory process initiated by an organ, mediated via the central nervous system—rather than a psychological study of the individual responding to an organ inferiority. There is no mention of feelings, of the person, or a self; there is no statement of a self-concept. When the translator, Smith Ely Jelliffe, extended the title to become *Study of Organ Inferiority and its Psychical Compensation* he also added as subtitle, *A Contribution to Clinical Medicine*. We get some of the flavor of this work from the following statements by Adler: "This study intends to trace all phenomena of neurosis and psychoneurosis to organ inferiority, the degree and kind of central compensation which was not completely successful, and resulting compensation disturbances" (p. 98). "In childhood disorders as in reflex anomalies the altered methods of functioning of the inferior organ become apparent, and they obey the compensating and overcompensating power of the respective portion of the psychomotor sphere which has now attained overevaluation" (p. 75).

It should be noted that this first period included, in 1902, Adler's important life event of having been invited by Freud to become one of the four "charter members" in his original "Wednesday Society." How Freud came to know Adler, and know him so well as to invite him, has never been satisfactorily documented.
PRIOR TO SOCIAL INTEREST (1908-1917)

When Adler, between 1908 and 1917, presented a comprehensive dynamic principle as an alternative to Freud's libido before he introduced the concept of social interest, his writings did indeed lend some support to the Freud-Putnam criticism.

The Aggression Drive

Adler's first formulation of a dynamic principle of human behavior, beyond an impersonal "central compensation" for a physiological organ inferiority, was the "aggression drive," referred to by Freud in the translation as the "aggressive impulse." Adler (A1908b) described it as follows (the quotations are modified according to the original edition):

"From early childhood, we may say from the first day (first cry), we find a stand of the child toward the external world which cannot be called anything but hostile. On closer examination one finds this attitude determined by the difficulty in gaining pleasure for the organ. This circumstance as well as the further relationships of the hostile, belligerent position of the individual toward the environment indicate a drive toward fighting for satisfaction which I shall call 'aggression drive' " (p. 58).

This drive is endowed with an "expansion tendency." When this is relatively strong, the drive "absolutely exhausts all possible relationships to the environment and presents itself virtually world-comprehensive. The drive is inhibited by the culture or by a second, opposing drive" (p. 54). "The psychological superstructure [of the drive] arises through the inhibitions of the culture which permits only certain ways for the gaining of pleasure" (p. 55). "The adaptation of the technique of the superstructure to the culture occurs from egotistical motives" (p. 56). We have here then a strictly "private profit" form of ethics.

Need for Affection

In 1908, Adler also published "The Child's Need for Affection." This may well be understood as a counterpart to the aggression drive and forerunner of social interest (A1956b, p. 39). Wolfgang Metzger, editor of the recent German paperback edition of Adler's works, states: "Here we have the first clear pronouncement that man is born a social creature, designed to live and work together with others" (A1972a, p. 22).
According to Adler (A1908d) this need is manifested in children as "wanting to be fondled, caressed, and praised; tending to cuddle up, remain close to beloved persons, wanting to be taken to bed with them, etc. In later life the desire is aimed at a loving relationship, from which derive love of relatives, friendship, social feelings, and [sexual] love" (p. 64; italics added).

Much depends "on proper guidance of this drive complex. A partial satisfaction . . . becomes an indispensable factor of culture, while the unsatisfied remainder furnishes the perpetual immanent impulse for an advancing culture. Also the possible erroneous directions of the need for affection can be easily understood. Before letting it attain satisfaction, the impulse (Impuls) should be forced to detour, to furnish the drive for the cultural development of the child. Thus, way and goal of the need for affection are raised to a higher level, and the derived, purified social feelings are awakened" (p. 64; italics added). This construction of an impulse "forced" to a higher level to yield "purified" results is much like Freud's repression and sublimation, only that Freud's impulse is one of libido, while Adler's is one of wanting affection.

It should be noted that the German term for "social feelings," used here twice, is the plural form, Gemeinschaftsgefühle, as distinct from the singular form, Gemeinschaftsgefühl, translated as "social interest," which Adler did not introduce until 1918.

How could Freud disregard the "need for affection" when he asserted "there is no room for love" in Adler's view of life? One possible, and certainly only partial answer is that Adler gave much less weight to it than to the aggression drive (e.g., while he published the latter in a most important medical journal, the former appeared as a small paper in the first issue of a new educational monthly). Adler also did not often refer to the need for affection, and when he did, it was mostly in a context of weakness. For example, in the neurotic in whom self-confidence and independence were inadequately developed, "the need for dependency and affection increases beyond measure" (A1909a, p. 75). Also the neurotic may attempt "to chain others through his weakness, fear, passivity, need for affection, etc." (A1920a, p. 52).

*Masculine Protest, Will to Power*

Two years later, Adler (A1910n) announced before the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society that he was replacing "aggression drive"
with "masculine protest," a decisive step away from drive psychology and toward a human value psychology. He stated the reason clearly: "The conception of the aggression drive . . . suffered from the defect of being a biological one and not suitable to a complete understanding of neurotic phenomena. To this end, one must consider a conception of the neurotic . . . that does not permit of definition in biological terms, but only in psychological terms, or in terms of cultural psychology" (p. 425).

The masculine protest is the tendency of men and women of wanting to be like the cultural stereotype of a man, embracing strength, courage and competence, and not like a woman, characterized by weakness, fear and inferiority. "Every form of inner compulsion in normal persons and neurotics is to be derived from this attempt at a masculine protest" (A1910c, p. 88). Adler (A1912a) "found the neurotic purpose to be the enhancement of the self-esteem, the simplest formula of which can be recognized in an exaggerated 'masculine protest.' This formula, 'I want to be a real man!' is the guiding fiction in every neurosis, where it claims more reality value than in the normal psyche. . . . Nietzsche's 'will to power' and 'will to semblance' include much of our understanding" (p. 32).

Adler pointed out "the absolute primacy of the will to power" (p. 77), which as a guiding fiction "asserts itself the more forcibly and is developed the earlier . . . the stronger the inferiority feeling . . ." (p. 77). Later he explained that he wanted the will to power, or striving for power, to be understood in the broader sense of desire for mastery or competence in general, including self-mastery. But just as Nietzsche laid himself in this respect open to misinterpretation (see Kaufman, 1972), so did Adler in his original statements (see Ansbacher, 1972).

Personality Ideal, Guiding Fiction

With the change from drive psychology to a psychology of values, ideals and goals which function as guiding fictions, Adler's conception of man remained the same. He described man as self-centered and even hostile to the world, as expressed most clearly in the following passage from the Neurotic Constitution (A1912a) which we shall quote at length.

Nothing in life and the development of a person is undertaken with such secrecy as the construction of the personality idea. The most important reason for this secrecy seems to lie in the belligerent, if not hostile character of this fiction. It arose under continu-
ous weighing and evaluation of the advantages of others and therefore—following the principle of opposites on which it is based—necessarily aims at the disadvantage of the others. The psychological analysis of the nervous person always shows the deprecation tendency which is summarily directed against all. The belligerent tendencies (see Aggression Drive, A1908b) regularly come to the fore in the form of avarice, envy, and in the longing for superiority.

But the fiction of overcoming others can be used and become effective, only if it does not from the start disturb the establishment of relations. Therefore it must, at an early age, be made unrecognizable, be masked, lest it would undo itself. This is accomplished through the construction of a counterfiction which guides primarily overt action and under whose influence the approach to reality and the acknowledgement of its effective forces takes place. This counterfiction, always-present corrective factors, causes a change of form of the guiding fiction by forcing considerations on it; taking social, ethical demands of the future with their real weight into account; and thereby securing a reasonableness of thinking and acting. It is a safety coefficient of the guiding line to power. The harmony of the two fictions, their mutual compatibility, is the sign of psychological health . . . .

It is one of the triumphs of the human wit to enable the guiding idea to prevail through adaptation to the counterfiction—to shine through modesty, to conquer through humility and submission, to humiliate through virtue, to attack through passivity, to hurt others through one's own suffering, to pursue a masculine goal through feminine means, to make oneself small in order to appear big. But such are often the devices of the neurotic. (pp. 82-83)

**Generalizing from the Neurotic to the Normal**

Adler stated in later years that any unfavorable conception of man that may be seen in his early writings applied only to the abnormal. It appears, however, that earlier in his career, Adler (A1912a) did not have a clear conception of the normal person. Rather, he generalized from the abnormal to the normal, qualifying his description of the normal principally by: "the same . . . only to a lesser degree." Any individual's personality ideal, for example, is characterized as "belligerent, if not hostile." "One finds in the nervous person no completely new character traits, not a single trait that could not be identified in the normal as well" (pp. 35-36). Regarding children Adler (A1912f) speaks of "the—in my opinion—natural opposition between child and environment" (p. 200). Statements such as these convey a negative impression of the normal person, although to a lesser degree, to be sure, than of the neurotic.
We may ask, is not the normal person in any way positively ahead of, or qualitatively different from the neurotic? Adler was able to answer this question in the affirmative only after he had introduced his mature concept of social interest, around 1927 (see below). Well-developed social interest became the criterion of normality, a trait which remained underdeveloped in "the failures in life." The latter are more concerned with their own self-esteem and personal power over others, while the normal individual is more concerned with gaining satisfaction by overcoming difficulties that are considered as such by others as well. The normal goal of superiority includes the welfare of others— it is on the socially useful side— whereas the abnormal goal is socially useless or harmful.

That this was a later development in Adler's psychology is well illustrated in an important paper on "Individual Psychology, its Premises and Findings" where Adler (A1914h) asserted originally: "Let me emphasize that the dynamics of psychic life that I am about to describe are found equally in the healthy and the sick. What differentiates the nervous from the healthy is the stronger safeguarding tendency with which the sick furnishes his life plan. However, regarding the 'positing of a goal' and the life plan which is adapted to it, there are no fundamental differences whatsoever" (p. 24). Not until 1930 did Adler add the following phrase to this sentence: "... except the one difference, which is of course decisive, that the concrete aspect of the goal of the neurotic is always on the useless side of life" (p. 24; italics added). By that time Adler had defined normality as striving with a well-developed social interest, on the useful side of life, and abnormality as striving with underdeveloped social interest, on the useless side of life.

Main Developments

In this section we have gathered evidence supporting Freud's criticism. Yet although the criticism was not unfounded, it missed the point of the issue between Adler and him. This was not limited to libido versus aggression but concerned the much broader issue of elementaristic, causalistic drive psychology versus holistic, finalistic value psychology. The aggression drive was merely a first step in turning away from physiologically based drives toward values such as "to be a real man," to have self-esteem, to be powerful. This is the important development during the second decade which led to the break between Freud and Adler in 1911.
After the separation Adler founded the Society of Individual Psychology, and in 1914 the *Zeitschrift für Individualpsychologie*. The chief theoretical and methodological distinction of Individual Psychology became Adler’s conviction that individual behavior cannot be explained by looking for objective causes in the past, but that it can be understood by gaining a conceptualization of the ultimate goal toward which an individual is striving, or what his personality ideal might be. The following quotations will highlight this. “More important than disposition, objective experience, and environment is the subjective evaluation of these. Furthermore, this evaluation stands in a certain, often strange, relationship to reality” (A1914h, p. 23). “The most important question of the healthy and the diseased mental life is not whence? but, whither? Only when we know the effective direction-giving goal of a person may we try to understand his movements, which for us have the value of individual preparation. In this whither? the cause is contained” (A1914m, p. 263).

This decade also includes World War I, which broke out in 1914. As the situation grew worse, Adler was drafted in 1916 into the Austrian army medical corps where he continued until the end of war in 1918 (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 587).

**Introduction of Social Interest**

The strongest support of the Freud-Putnam criticism of 1914 and 1916 comes from Adler himself in that around 1918 he introduced the term *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*. Ultimately translated as “social interest” it became his most important concept. Obviously Adler must have felt he had previously not dealt adequately with the socially constructive side of man.

Furthmüller (1964) particularly noted that in the *Neurotic Constitution*, published in 1912, social interest, “one of the pillars supporting Adler’s final system is still missing” (p. 361). And indeed, when we find today in the most recent German edition over 20 index entries for social interest, these all refer to later insertions which Adler made beginning with the second edition in 1919— but which he did not identify as such. The statement by Hertha Orgler (1963) that “the significance of community feeling [social interest] is especially put forward in the *Neurotic Constitution*” (p. 90) is certainly incorrect for the first edition, and does not hold true even for the later editions (1919, 1922, 1928) because the various insertions in these are essentially brief modifications of older statements that do not
add up to an exposition of social interest.

Through the original absence of social interest, Furtmüller (1964) observed, "Nearly all of the older members [of Adler's group], as well as the new ones who came to Adler after having studied the Neurotic Constitution, supposed that an absolute self-centeredness was basic to these inferiority feelings" (p. 373, italics added) and to the subsequent compensatory tendencies, which represented Adler's dynamics. With the introduction of social interest, Adler "added the last pillar to his system—or maybe it would be more nearly correct to say, he placed his system on new foundations" (p. 368).

The subtitle of the Neurotic Constitution was "Outlines of a Comparative Individual Psychology and Psychotherapy." In the translation, "Individual Psychology" became "Individualistic Psychology" (A1917a). This seemed to reflect a total misunderstanding by the translators. Had Adler not stated: "Individual Psychology is probably the most consistent theory of the attitude of the individual to the problems of social living and in this sense, social psychology" (A1929b, p. 121)? But this statement dates from 1929, whereas the translation error applies to a work of 1912. In the light of the preceding, the error appears no longer quite as absurd and ironic as otherwise. In fact it becomes quite understandable.

The term Gemeinschaftsgefühl had two precursors. One was the plural form, Gemeinschaftsgefühle, translated as "social feelings," which Adler used in his paper on "The Need for Affection," discussed above (at least from the 1914 reprinting on). The second was Gemeinsinn, translated as "social sense." Adler spoke of the necessity of "advancement of the social sense" (A1914f, p. 481) and described problem children as showing "lack of social sense" (A1917e, p. 44). The social sense was a counterforce against selfish forces, as was social interest in the beginning. "From his individual and family life the child's hateful, or in the nobler sense, belligerent traits arise and take up opposition to the preconditions of social life which urge to mutual goodwill, comradeship, social sense, equal rights. The outcome of the clash between these two 'guiding lines' represents the core of the future personality" (p. 41). In his monograph on homosexuality Adler (A1917b) used both precursors as in "the patient shows little social sense" (p. 34), and "rejection of homosexuality is spontaneously founded in the social feelings and grows and diminishes according to the strength of the social cohesion" (p. 88;
in the later editions the plural is changed into singular).

The precursors were apparently not very important to Adler. But when soon afterwards "social interest" occurred to him, he presented this term to his friends and followers as an important innovation (Furthmüller, 1964, pp. 369 and 373; Bottome, 1957, pp. 120-126).

The first use of "social interest" in writing was in an article on "Bolshevism and Psychology" which appeared toward the end of World War I in a general political journal. Adler (A1918e) related social interest to socialistic ideals which, as mentioned earlier, were close to him since his youth. The article sharply rejected the Bolshevist terror in Russia, while celebrating the German and Austrian social-democratic revolutions of 1918. The "civilization of power" that prevailed until then resulted, according to Adler, in a "fateful exploitation of social interest by the striving for power . . . . Science . . . declared . . . lust for domination, striving for power and superiority, personal ambition and egotism as innate and unalterable, thereby advancing them and preventing their reduction through social interest . . . . Only in socialism did social sense [sic] as the demand for free human living-together remain the ultimate goal and purpose" (p. 598). However, Bolshevism is again a regime based on power. When power is the last word, "there can be no reduction in violence, only further increase . . . . If there is any way to call a halt, it can only be remembrance of the miracle of social interest which we must perform and which will never succeed through the use of power. For us the way and the tactics are determined by our highest goal: the cultivation and strengthening of social interest" (p. 600).

Once Adler had introduced the concept of social interest it continued to grow in importance in his writings. But it also changed in meaning. During approximately the first ten years, Phase 1 of social interest (1918-1927), it was essentially an innate counterforce restraining self-interest, while during the last ten years, Phase 2 (1928-1937), it was essentially an aptitude which must be consciously developed, a cognitive function. In our systematic selection of Adler's writings (A1956b), we gave relatively little space to the first phase, while emphasizing the second, which is theoretically very superior. Besides, the second phase was still relatively little known and little understood. Even one who knew Adler as well as Furthmüller (1946) wrote: "You may see in man a being originally completely egoistic; then . . . altruism must be explained as a complicated transformation of egoism . . . . Or you may see altruistic as
well as egoistic instincts . . . . That Adler took [this] position could have been seen, even before he spoke about social interest’" (p. 369). Furtmüller was not aware of a third possibility which is provided by the second phase. In the present paper with its focus on the history of the concept we shall exemplify the first phase of social interest as well as the second.

**Social Interest Phase 1: Counterforce (1918-1927)**

One of Adler’s earliest presentations of social interest to the professional world was a fervid and eloquent statement on the social context of human life and the resulting recognition of social interest. The structure was one of conflict between social interest and striving for personal power. We are referring to Adler’s (A1920a) statement in the introduction to his second book of collected papers: “It was not too difficult to explain the prestige policy of the individual to psychologists, educators, and neurologists . . . . It will be more difficult to explain the general contribution of social interest, because here we are confronted with the conscience of the individual . . . . His physique refers him to unification; language, morality, esthetics, and reason aim at and presuppose general validity; love, work, and fellowmankind are the concrete requirements of human living together. Against these indestructible realities the striving for personal power storms and rages, or seeks cunningly to bypass them. This relentless battle is evidence for the recognition of social interest” (p. 16).

The original antithetic character of social interest becomes further evident from various small changes which Adler made in the 1919 edition of the *Neurotic Constitution* and the 1922 edition of *Heilen und Bilden* (Healing and Educating). These changes consist frequently in a substitution of social interest for an external restraint to enforce socially constructive, ethical behavior. Structurally, this does not differ from the counterfiction discussed previously and is also similar to the superego which Freud announced in 1923, although the superego is acquired, while social interest was assumed to be innate.

The following are examples of such substitutions. *Note:* In these passages, brackets indicate material that has been deleted from the original edition; italics indicate material that has been added in a subsequent edition, beginning with 1919.

We find in the “Aggression Drive” (A1908b): “A drive is inhibited
in its expansion tendency . . . by a limit set by [the culture] the innate social interest or created by a second drive” (p. 54). “Adaptation . . . to the culture takes place from egotistical or altruistic motives” (p. 56). “Aim and fate of the aggression drive, as of the primary drives, are subject to inhibition by [the culture] the social interest” (p. 59).

In the “Need for Affection” Adler (A1908d) modified as follows: “A strong need for affection in a child leads to the assumption, other things being equal, of a strong [drive life] social interest, but also a strong striving for power (p. 64).

In a paper on the “Neurotic Disposition,” Adler (A1909a) wrote: “The child learns to dissipulate and remain silent—from oversensitivity, fear of punishment, or humiliation, always also from oppression by the voice of his social interest” (p. 76). “Seen from the moral side, the psychological development of organ inferiority . . . results in increased guilt consciousness toward the social interest and in oversensitivity . . .” (p. 77).

In the revised editions of the Neurotic Constitution Adler (A1912a) superordinated social interest to the counterfiction as shown in the following passages: “This counterfiction, always-present corrective factors of the social interest, causes a change of form of the guiding fiction” (p. 82). Or, “It is one of the triumphs of human wit to enable the guiding idea of power to prevail through adaptation to the counterfiction of the social interest” (p. 83). Social interest is also inserted as in the following: “The compulsive striving of the nervous person to fill his personality ideal with the more highly valued or masculine traits drives him—on account of the obstacles of reality, especially the social interest—to change the form of his guiding lines” (p. 187).

Finally, into an important earlier paper, Adler (A1914h) inserted in 1920 a passage on “the immortal, real, physiologically founded social interest” as the basis for neighborly love, friendship, and sexual love. Against this force the personal striving for power becomes veiled and “seeks to prevail . . . in secret and by cunning” (p. 27).

When social interest was thus seen as an innate, physiologically based force like an instinct, cases or situations where it remained ineffective in controlling lust for power were explained by Adler through its having been choked or throttled by some outside force, or by the individual himself. As Adler (A1912a) wrote in the preface to the 1919 edition of the Neurotic Constitution: “The generally
unleashed lust for power throttles the immortal social interest of humanity or cunningly abuses it" (p. 26). Or, as Adler (A1927a) also believed: "It takes a certain effort to throttle one's social interest, to push it aside" (p. 151).

This phase of Adler's psychology was then an inner-conflict conception of human dynamics similar to Freud's, and not suitable for a holistic general theory which stresses the unity of the individual. There was of course an important difference between Freud and Adler: Whereas with Freud the neurotic's instinctual forces are too severely "repressed by the 'ego-ideal,'" with Adler, the opposite is the case, the social interest is "throttled by the will to power." Yet the conflict structure is the same in both models.

This decade was otherwise characterized by Adler's establishment of numerous child guidance centers in the Vienna public schools, staffed by volunteer professionals and paraprofessionals. The centers became well known for Adler's unique procedure of conducting the clinics before an audience, as a training method. Among numerous further activities we may mention lectures at the Volksheim, Vienna's most important adult education institute, which were very well attended. In 1924, Adler was appointed a professor at the Pedagogical Institute of the City of Vienna.

The main further contributions during this period were the concept of the three life tasks, and writings on the myth of women's inferiority, love and marriage, and sexual disorders (A1978a). In this period also, after 1926, Adler replaced "life plan" and similar terms, by "life style" (see Ansbacher, 1967), a hallmark of today's Adlerian psychology.

Social Interest Phase 2: Cognitive Function (1928-1937)

Adler's conception of social interest as a cognitive function may be dated from a paper on "Reason, Intelligence, and Feeblemindedness" (A1928f). In it he practically equated social interest with identification and empathy, that is, with cognitive functions rather than innate forces: "To see with the eyes of another, to hear with the ears of another, to feel with the heart of another" (p. 42). "Identification . . . is one aspect of social interest. At a play every person in the audience empathizes and participates. This is identification in our sense" (p. 43). Such social interest tends to combine with general intelligence, changing the latter from "private intelligence" (without social interest) to reason or "common sense" (with social interest).
The clearest original statements on social interest as a cognitive function are to be found in *Problems of Neurosis*, where Adler (A1929c) writes: "Social interest is not inborn but it is an innate potentiality which has to be consciously developed. We are unable to trust any so-called 'instinct'" (p. 31; italics added). In the early development of this potentiality the mother is the most important factor. "She must interest the child in other persons and in the wider environment of life. With such an initiation into life, the ineradicable will to superiority is united with social interest, and issues in courageous and optimistic activity upon the useful side of life" (p. 32).

*Compatibility with Holistic Theory*

Social interest as an aptitude to be developed implies that when developed it becomes an ability. It will be the ability for social living, including making contact with others and cooperating with them. Motivational aspects are only secondarily involved, since we generally like to exercise our abilities. E.g., if we know how to play tennis, we generally also like to play tennis, etc. (See Ansbacher, 1965).

This view of social interest is compatible with a holistic theory which requires one central dynamic force to which all other functions are subordinated. For Adler during the last decade of his life this was the striving for a goal of success as subjectively conceived. Social interest as a cognitive function influences the direction of the striving, whether it will be on the socially useful side or on the socially useless side. It will become part of the goal, but will be as little in conflict with the fact and the intensity of goal striving as any other ability or interest.

Social interest, Phase 1, was still somewhat Freudian in structure in that it implied two opposing forces. But during this last period, Phase 2, Adler (A1931o) could declare his position on the social nature of man as "the decisive basic difference" between himself and Freud. "Freud starts with the assumption that by nature man only wants to satisfy his drives—the pleasure principle—and must, therefore, from the viewpoint of culture be regarded as completely bad. . . . Individual Psychology, on the other hand, states that the development of man . . . is subject to the redeeming influence of social interest, so that all his drives can be guided in the direction of the generally useful. The indestructible destiny of the human species
is social interest. . . . Man is inclined toward social interest, toward the good. . . . If one has clearly comprehended this difference, one will not be able to think that these two theories have anything more in common than a few words. That much any theory has in common with any dictionary” (pp. 210-211).

Quite logically, other holistic theories have also dealt with man’s social orientation as a cognitive function. Among the original Gestalt psychologists, the advocates of holistic theory, in experimental psychology, Solomon Asch (1952), arriving at the concept of social interest quite independently of Adler and somewhat differently, stated: “Our intellectual and emotional capacities urge us into the surroundings, they awaken our interest and concern. To recognize the nature of a situation is to be responsive to its requirements; in this way many concerns and goals arise. This trend comes to clearest expression in the social relations” (p. 346). “Social interest is an intrinsic part of our extending interest in the surroundings” (p. 334).

Adler’s cognitive conception of social interest also corresponds to what Kohlberg (1976) has formulated as a cognitive-developmental moral theory. “Moral development depends upon stimulation . . . from social interaction and from moral decision-making, moral dialogue, and moral interaction. . . . Social experience [or interaction] involves role taking: taking the attitude of others, becoming aware of their thoughts and feelings, putting oneself in their place. When the emotional side . . . is stressed, it is typically termed ‘empathy’ ” (p. 49). This kind of theory was represented in various ways by J. M. Baldwin, J. Dewey and J. H. Tufts, and G. H. Mead, among others. By contrast, “Freudian psychoanalytic theory of moral development . . . shares with [behavioristic] social-learning theories the assumption that moralization is a process of internalization of cultural or parental norms” (p. 48).

Criterion of Mental Health

Social interest as a counterforce was mixed with striving for personal superiority to result in the individual “movement line of human striving” (A1920a, p. 15). With this formulation Adler did not elaborate further on the dynamics of mental health. But once he took the cognitive-developmental view of social interest as a cognitive function, Adler expressed himself fully on the important and beneficial relationship of social interest to mental well-being. He
stated: "It is almost impossible to exaggerate the value of an increase in social interest. The mind improves, ... the feeling of worth and value is heightened, giving courage and an optimistic view, and there is a sense of acquiescence in the common advantages and drawbacks of our lot. The individual feels at home in life and feels his existence to be worthwhile just so far as he is useful to others and is overcoming common, instead of private feelings of inferiority" (A1929c, p. 79).

Cases of failure are no longer ascribed to a "throttling" of social interest but to its underdevelopment or lack. All failures in life, "difficult children, neurotics, psychotics, suicides, criminals, prostitutes, alcoholics, sexual deviates . . . are all characterized by lack of social interest" (p. 53). "Social interest is the barometer of the child's normality. The criterion which needs to be watched . . . is the degree of social interest which the child or adult manifests" (A1930a, pp. 10-11). As to the relationship of social interest to psychotherapy, Adler (A1936i) stated in clearly cognitive terms: neurotic symptoms "show that a patient equipped with a comparatively small degree of activity and insufficient social interest, has pictured to himself a world in which he is entitled to be first in everything" (p. 98). "Coming to understand his own picture of the world . . . is an essential part of the process of cure. . . . He will have to re-see the world . . . to bring it more into harmony with a common view of the world—remembering that by common view we mean a view in which others can share" (p. 110).

If we may equal individual happiness with mental health, we find here considerable similarity to the ideas of John Dewey with whom Adler was personally acquainted. Their theories have been compared on various occasions (see Ansbacher, 1968; Winetroub, 1968). Dewey (1932) concluded his discussion on "The inclusive nature of social interest" (pp. 331-336) with the words: "The final happiness of an individual resides in . . . alert, sincere, enduring interests in the objects in which all can share. . . . interest in others and in the conditions and objects which promote their development . . . in objects that contribute to the enrichment of the lives of all" (pp. 335-336).

With social interest as criterion of mental health and a trainable cognitive process, Adler had a specific approach to primary prevention of "failures in life"—development of social interest through training in cooperation and education toward being a "fellowman."
He increasingly stressed prevention of neurosis (A1935l) and particularly delinquency (A1935m, 1936s).

Transcendence

As with Dewey, Adler’s “social interest” extended not only to human beings but to all “objects that contribute to . . . the lives of all.” At the transition to Phase 2, Adler (A1927a) held: “The feeling of belonging together, the social feeling [social interest] . . . extends in favorable cases not only to the family members, but also to the clan, the people, all of humanity. It may even . . . extend to animals, plants and inanimate objects, ultimately to the cosmos at large” (pp. 50-51).

Adler (A1929c) extended the objects of social interest also into the future. “The most sensible estimate of the value of any activity is its helpfulness to all humanity, present and future, a criterion that applies . . . also to higher activities such as religion, science, and art” (p. 78). A few years later Adler (A1933i) added, as quoted earlier: “Social interest means . . . feeling with the whole, sub specie aeternitatis [under the aspect of eternity]. It means a striving for a form of community . . . as . . . if humanity had reached the goal of perfection. It is never a present-day community or society, nor a political or religious form” (pp. 34-35).

Acknowledging that he thereby introduced “a piece of metaphysics in Individual Psychology” (p. 35), Adler went on: “Every new idea lies beyond immediate experience; immediate experience never yields anything new. Only a synthesizing idea can do this. Whether you call it speculation or transcendentalism, there is no science which does not have to enter the realm of metaphysics. I see no reason to be afraid of metaphysics; it has had a very great influence on human life and development. We are not blessed with the possession of the absolute truth, and on that account we are compelled to form theories for ourselves about our future, about the results of our actions, etc.” (p. 35).

It was the criticism of Putnam the pragmatist and transcendentalist that stimulated us to examine the development of Adler’s concept of man, especially its social or moral aspect. This examination took us from what was indeed a self-centered concept of man in Adler’s early work to one of broad self-transcendence, where Adler then stood on common ground with Dewey. This development should have pleased Putnam very much, had he lived to
see it, and, fair-minded as he was, he would have appreciated the fact that he and Adler were ultimately on the same side of the issue of man’s ethical nature.

**Other Developments**

Adler achieved his true greatness during approximately his last decade, and we have expressed this tangibly through a volume of his writings of this period (A1964a). Some of Adler’s developments during this time, in addition to his final formulation of social interest, are the following.

Whereas at the beginning and for many years thereafter Adler took organ inferiority and then inferiority feelings as the starting point of human dynamics, and striving for a compensatory goal of superiority or power as the outcome, he now recognized that the goal striving, growth motivation, must be primary. “The striving for perfection is innate as part of life . . . To live means to develop” (A1933i, p. 31). Inferiority feeling clearly became secondary, as in the following: “In continuous comparison with unattainable ideal perfection, the individual is continually filled by an inferiority feeling and motivated by it” (A1933b, p. 35). By this change Adler in fact advanced his theory, in terms of Maslow (1962, pp. 19-41), from one of deficiency motivation to one of growth motivation.

Regarding theory of knowledge, Adler (A1937b) recognized that the therapists’ interpretations are not necessarily statements of discovered facts but may be new conceptions of the therapist to help the patient reconstruct his picture of himself and the world. Thus Adler (A1937b) stated: “The inferiority complex has never been in the consciousness or unconsciousness of the patient but only in my own consciousness, and I have used it rather for illumination so that the patient could see his attitude in the right coherence” (p. 776). This is a dialectical-pragmatic rather than a demonstrative-positivistic statement (Rychlak, 1968).

In respect to his life, Adler began with the winter of 1926-1927 to spend the winter months in the United States where he travelled and lectured widely in addition to conducting clinics, having a private practice, editing and writing. After the Austrian fascists with their persecution of the socialists came to power in Vienna, he settled in New York with his family in 1934. It is noteworthy that it was under such adverse conditions of unsettlement and disturbance, in a new country with a new language, that Adler succeeded in making the
final important changes in his theory. By these he left a constructive
description of the ideal human norm as a unified, self-consistent,
confident individual, feeling and acting as a fellow human being, and
striving for successes that are in harmony with the evolutionary
tendency of the world.

Adler’s Minimizing His Development

While Adler's conception of the social aspect of man underwent
considerable development as we have shown, he tended to minimize
this. He wrote in 1927: "Individual Psychology is a steadily pro-
gressing science, but did not have to make any changes in its basic
views" (A1927s, p. vi), and again in 1928: "Every step forward has
been consistent with our basic views. So far it was unnecessary to
make any changes in our structure nor to brace it with views of some
other kind" (A1912a, p. 29). Adler’s emphasis on “no basic change”
may perhaps be explained from his personal philosophy which prob-
ably was from the start like his final theoretical position and steered
him steadily in that direction until he had found the appropriate
formulations. Thus his personal experience may have been one of
"no change," and he failed to do justice to the “forward steps”
mentioned above.

This “no change” attitude had several regrettable side-effects: (a)
Adler generally did not introduce an innovation explicitly but often
made in later editions corresponding changes that could not be eas-
ily recognized as such. (b) At times he clung to superseded concepts
attempting to update them. (c) Sometimes he attributed concepts to
his early writings that actually were not introduced until later. (d)
Occasionally he failed to acknowledge an earlier position. With all
this, Adler left inconsistencies in his writings that created confusion
and facilitated misunderstanding.

Before discussing these side-effects we should like to mention that
especially Adler’s early writings were in themselves often not very
clear. According to Metzger (A1972a): “One has the feeling that
Adler jotted down his thoughts in a first draft as they came to him.
The reader must frequently fill in logical connecting links; the same
expression is frequently and without concern used in several mean-
ings; one is sometimes not sure whether the text is to be understood
literally or figuratively” (p. 24). Furtmüller (1964), commenting on
the Neurotic Constitution in particular, writes: “Unluckily . . . what
was lively and understandable when Adler addressed an audience,
lacks clearness and precision on paper. . . . The conscientious reader . . . will have to worry about supplying for himself what the writer was not careful enough to furnish him” (pp. 361-362). This of course increased further the likelihood of misunderstandings. During his last decade his writings were clearer, including especially the several popular books that were first published in English and had the benefit of good editors. But Adler’s first books had a crucial impact among academic and professional colleagues.

Inadequate Announcement of Innovations

The outstanding example of the inadequate introduction of a new term is “social interest.” When Adler introduced this term orally among his friends and followers its importance was apparently sufficiently stressed and appreciated (see above). But in his writings we could find no formal announcement nor any clearly identified statement of original exposition.

A logical occasion for an announcement would have been the 1919 edition of the Neurotic Constitution where Adler inserted the term in the text in numerous places as shown earlier. To be sure, he mentioned social interest in the brief preface, three times, but each time only as part of a sentence, never as its subject. He did not name it as an innovation, and each time the term covered a different process. The three statements are: (a) “Undisguised, the World War appears as the demonic work of the generally unleashed lust for dominance which throttles the immortal social interest of humanity or cunningly abuses it.” (b) “By perceiving and understanding a person we mean to tear him from the errors of his wounded, whipped-up but powerless striving for godlikeness, and win him for the unshakeable logic of human living together, for social interest.” (c) “A review of the development of Individual Psychology shows a continuous extension on three interlocking planes: From the child’s inferiority feeling arises an irritated striving for power which meets its limits in the demands of the community and the admonitions of the physiologically and socially founded social interest, and goes astray” (A1912a, pp. 26-27). The last statement was apparently meant as an introduction of the concept of social interest. But actually it claimed that social interest was present from the start as one of three “interlocking planes” that together were developed further over the years.

The fullest statement on Social Interest, Phase 1, reads: “The
most important regulator of the aggression drive is to be seen in social interest which is innate in man. It is the basis of any relationship of the child to humans, animals, plants and objects, and signifies the cohesion with life, its affirmation and reconciliation with it. Through the combined action of social interest in its ample differentiations (parental love, filial love, sexual love, love of one's country, love of nature, art, science, love of humanity) with the aggression drive, the attitude that is the psychological life proper of man comes about" (A1908b, p. 62). This statement appeared three years after the preceding statements, added, without further explanation, in a reprinting of the "Aggression Drive" when Adler had long since separated himself from drive psychology (see below). This was hardly an effective place for the description of a new focal concept.

Regarding Phase 2, of Social Interest, Adler's expository writing was more visible, including the paper in which he presented his final understanding of this concept. This was also one of the few instances where he became explicit about a change of position, writing: "You will have observed certain fluctuations in the Individual Psychology literature regarding social interest, and therefore I wanted to talk about it" (A1933i, p. 34).

A few years earlier, Adler (A1929d) also specifically introduced "style of life" as a new term. He wrote: "Individual Psychology has long called the consistent movement of a person toward his goal, a plan of life. But because this name has sometimes led to mistakes among students, it is now called a style of life" (p. 39). But actually style of life is a much broader and dynamic concept than plan of life and not a mere equivalent. This is then an example where Adler even in announcing a new term, minimized the change.

*Continuing a Superseded Concept*

As we have seen, Adler (A1910n) had announced before the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society that he was replacing "aggression drive" with "masculine protest" because he wanted a conception of the neurotic "that does not permit of definition in biological terms, but only in psychological terms, or in terms of cultural psychology" (p. 425).

Yet in 1914 Adler reprinted "The Aggression Drive" in *Heilen und Bilden* without any mention of the important shift four years earlier from drive psychology to "cultural psychology" through which the paper was in fact reduced to a historical item. On the contrary. In
the 1922 edition Adler apparently attempted to integrate the paper with his later views by making some changes and additions: among these is the relatively important statement on social interest quoted above. But such “updating” left the paper still formulated in terms of drive psychology, including the passage, quoted initially, on which much of the early criticism of Adler was based. This could create only confusion. Again, Adler’s oral communication had been better than his written communication as when he originally announced “social interest.”

Not until another eight years had passed did Adler (A1931f) repudiate the aggression drive in writing: “In 1908 I came upon the idea that every individual is actually always in a state of aggression, and imprudently called this attitude, aggression drive. . . . But I recognized soon that one is dealing here not at all with a drive, but with an attitude toward the tasks of life, which is partly conscious, partly not understood. Thus I arrived at the understanding of the social component in personality, the degree of which is developed always according to the person’s opinion about the facts and difficulties of life” (p. 114, translation modified).

Yet again, two years later, Adler (A1933b) attempted to integrate the aggression drive with his later theory, stating: “Each of the thousands of tasks of the day and of life sets the individual into a readiness for attack. Every movement progresses from incompleteness to completion. In 1909 [sic], in ‘The Aggression Drive in Life and in Neurosis’ I attempted to illuminate this fact more closely and arrived at the conclusion that this readiness for attack originated through the force of evolution, but that its manner emerges from the life style, is a part of the whole. There is no pretext for regarding it as radically evil and to explain it through an innate sadistic drive” (p. 71).

Attributing Later Concepts to Earlier Works

The above passage also illustrates Adler’s tendency to attribute to early works concepts he developed, or terms he used not until years later. When he states that in the “Aggression Drive” he arrived at the conclusion that the manner of the attack “emerges from the life style,” he does not consider that he did not use the term life style until 1926.

In “On the Origin of the Striving for Superiority and of Social Interest” Adler (A1933i) states: “The emphasis on these two ques-
tions has never been lacking in our work" (p. 30). Yet, as we have seen, he did not introduce social interest until 1918 and its precursors were not emphasized.

Another example is Adler's description of the Study of Organ Inferiority, as showing that "a child born with weak organs . . . has a sense of insecurity, a feeling of being overburdened and under strain" (1931f, p. 113n). But the Study, being limited to the process of compensation without reference to subjective states of the individual, mentions neither "sense of insecurity" nor feelings of inferiority. Wolfgang Metzger, editor of the recent German edition of Adler's works, points out specifically that in the Study "there is no mention of attitudes of the individual as a whole" (A1977b, p. 9).

A final example is from the "Closing Words" of Heilen und Bilden of 1914, where Adler refers to "a decade of work based on Individual Psychology" (A1914a, p. 382). But the term Individual Psychology was not introduced until 1912.

Lack of Acknowledgment of Earlier Positions

Striving for power. An outstanding example of lack of acknowledgment of an earlier position is the concept of striving for power, or will to power. In the Neurotic Constitution Adler (A1912a) spoke of "the primacy of the will to power, a guiding fiction, which sets in the more vehemently and is developed the earlier, often hastily, the more acutely the inferiority feeling of the organically inferior child moves into the foreground" (p. 77). In 1919 or 1922 he added: "All human problems demand their solution in the sense of the striving for power" (p. 47). Elsewhere Adler (A1908d) added in 1922: "Social interest and striving for power are the facts that first of all determine the course of life of a human being" (p. 63). And again: "A strong need for affection . . . permits us, everything else equal, to assume a strong social interest but also a strong striving for power" (pp. 63-64).

Yet in his definitive paper "On the Origin of the Striving for Superiority and of Social Interest" Adler (A1933i) seems not to remember these statements of some eleven years earlier. By that time he designated the basic human dynamics as a "striving for perfection," and wrote: "Referring to the striving for perfection, or the striving for superiority as which it manifests itself sometimes, or the striving for power that authors of less understanding sometimes attribute to us, some few have always known about it. But . . . it
took Individual Psychology to point out that every individual is seized by this striving for perfection” (pp. 30-31, italics added).

**Masculine protest.** Another example is found in Adler’s use of the concept of the masculine protest. He introduced the term stating, “In neurotics, the masculine protest, this protest of masculinity, can always be shown to be present” (A1910n, p. 426). He further stated: “The neurotic psyche is indeed completely under the influence of a dynamic which I have described as psychological hermaphroditism with subsequent masculine protest” (A1910f, p. 98). He wrote further: “Every form of inner compulsion in the normal person and the neurotic is to be derived from the attempt of a masculine protest” (A1910c, p. 88), and also designated the masculine protest as “the primum movens” (A1911h, p. 111) of what he had a few years earlier described as the aggression drive.

A few years later Adler demoted the masculine protest from its position of pre-eminence. This can be seen from the following statement from the *Neurotic Constitution* where we have, as we did earlier, bracketed what Adler (A1912a) in the last edition omitted from the original version and italicized what he added. “All these attempts to strive higher, of the will to power, must naturally be understood as a form of the [masculine striving, be identified with] striving for superiority of which the masculine protest represents a frequent special case, [since it represents] a prototype of the psychological urge for significance according to which all experiences, perceptions and volitional directions are grouped” (p. 61).

Yet Adler (A1930d) did not acknowledge his earlier though superseded conception of the masculine protest when he observed: “There are still some writers who, in order quickly to dispose of Individual Psychology, see in the ‘masculine protest’ the beginning and end of our views. They do not understand that the ‘masculine protest’ represents only one, although an important, concretization of the formal striving for superiority” (p. 70). Adler failed to acknowledge that the 1922 third edition of the *Neurotic Constitution* still carried the original version of the above statement and that he did not make the revision until 1928, in the fourth edition.

**Throttling of social interest.** Adler’s conception of a throttling of social interest in cases where it remained ineffective as a counterforce was quite similar to the subsequent position of Arvid Runestam (1928)—which was also accepted by O. H. Mowrer (1961)—namely, that “in neurosis it is actually the individual’s conscience
that has been repudiated and 'repressed' rather than his 'instincts' " (p. 83). In relating social interest to conscience, Adler (A1920a) noted: "An individual accepts much more easily evidence that he like all others strives toward glamor and superiority, than the imm mortal truth that he also is firmly held by the tie of human belonging together, and cunningly veils this before himself and others" (p. 16).

Yet Adler (A1933c), about a decade later, rejected any similarity with Runestam, and in doing so also failed to acknowledge his own earlier formulation. But he did see the relationship between Runestam and Freud, "pretty much the last refuge of the Freudian conception," Runestam coming "from the Freudian line" (p. 292). In seeing this relationship, Adler inadvertently acknowledged the structural similarity of his own early, now superseded, conception and that of Freud.

Consequences

We believe that the difficulties Adler met in attaining recognition for his Individual Psychology were partly due to his emphasis on the constancy of his theory and the resulting various ways of de-emphasizing its development. As mentioned earlier this created some confusion among his followers. More broadly it resulted in "misunderstandings" of Adler which even today have not been completely resolved.

Of particular significance is the identification of Adler with striving for personal power over others that led him to repeated protests to the contrary such as in 1922: "The views of Individual Psychology demand the unconditional reduction of the striving for power and the development of social interest" (A1912a, p. 28). But in 1932, he still found "the misunderstanding that Individual Psychology not only regards psychological life as the striving for power, but propagates this idea." To this he replied: "This striving for power is not our madness, it is what we find in others" (A1956a, p. 113). Adler’s position was then: "The striving for power, personal power, represents only one of a thousand types, all of which seek perfection, a security-giving plus situation" (p. 114). Yet in 1952 a scholar like Egon Brunswik (1952) still held that the difference between Adler and Freud amounted to merely a substitution of striving for power for libido, and eleven years later, Viktor Frankl (1963) still characterized Adlerian psychology as stressing "the will to power" (p. 154).
During the last twenty to thirty years the understanding of the mature Adler has made great progress as illustrated by the initial quotation from Hall and Lindzey. But it was a relatively delayed understanding which, in our opinion, could have been avoided, had Adler openly acknowledged and discussed his various changes. We hope that the present exposition may advance still further the appreciation of Adler by enabling the careful reader to make the necessary distinctions between earlier ideas and the mature theory as he studies the various works of Adler.

We consider Adler's development logical steps in a continuous progression toward formulations which satisfy the criteria of a good and viable organismic theory of personality, psychopathology, psychotherapy, and counselling. Adler's untimely death at the age of 67 leaves the question wide open how this development would have continued had he lived longer.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The span of Alfred Adler's writing, 1898-1937, falls relatively neatly into four decades in regard to the development of his conception of human dynamics and social nature.

1898-1907. Prior to an explicit concept of man: Writings on issues of social medicine and education, shifting toward organic considerations in the Study of Organ Inferiority which is written in physiological terms without reference to the individual. In 1902, invitation by Freud to become one of four "charter members" of a discussion group.

1908-1917. Prior to "social interest": "Aggression drive," followed by "masculine protest" and "will to power" replacing Freud's "libido." In 1911 separation from Freud and causalistic, nomothetic, drive psychology in favor of a finalistic, idiographic, value psychology.

1918-1927. "Social interest" as counterforce: "Social interest" as an innate counterforce setting limits to the expansion tendency, aggression drive, lust for power, unless "throttled" by outer or inner forces. Founding of child guidance centers, teaching and writing. "Life style" replacing "life plan."

1928-1937. "Social interest" as cognitive function: "Social interest" as innate aptitude to be consciously developed, giving direction to an ethically neutral striving for perfection, superiority, or simply a
plus situation. Restating of other conceptions. Regular travels to the United States and settling there in 1934.

The paradox of a criticism by Freud and Putnam of Adler as providing a "dreary" concept of man, and an appraisal by Hall and Lindzey of him as offering a "more hopeful and far more complimentary" concept of man than Freud, is resolved by understanding that the former referred to the Adler of the second decade, while the latter refers to the Adler of the fourth decade. The development of Adler's concepts has not been sufficiently evident before because he took an attitude of "no basic changes" from the beginnings of his theory. This led him virtually to obscure his advancements in various ways, thereby creating confusion even among his followers and continuing "misunderstandings" among others.

Knowledge of the development of Adler's concept of man, especially his social nature, should be not only enlightening from the viewpoint of the history of ideas, but also helpful in advancing reconciliation about Adler. As a supporter of Adler this writer finds some satisfaction in understanding that the early criticism was not quite unfounded. And to contemporary opponents of Adler who find inconsistencies in him we can now concede: "You have a point. But this is how these inconsistencies can be resolved." We should now also be in a better position to deal with the paradox that Adler is still not sufficiently acknowledged although his theories and methods have been amply validated by the extent to which others have arrived at quite similar formulations. This ever-broadening consensus refers to the Adler of his last decade.
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