

Editors' introduction to the Adlerian Year Book 2014



The first article is Elaine Parker's review of the posthumously edited and published volume, *Perchance to Dream – Dream Work in Four Movements: Language, Symbolism, Interpretation, Therapy*, written by Leo Gold. The publication of *Perchance to Dream* is an example of Paola Prina's tireless leadership in furthering the *Adlerian Society UK and Institute of Individual Psychology's* production of Adlerian works that otherwise would be unavailable to Adlerians and others who might benefit from them. Elaine Parker offers a sympathetic, insightful and incisive précis of this text, suggesting that, "it should be included on course reading lists at Diploma level." Elaine's thoughtful review may well entice others to read Leo Gold's book for themselves.

The article by Erik Mansager, "A Biographical Sketch of Leo Gold", is a shortened version of the one he wrote as the "afterward" of Gold's *Perchance to Dream*. Erik manages to convey the immense creativity, social interest and energy of the man and his contribution to Individual Psychology (IP) in particular and psychology in general – in New York City, New Jersey, Chicago and elsewhere in the USA, as well as around Europe, both independently and as part of the *North American Society of Adlerian Psychology* (NASAP) and the *International Committee of Adlerian Summer Schools and Institutes* (ICASSI). Leo Gold lived long enough to be celebrated in his own lifetime, and in 2004, seven years before his death at age 87, he received NASAP's Lifetime Achievement Award.

In "Perspectives on what it Means to Be an Adlerian in the 21st Century", Lori Ann Wagner thoughtfully addresses the relatively low profile of IP and her own and others' concern that "... many Adlerians still preach among the choir" at a time when IP could be of greater use to the wider community. Lori Ann reviews the

contemporary relevance of IP and its central tenets, along with psychology and neuroscience research evidence of the accuracy of Adler's observations. Reporting the results of her interviews with twenty-seven Adlerians, representing different ages and stages in their careers, she found that they overwhelmingly embodied Adlerian principles in their personal and professional lives. Female interviewees tended to personalise their answers, while male interviewees tended to focus on professional and intellectual aspects of what it is to be an Adlerian. Lori Ann uses Erikson's psychosocial stages to characterise developmental differences in perspective across different age ranges, noting increasing integration and generativity with age. In conclusion, despite avowed limitations of her study, Lori Ann highlights the positive Life Style implications of being an Adlerian and invites us to "... become more than a covertly influential force in the world ... no longer remain a footnote".

In "Individual Psychology as a Philosophy", George W. (Bill) Linden reminds us that Adler had a classical education and acknowledged the metaphysical aspects and heritage of IP, and that through ICASSI, Dreikurs promoted IP "... not only as a psychological method of treatment, but as a philosophy of life." Using IP's central principles as main headings, Bill painstakingly illustrates how "subjectivity of perception", "social embeddedness", "teleo-analytic interpretation of behaviour", "self-determination and creativity" and "holism" follow from the works of Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Spinoza, Kant, Vaihinger and Smuts. Concluding his article as he began it, namely, by posing traditional philosophy's three questions: What can I know? How can I know it? And So what? - Bill highlights the optimism and generativity of IP and Adler's focus on *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* "... and its necessity for the survival of humankind. It is his standard for measuring the value of actions by human beings and societies. As such, it also provides an ultimate transcendental goal that delivers hope to humankind."

In “A Case Study of Efforts to Lead Democratically when Good Authority is Undermined”, Karen John further explores factors that undermine and promote authority and democracy, which she drew from three “classical” texts and delineated in a *Year Book 2012* article. In this volume, she uses those factors to analyse and make sense of the breakdown and rebuilding of leadership within a children’s centre that provides local integrated educational, social care, health and community services for young children and their families. Applying Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, she identifies how efforts to lead democratically are seriously compromised within an organisation embedded in hierarchical political and social structures that actively undermine good authority. At the same time, she shows that leaders draw courage and succeed when they are helped to see how their efforts to promote egalitarian relationships and practice are challenged by those structures.

Martyn Williams article, “The Eagle and the Horse: Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy from an Adlerian Perspective”, contains a wealth of information about how social interest can be promoted and the value of a horse as “... a living, feeling being who works alongside the therapists, not beneath them.” From Martyn, we learn that horse and human brains are structured and function in much the same way, with the horse’s limbic system being proportionately as large as a human’s, which helps to explain the apparent range and nuance of their emotional sensitivity. Martyn explains that horses are also highly social animals: their “... society is hierarchical but organised for the benefit of the herd as a whole”, and “the equine survival technique is to form stable, long-term relationships.” They also form deep, “authentic” attachments to humans. As a linguist, Martyn observes that “... 75-80% of human communication is non-verbal, so it is a relatively simple step to interact with a horse”. Through a brief case example, Martyn demonstrates the

power of a horse, working with an equine and an Adlerian therapist, in helping a client who had trouble making relationships.

In “Envy in Couple Relationships”, Rachel Shifron and Betty Lou Bettner bring empathy, understanding and a systematic approach in their explication of the topic and work with partners when envy has taken over. Making it clear that envy is the focus, not jealousy, with which envy is confused, they helpfully distinguish between the two: “Jealousy is when I want or wish to have what you have. Envy is when I am ready to feel or behave destructively towards you when I do not have what you have.” They explain that envy arises from feelings of inferiority and fuels aggressive thoughts and behaviour, yet success in a couple relationship requires feelings of equality, social interest and co-operation: “Love is a feeling of belongingness ... One cannot choose envy without giving up happiness.” They describe and illustrate their work with each partner’s family constellation and early recollections, which are used to draw out the strengths and abilities of each and to promote mutual understanding and commitment to move beyond the envy of one partner and the guilt the envier induces in the other.

James A. (Jim) Holder, in an elaborated case study, “The Addiction Process and Re-orientation”, movingly describes his method of using early recollections (ERs) as metaphors in helping people with addictions to understand and embark upon recovery. The client who is the subject of the case study provided an initial ER in which a terrifying fall into a well punctuated exuberant play with friends. Jim’s earlier research showed that 90% of those in treatment for serious substance use and 91% of counsellors recovering from substance misuse offered negative early memories, compared with only 27% of counsellors with no history of substance use. Jim illustrates how reframing the mistaken ideas from the initial ER and the client’s

first-use ER initiated encouraging insight for the client and others in the treatment group.

Steve Slavik has contributed two brief articles to this volume of the Year Book. In the first, "A Note on Adler's Holism", Steve brings his considerable knowledge and skill to writing holistically about "holism". The "final, fictive goal", "self-ideal" and "psychic unity", each refer to "indivisibility" of the person, intra-personally and inter-personally. For example, Steve asserts that: "Thinking and feeling are manifestations of one's engagement or involvement in the world." ... "In presenting and representing the world to him- or herself, the individual composes and builds a place." He reminds us that although Adlerians speak as if personal processes were different states, this is only to demarcate different conditions, such as "thinking", "day-dreaming" or "dreaming" rather than different states.

In the second of his articles, "A Short Story by Mario Benedetti and Its Adlerian Roots", Steve Slavik introduces this prolific Uruguayan author of short stories, poems, essays and novels as someone who was acquainted and made use of Adler's ideas. Steve translates from Spanish to English one of Benedetti's short stories, "Suicide More or Less". He then undertakes a Life Style analysis of Ezequiel, the neurotic central character, from which he concludes that Benedetti "... has made good use of Adler's thought, while perhaps describing individuals he has known or seen in life."

In the final article, "Individual Psychology in Switzerland: A Brief History and Overview", Erik Mansager and Roman Borboa trace the history and primary approaches of Individual Psychology (IP), in the context of the history of Swiss democracy, current mental health trends, the on-going struggle between psychoanalytic and Dreikursian models of IP, and current undertakings of IP. Their contextualised account suggests that the pluralism inherent in Swiss democracy, neutrality and multiculturalism is reflected in

the development and practice of different IP approaches, with each currently serving an important function in Switzerland.

Our gratitude is extended to the authors of this volume for their valued contributions. As always we welcome submissions for future volumes from all those engaged with Adlerian thought and practice. Moreover, we wish our readers a pleasurable read.

The Editors

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