

YEAR BOOK 2005

From the Editorial

What better way to begin a volume packed with articles explicitly or implicitly concerned with social interest than a tribute to Professor Heinz Ansbacher, written by one of our longest-serving editors Chris Shelley? Fortuitously, the publication of this Tenth Issue of the Year Book coincides with the celebration of Professor Ansbacher's 100th birthday. Professor Ansbacher has made an enormous contribution to the English-speaking world in translating and integrating Adler's writings, with the clear ambition of "systematising, disseminating, and advancing Adlerian theory" (Ansbacher, 1994, p. 439), with the help of Dr. Rowena Ansbacher, his life partner, academic collaborator and co-author.

In the second article, Jim Holloway explicitly addresses Adler's concept of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, reminds us of its complexity and explores the development of darker human impulses. He observes that: "To belong to a group without inferiority – as a member equal in worth to all the other members – is a creative achievement."

Marion Balla is also explicit in her search for meaning and contemporary support for Adler's notion of social interest in its many manifestations and concludes her article with a list of local, national and international projects that demonstrate its expression.

Manu Bazzano juxtaposes Adler and Zen Buddhism, borrows for his main title a line from one of Adler's definitions of social interest, "to feel with the heart of another", and drives home the parallels, using Adler's own words:

"The self-bound individual forgets that his self would be safeguarded better and automatically the more he prepares for the welfare of mankind, and that in this respect no limits are set for him." (Adler, cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956/1964, p. 112).

Seeking to understand more about a friend, Steve Slavik asked how she imagined she might die. Her speedy and detailed reply, with its expression of deep feeling for her daughter, prompted him to ask a number of other friends the same question as a way to explore "community feeling". Not surprisingly, their replies reflected their views of themselves and their relationships with others, as well as the extent to which they felt they had achieved what they had hoped to and lived up to their own expectations.

Tori Barker Ross's article also looks at death, but from the perspective of those suffering the loss of a loved one. In her work with bereaved clients, she describes sitting with them, hearing their desolation, and helping them to tell their stories, which re-kindles their social interest, encourages them to re-engage with life and eventually re-emerge as whole and centred beings again.

How displacement compromises one's sense of belonging and identity is at the core of Vieda Skultans' article, in which she describes her own and others' experiences of loss of home and country, and movingly writes of being outside in an unreal present, with reality existing somewhere else and in the past. In "Reflections from an Adlerian Perspective" of Vieda's article, Anthea Millar notes the power of her narrative approach in helping others "... to re-tell and transform their stories in a way that enables them to reconnect with the community." This parallels the Adlerian use of memories as metaphors for the unique experiences and values of the individual and the community, which when understood can be used to promote social interest rather than to safeguard the self.

Bill Linden turns to philosophy and neuro-science in his entertaining "search for Adler" and *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, and he certainly found them in neuro-science - via Spinoza:

"It is reasonable to hypothesize that the tendency to seek social agreement has itself been incorporated in biological mandates in part, due to the evolutionary success of populations whose brains expressed cooperative behaviors to a high degree. Beyond basic biology there is a human decree which is also biologically rooted but arises only in the social and cultural setting" (Damasio, 2003, p. 173).

In his look at the future of Adler's "precocious" vision, Erik Mansager detects the legacy of Adler's second-born position in the tendencies of contemporary Adlerians, and identified their self-bounded directions as: 1) "leave us alone", 2) "give us our due", and 3) "acknowledge my pedigree". Showing that Adler's main theories have found strong support in research, although not carried out by Adlerians, he recommends that we now engage in a "critical collaboration" and resist "... retreating into a circumscribed, non-critical and congratulatory posture; but using the various Adlerian professional schools, enclaves that know and respect Adler's theories, as critical think-tanks and research centres. They would examine at necessary depths the connections among IP, current trends and well-researched findings."

Lillian Beattie's and William Hayes's articles are good examples of Adlerian collaboration and integration at its most creative. They joined forces and frameworks to evolve a typology that combines the elements of Air, Fire, Earth and Water with Adlerian descriptions of different human orientations, goals and priorities. The explication of the different patterns of human experience and

behaviour represented in their integrated framework proved to be an effective means of promoting understanding and co-operation among primary school children.

From her experience of providing couple therapy, Clair Hawes helps a couple overcome their discouragement by helping them “quickly understand that the emotional baggage they carry can be interfering with them having the quality of relationship that they both want, but have difficulty achieving. They may take a step back and review new possibilities. Using early recollections is one dynamic and direct method to greater understanding.”

Adler instructed that social interest is expressed in the main three life tasks of work, friendship, and love and intimacy. Eva Dreikurs Ferguson points out in her article that Adlerians have written much less about work than the other two, but that key Adlerian principles and methods are effective in improving relationships and performance in the workplace. She discusses these under the headings of “social interest”, “life style and short- and long-term goals”, and “encouragement and discouragement”. She concludes that the Adlerian perspective has much to offer work-based consultants working from a different but compatible framework.

The development and expression of social interest as a core element of emotional well-being requires encouragement. Margaret Wadsley explores what might be construed as encouraging or discouraging to the healthy growth and development of human beings from conception through childhood, relating these to recent findings within neuro-science.

Rounding off the issue for Adlerians and non-Adlerians alike, Tim Smithells provides us with a highly accessible and informative lexicon of Adlerian Psychology.

We hope you will find this year’s collection of articles as exciting as we do.

The Editors

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References

- Ansbacher, H.L. & Ansbacher, R.R. (1956/1964). *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: A Systematic Presentation in Selections from Later Writings*. New York: Harper Torchbook, Publishers, Inc.
- Damasio, A. (2003). *Looking for Spinoza*. New York: Harcourt.