

**Volume 4**

**Journal Articles: 1914-1920**

**Expanding the Horizons of Child Guidance; Neurosis & Psychosis**

**Chapter I: Melancholia and Paranoia** (1914) is a study on the theory of psychoses. Adler begins by referring to *The Neurotic Character* (CCWAA: Vol. 1) and summarizes his earlier conclusions on the theory of psychoses. Psychotic individuals characteristically search for detours and distancing to dodge the expectations of society and to escape a realistic self-evaluation, as well as personal responsibility. Melancholic (depressive) people have a low sense of self-worth. Consequently, they make constant attempts to gain great prestige. They often emphasize their lost opportunities for exceptional development. In their manic phase, they show an unshakable assumption that they are super-beings. Aggressive, systematic ideas characterize paranoid people. Their sense of self is driven to the point of god-likeness, based on a deep-seated feeling of inferiority. The chapter concludes with a separate appendix: a case study on the dreams of a depressive client.

In **Chapter II: The Social Impact on Childhood** (1914), Adler examines the social context of psychological development. In the beginning, he says, “Everything related to child-rearing must be considered with the individual in mind.” The idea of “social usefulness” is central to child development. He refuses to provide clear-cut rules for education because this activity is essentially more an art than a science. However, he offers some general ideas that guide the normal growth of the child. Both discipline and freedom are needed. The impact of the social environment is important for the development of the feeling of trust; the environment should provide logical values that everyone respects, the educators as well as the children. Harsh discipline may destroy the child's trust in other people. What matters most are the attitudes, goals, and intention of the child and of the educator. Their general attitudes and life goals are important in determining the future outcome of the educational process. The social attitudes hide behind the behavior, and are often difficult to change. The most difficult cases require psychotherapeutic intervention.

In **Chapter III: Individual Psychology: Its Assumptions and Results** (1914), Adler addresses the philosophical and theoretical premises of IP. He begins by defending his thesis that the unity of the individual is an essential element of his psychology, which has practical objectives. If we know an individual's goal, we can predict her actions. As a prerequisite, we need to know the social context of the person. He emphasizes the importance of the goal: "It is not possible for us to think, feel, desire, or act without envisioning a goal. All the causalities are not sufficient for a living organism to overcome a chaotic future and obviate the haphazardness to which we would become victim." The psychological manifestations of the personality are best understood as directed toward superiority, or, overcoming the feeling of perceived inferiority. This striving toward a personal sense of superiority explains the predominance of "personal feelings" over "objective, or unbiased" views. He concludes by referring to Dostoyevsky's novel, *A Raw Youth*, where we find a vivid description of the power fantasies in young children.

In **Chapter IV: Child Psychology and Neurosis Research** (1914), Adler discusses the origin of neurosis. Neurotic developments can be traced back to the first and second years of life, when children form their attitude toward their environment. Children and neurotics lack independence; they both need others to serve them. Adler emphasizes that we should never draw conclusions or make interpretations based on a single detail, but we should evaluate individuals within the total context of their lives. In the second part of the chapter, he uses case studies to examine the complicated manifestations of neuroses. He closes the chapter with ten concluding remarks, or theses, such as: "Just as an insufficient organ creates an unbearable situation out of which grow numerous attempts of compensation until the organism feels itself equal to the demands, so does the child's psyche out of a feeling of insecurity seek that font of extra strength to rise above that feeling of insecurity."

In **Chapter V: The Problem of Distancing Oneself (On a basic problem of neurosis and psychosis)** (1914), Adler states that normal people solve life's problems directly, while neurotic individuals prefer to defend themselves with symptoms and reasons for their failures. He defines neurosis as a "yes-but" condition. On the one hand, the neurotic person expresses inferiority feelings; on the other hand, as compensation, she compulsively strives upward toward a goal of god-likeness. He explains four general categories of psychological movement: 1)

Retgression in extreme cases means suicidal attempts, severe forms of psychosomatic illness, hysterical paralysis, and so on. Normal activities become impossible. 2) Stagnation represents security measures meant to prevent crossing the line. 3) Doubt and a mental or physical “back and forth” ensure that distance is kept, often leading to compulsion neurosis. 4) Creating and overcoming obstacles indicate distancing. He concludes by pointing out that where these neurotic dynamics are manifested, personal responsibility is minimal, if it exists at all.

In **Chapter VI: Neurotic Hunger Strike** (1914), Adler focuses on what we call “anorexia nervosa” today. The fear of eating begins at about age 17, almost exclusively affecting girls. He presents a number of striking cases that describe this condition and the problems it entails. In explaining the dynamics of the hunger strike, he concludes that the affected individuals (primarily young women) place high value on nourishment, because only by overstating it can they attain their goal of dominating everyone around them, and being the center of attention. They can be critical of everything and create anxiety in their mothers by denigrating their cooking and dictating the choice of meals.

In **Chapter VII: The Life-lie and Responsibility in Neurosis and Psychosis (A Commentary on Melancholia)** (1914), Adler contends that the neurotic person creates an inner world on the basis of a failed individual perspective, a world that conflicts with reality. In order to protect this unreal inner world (to maintain the “life-lie”), the neurotic needs what Adler calls “safeguarding tendencies.” Using several cases to illustrate his theories, he points out that melancholic (depressive) individuals are not really dedicated to anything, feel rootless, and easily lose confidence in themselves and others. They act hesitantly, recoiling from responsibility of any sort. They use safeguarding intensively, as in excusing themselves with falsehoods that contain evidence of their weakness, but are effective in their struggle with others.

**Chapter VIII: Book Review of Theophil Becker's *On Diagnosing Paranoid Conditions*** (1914) is a review of a published study on paranoia. Adler argues that in the first case study presented by Becker, “the psychoses here represent a symptom and a means to do battle, tempered by irresponsibility, wherein the blame ascribed to the other as a paranoid premise becomes apparent. The same holds true for the dominant emperor illusion.” Adler comments on four separate case studies in this review. In every case, he and Becker find implicit or

explicit aggression. Adler seems to imply that although Becker was not an Individual Psychologist, his presentation was very much Adlerian.

In **Chapter IX: Book Review of Wladimir Astrow's *Petersburg Dreams (An Unfamiliar Story by Dostoyevsky)*** (1914), Adler reviews a paper on Dostoyevsky. He refers to a lecture by Stephan Zweig and the Individual Psychologist, Kaus, and their studies on Dostoyevsky. Adler writes that “the poet's life becomes a protest against the harsh reality and its demands.” He correlates the ideas of humility and subjugation with revolutionary disposition, because these ideas point toward the surmountable distance: “The act is meaningless, corruptive, or criminal; the healing lies only in subjugation, if it conceals the secret pleasure of being superior over others.”

In **Chapter X: *Nervous Insomnia*** (1914), Adler includes some of his famous ideas on sleeping-positions. He remarks that frequently insomnia is used as a recrimination against another person, often the spouse or someone living in the same household. Furthermore, clients often insist that their problem should be taken very seriously. If they receive recognition that they have severe difficulties with sleep, they are relieved of responsibility for possible mistakes in their life. Insomnia often springs from psychological tension caused by individuals having to solve problems for which they believe their ability to cooperate is inadequate.

**Chapters XI and XII: Minutes of Meetings of the Organization for Individual Psychology** (1914) cover several meetings in 1914. On 7 February, Adler explains kleptomania as a condition of defiance. The rage to become rich is often found among people with a pronounced feeling of inferiority. This theme continues in the meeting of 14 February. Wexberg comments on a case where a schoolgirl fantasized that she could steal from her father without any punishment. In the meeting on 21 March, a paper on morality by Dr. Furtmüller is discussed. Adler comments, “The ambiguity of the ethical phenomena forces us to find therein the line of the individual. Ethics is the incarnation of the sense of community.” The goal of education should be to educate the child for the community.

In **Chapter XIII: *The Woman: Raising and Educating Children*** (1916), Adler explores the influence of women as the predominant figure both in the raising of children and in the schools (at least at that time). Referring to the ongoing war (World War I), he notes that children were

being raised almost exclusively by their mothers. However, the significance of the father-figure has not diminished: “Therefore, the man has to assume the indisputable responsibility for his part in child-rearing.” Adler contends that both parents have a role to play in educating the child. While the mother's impact is certainly valuable, it is regularly subordinated to the influence of the man and the male culture. Ultimately, “Upbringing means: to make someone useful for social interrelationships.”

In **Chapter XIV: The Child's Inner Life and Social Feeling** (1917), Adler elaborates on the concept of social feeling, arguing that the child's inner life is the most critical aspect of development because organ functions, reflexes, movements, and emotions are influenced by it. In this inner life, a hidden line leads upward. All physiological functions are guided by this hidden line, which starts to develop at the second half of the first year of life. This inner life develops on the strength of the child's feeling of inferiority in relation to the goal which promises tranquility, satisfaction, standing, and superiority, in short, “growth.” We can find the unity in the child's life plan (life style) in his games, career fantasies, and earliest recollections. Social deficiencies, “the absence of a public spirit,” become very apparent. These deficiencies result in conflicts with the demands of life, manifested in two major categories: those who oppose others, and those who blame others. These actions represent the majority of neurotics.

**Chapter XV: On Homosexuality** (1918), mainly of historical interest, reflects the common bias of Adler's time and culture, as explained in the Editor's Note. Here Adler explores the dynamics of homosexuality, as he sees them: “While we find in the development of some homosexuals the total exclusion of the other sex, we can find others who are able to make compromises. However, the shadow of reproach always falls on the other sex.” Always empathic, he notes that homosexuals frequently “have to train in skills in dealing with the other sex that others have practiced and acquired since childhood.”

In **Chapter XVI: Compulsion Neurosis** (1918), Adler begins, “Discouragement, the surest sign of the neurotic, forces her to put distance between herself and unavoidable decisions. In order to justify this distancing, she resorts to arrangements that mount before her like a heap of dung. This is how she retreats from life.” The image of the compulsion neurotic is of someone “who busily struggles outside normal

human activities, tormented by fear and worries.” Compulsions most commonly take the form of “washing, praying, masturbating, various moral ideas, and brooding.” A variety of other forms exist, many of which are found in literature. Adler emphasizes compulsion “as an almost self-contained pathological picture,” revealing all the essential components of neurosis. He considers compulsion, like all neuroses, a “position illness,” rather than what others may call a “disposition illness,” in that compulsion is a distancing mechanism, enabling a person to “confront life with a dismissive gesture,” providing a defense against an individual's sense of superiority. He concludes, “A neurotic compulsive movement is an arrangement created by a person afraid of life to which that person must adhere because she intelligently, but wrongly, fears everything else.”

In **Chapter XVII: Dostoyevsky** (1918), Adler explores the connections between the hardships of Dostoyevsky's life, the philosophy embodied by his fictional characters, and IP. The Russian author suffered greatly: from life-long epilepsy, four years of having his feet chained in prison, and four more years as a prisoner in Siberia. Yet, compelled to “find a harmonious interpretation of life,” Dostoyevsky came “closer than anyone else to discover the reality of life, its logic, and of living together. He found the limits for the intoxication with power in loving one's neighbor.” Adler describes him as “a great and unequalled moral philosopher,” whose characters are “wholly integrated,” embodying “all the essentials for existence and striving.” Finally, “his understanding and explanation of dreams have still not been superseded, and his perception that no one acts without a goal coincides with the most modern achievements of IP.”

In **Chapter XVIII: Individual Psychology on Upbringing** (1918), Adler stresses that physicians have an obligation to understand human nature, if they want to be successful in helping their patients. After noting the close connection between physical and psychological health, and that physical difficulties may lead to a pessimistic view of life, he discusses the inferiority feeling and the problems it may cause. He describes the many pitfalls of parenting, the possible influence of birth order, and the “dangerous corners” of childhood, all of which may lead to psychological difficulties in adulthood. He concludes with, “We regard the schools and school counseling centers as most appropriate for dealing with problem children.” These centers were founded by Individual Psychologists before World War I. Now, in post-war Vienna,

Adler and his colleagues were building a network of these centers, with the sole purpose of helping children, families, schools, and everyone concerned. “By working together, physicians, teachers, parents and the child have always found the right way to reinforce the child's ability for cooperation.”

**Chapter XIX: Bolshevism and Psychology** (1918) begins with Adler's lamentation, “The means of power have been torn from us Germans.” In other words, Germany and Austria have lost the war. “We were never more miserable than at the height of our power. The striving for power is an ill-fated delusion that poisons human fellowship. Whoever seeks fellowship must forsake the striving for power. We are closer to this truth than are the victors.” The deep tragedy experienced by German-speaking countries was conditioned by the fatal striving for power, exercised by the ruling classes. “Only in socialism did the feeling of community remain as the ultimate goal and end as demanded by unhampered human fellowship.” However, Adler believes there is no hope for this fraternity of humans, because “The reign of the Bolshevists is like that of all other governments founded on the possession of power.” He refers to “old friends, true comrades, who reached dizzying heights, misled by the drive for power.” So he warns that people should not be misled by the Bolshevik propaganda. Instead, he calls for “the cultivation and strengthening of the feeling of community,” which must begin in earliest childhood.

In **Chapter XX: New Aspects of War Neurosis** (1918), Adler examines the problems in clinical psychology during the war. He reviews a number of contemporary methods used to “cure” war neuroses, and finds them unsatisfactory. Also rejecting the practice of electrotherapy (“shock therapy”), he refers favorably to a paper by Liebermeister, who recommends avoiding “every method of treatment that offends human dignity.” An important survey of available methods of treatment during WW I, it contains 33 references to different papers by psychiatrists and psychologists on the contemporary problems in treating the neuroses caused by the war. Adler himself stresses the importance of the attitudes of the patient. He believes that neurosis is, essentially, an attitudinal illness.

**Chapter XXI: The Other Side: A Mass-Psychological Study of a Nation's Guilt** (1919). Taken as a group, this chapter, Chapter XIX on Bolshevism, Chapter XX on war neuroses, and Chapter XXIV on

neglected children, all deal with the psychological ramifications of war, before, during, and after the event. Adler argues that the people were not guilty of the war, the leaders were. Eloquently describing how the people were taught to be obedient and subservient, he examines in detail the impact of propaganda: “Then came the general staff with their lies. Poisoned wells were uncovered, dynamited bridges discovered far inland, and tales were told of the martyrdom of citizens living along the borders.” As a result, “the people totally lost their heads; no one trusted anyone.” Some “caught on to the game and sought every possible means to escape front-line duty, employing all sorts of real or imagined ailments. The poor and desperate masses were enveloped by fear of death, jail, and asylums and with no salvation in sight. Then came hunger and the endless lines of desperate women and children who stood day and night in rain and snow before the stores of profiteering merchants.” Adler expresses great sympathy for the German-Austrian people, “They had no voice. They were dragged to the slaughter. No one told them the truth,” and fierce disdain for their leaders who caused “this hell.” This chapter serves as a warning for all time: Those seeking power and profit are not to be trusted. Beware leaders who do not tell their people the truth.

In **Chapter XXII: Concerning Female Neurotics and the Masculine Attitude** (1920), Adler begins with a citation from Immanuel Kant's *Anthropology* that many women prefer to be men because in that way they have greater freedom, but “no man would want to be a woman.” Many neurotic patients report doubting their gender identity until late childhood; “others carry lifelong obvious character traits of a magnified masculine protest so that, as a result, their attempts at social adjustment at work, in their family, or at love and marriage, fail. All, however, especially female neurotics, insist that they had always yearned to be a total man.” In several case studies and dream interpretations, Adler illustrates the principle that “. . . no human being can readily endure real or ostensible inferiority. Wherever we encounter any degree of inferiority feelings, we also find a sense of protest, and vice versa. Hence, all movement tends to go from 'below' to 'above' which can only be discerned clearly when examined in the context of the total personality.”

In **Chapter XXIII: The Individual Psychology of Prostitution** (1920), Adler argues that society brands prostitution as “appalling and even criminal” but continues to tolerate it, treating prostitution as a kind of

“emergency exit.” In contrast to some other contemporary authors, he views prostitution not only from the standpoint of the individual prostitute, but also from the standpoint of the customers; they create the system and the trade, not the women who provide the services. He identifies three categories involved in this social system: those in need of prostitution, the procurers, and the prostitutes. Noting the strong connection between neurosis, psychosis, and prostitution, he comments that “those in need of prostitution suffer from a feeling of inferiority, lack self-confidence, are afflicted with a pathological drive for esteem, tend to be irresponsible, and like to use psychological tricks.” As for the prostitute, “. . . she only plays the part of a woman for her easily duped partner. For her part, she is far removed from the female role. She is merely selling, aware only of her trade, and the demands made on her. She degrades the man into a dependent means for her subsistence. Both arrive at a fiction that deceives them into feeling personally predominant.”

**Chapter XXIV: Neglected Children** (1920) concludes Volume 4 with a study on the social situation of Austria after WW I. Adler examines the ordeal of the countless children who had to grow up in squalid conditions, in a society afflicted by the war. Many of them were, and continue to be, neglected. He says that the majority of delinquent children are not mentally sub-normal. However, once they fail, that failure turns into a fear of life that they cannot overcome. He emphasizes strongly the need for positive achievements and positive feedback. He discusses the difficulties often found in schools: overcrowded classes and inadequate teachers. Problems with children are frequently provoked by many teachers who focus only on maintaining discipline, without giving any thought to the educational methods used. He proposes that district counseling centers be established in affiliation with schools. “Finally, teachers must become familiar with IP and with therapeutic pedagogy so that they can recognize the signs of neglect. They should then intervene helpfully with positive feeling. In addition, a model school could serve to provide practical training for educators.” This chapter illustrates the unique interdependence of Adlerian philosophy, pedagogy, and psychology.