

*Alfred Adler Institute
of Northwestern Washington*

**A Clinician's Guide
to The Collected
Clinical Works of
Alfred Adler**

A Unified System of
Depth Psychotherapy,
Philosophy, & Pedagogy

Edited by Henry T. Stein, Ph.D.
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Classical Adlerian Translation Project

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The psychic life has a creative power that is identical with the life force itself. This creative power has the capacity to anticipate, which it must do, because human beings move. The psychic life means movement and direction with one goal.

* * *

To fully understand this impetus toward the guiding ideal, the final fictional goal, is to come to know, compressed in a single point: past, present, future and the intended finale, all at the same time.

* * *

Another definition of neurosis is “Yes – but.” In the “yes” is embedded the recognition of social feeling; in the “but,” the retreat and its safeguards. The neurotic turns his whole interest toward the retreat, until it becomes an elaborate “Retreat Complex.” Even the question, “Why should I love my neighbor?” springs from the inseparable connectedness of mankind and the stern criterion of the community ideal. Only he who carries within himself, in his “law-of-movement,” a sufficient degree of the community ideal and lives according to it as easily as he breathes, will solve his inevitable difficulties.

Alfred Adler

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Volume 9

Case Histories:

Problems of Neurosis

The Case of Mrs. A.

The Case of Miss R.

Volume 9 contains three separate, independently published books: *Problems of Neurosis*, *The Case of Mrs. A.*, and *The Case of Miss R.*

* * *

Problems of Neurosis (1929) consists of eleven chapters of case histories, focusing on the art of life style analysis and treatment strategies.

In **Chapter I: Goals of Superiority**, Adler begins, “The problem of every neurosis is, for the patient, the difficult maintenance of a style of acting, thinking, and perceiving which distorts and denies the demands of reality.” The patient and physician must work together “to understand the nature of the patient's mistakes.” This understanding requires not only “an accurate outline of her significant history, but also a perception of the dynamic unity of that history as a continual striving toward an implied conception of superiority. An individual goal of superiority is the determining factor in every neurosis, but the goal itself originates in the actual experiences of inferiority.” The physician's first task, then, is to “identify the real causes of the feelings of inferiority, which the patient disguises from herself in various degrees and in her manner.” Asking a patient whether she feels inferior is pointless, as she is always occupied with trying to conceal it from herself and others. The best we can do is “observe her mental and psychic movements, in which the attitude and individual aim can always be discerned.” From these movements, we can perceive the feeling of inferiority, “together with a compensatory striving toward a goal of superiority. Such a universal feeling is not in itself indictable; its meaning and value depend entirely on how it is used. The most important discovery of IP is that the inferiority feeling may be used as a stimulus to continue on the useful side of life.” Adler illustrates his ideas with four detailed case studies.

In **Chapter II: Not Meeting the Problems of Life**, Adler incorporates a number of his theoretical constructs into three case histories, beginning with, “Every development in an individual's life is conditioned by his life-aim (fictional goal), connecting all successive phases of his life.” A patient's lack of preparation to meet the problems of life does not usually show when things are going well, “or when he is shielded from the real demands of life which are always of a social nature and demand social feeling.” The first training and test in social behavior occurs in childhood, “in kindergarten, school, and companionship. When a neurosis is developed, we always find that the individual's difficulties were foreshadowed in these childhood relationships.” Adler then recommends certain therapeutic techniques. For example, the therapist must “win the patient's good will,” and then transfer it to his environment, essentially supplementing what the mother or father omitted. Also, he uses “the simplest and most direct method possible, winning the patient first and taking his part as far as possible, gradually bringing him to face the truth about what he is doing.” When dealing with cases of depression, “after establishing a sympathetic relationship, I give suggestions for a change of conduct in two stages. First, 'Do only what is agreeable to you.' The patient usually answers, 'Nothing is agreeable.' 'Then, at least,' I respond, 'do not exert yourself to do what is disagreeable.' For the second stage, I say, 'It is much more difficult and I do not know if you can follow it.' After saying this, I am silent and look doubtfully at the patient, exciting his curiosity and ensuring his attention, and then proceed: 'If you could follow this second rule, you would be cured in fourteen days. It is: to consider from time to time how you can give another person pleasure. It would very soon enable you to sleep and would chase away all your sad thoughts. You would feel yourself to be useful and worthwhile.’” He then cites the various replies he receives to his suggestion and how he parries each one.

In **Chapter III: Deficient Social Feeling, Masculine Protest**, Adler first reviews some basic concepts. “IP views the conscious and the unconscious not as separate and conflicting entities, but as complementary and cooperating parts of the same reality.” Unlike other psychological approaches, “. . . we believe the attribution of feelings, emotions, and thoughts to bodily conditions and inherited instincts always leads to exaggerations and mistakes.” All psychic activity moves toward the attainment of a specific fictional goal, thus, “If sadness is necessary to the attainment of his goal, an individual is naturally incapable of happiness, for he can be happy only when miserable.” The

crucial requirement for a psychic goal on the useful side of life is a well-developed sense of social feeling, or interest in others. This social feeling is not innate; it must be nurtured and developed, which is the primary task of the mother, or care-giver. She must help the child overcome his natural sense of “almost total, practical impotence.” Thus, the art of motherhood “is to give the child freedom and opportunity for success by his own efforts, so that he can establish his style of life and seek his superiority in increasingly useful ways. Then, she must gradually interest the child in other people. This sense of impotence, or the 'feeling of inferiority,' is the root-conception of IP. Whatever form it may take, it can be correctly estimated only from an adequate study of the individual's actions.” In order to understand the whole style of life, which encompasses all the individual's movements, we must “perceive the goal toward which all the feelings lead.”

Adler then describes how he uncovered the fictional goal of one university-educated man with obsessive guilt feelings. A second child, “his striving was largely concentrated on the effort to surpass his elder brother.” After summarizing the case, Adler states, “I had to recognize correctly, in the first quarter of an hour of the patient's visit, the kind of superiority for which this style of life was designed. If I had failed to do so, I would certainly have provoked prompt resistance.” Introducing the second case, of a neurotic, 26-year-old woman, he points out, “The goal of superiority is usually identified with the masculine role because of the privileges, both real and imaginary, with which our present civilization has invested the male. A girl's feeling of inferiority may be markedly increased when she realizes that she is a female, and a boy's when he doubts his maleness. Both compensate with an exaggeration of what they imagine to be masculine behavior.” This form of compensation is what Adler calls “the masculine protest.” The fundamental difficulty is the idea that women are of “second-rate importance, and therefore not really valuable. One of the chief causes of unhappiness in love and marriage, this mistaken belief is the illusion which forms the basis of the masculine protest.”

Chapter IV: Problems in Love and Marriage consists of Adler's response to the questions he is frequently asked about these topics after his lectures. He begins by establishing that he does not accept the idea that only sexual impulses and/or their sublimations are important here, although they have a definite place in a study of these difficulties. Any sexual components can be interpreted only in relation to the individual

style of life, which follows the psychic prototype formed by each person by the age of four. "If the prototype is sociable and interested in others, the individual will solve all love-problems with loyalty to the partner and responsibility to society. If the prototype is struggling to attract notice and to suppress others, its later manifestations will include the use of sexuality toward the same ends; that person will establish sexual relationships in order to rule. A prototype formed by attaining superiority in a limited sphere of activity which excludes the opposite sex will later tend to produce homosexuality or other deviations. The main outlines of the erotic life are thus strictly pre-conditioned." One of the main obstacles to love and marriage is the prevailing attitude that men are superior to women, "leading men to vain expectations and making girls rebel against their feminine function. Much suspicion, jealousy, and quarreling spring from this antagonism."

Chapter V: Neurotic Style of Life and Psychotherapy is about neurotic compensation. Adler begins: "Because it is natural for an individual to express herself with her whole body, we can often learn more by watching a person's movements – how she walks, sits, smiles, or fidgets – than by listening to what she says." After commenting on the psychological dynamics behind vomiting, fainting, and stuttering, he says, "Imperfections in the sense-organs limit the means which a child has of sharing in the life of others. They impose necessary differences of behavior which may be felt as a burden if we do not use wise measures of encouragement. Children with imperfect sight walk cautiously because they are conscious of danger in movement. They are more interested in seeing because it is difficult for them, and if they compensate well, they will become visual types. Poor hearing and handicaps in movement have corresponding compensations." He cites examples of individuals who chose different methods of compensating, both on the useless and the useful side of life.

In the section on principles of psychotherapy, he describes key aspects of how he works with clients. First, he rules out organic problems. Then, "if the disturbance is of a psychic nature, I explain to the patient what I have discovered, but in such a way that it cannot be discouraging, and taking the greatest care not to tell the patient anything she is not yet able to understand." To confirm his findings, he elicits a great deal of information and asks relevant questions, including, "What would you do if I cured you immediately?" He looks for the common direction in all the patient's feelings, thoughts, and actions; for how these factors prevent

the patient from solving some current difficulty; for the guiding line of her life style. He emphasizes the importance of the therapist losing all thought of himself, and never demanding anything of the client: "The first rule in treatment is to win the patient; the second is for the psychologist never to worry about his own success; if he does so, he forfeits it." He concludes by cautioning against trying to teach patients IP by telling them, "You lack social courage, you are not interested in others, you feel inferior." Such statements are vague, discouraging, and "worse than useless. A real explanation must be so clear that the patient knows and feels her own experience in it instantly."

In **Chapter VI: Neurotic Use of Emotion**, Adler uses the concept of a "trick" in order to describe how people can use emotions in order to safeguard their fictional goals. Specifically, "Habitual criticism, anger, and envy indicate useless striving for superiority; they are motions toward the suppression of others, either in reality or fantasy, to be supreme." Useful criticism always connects to some aspect of social feeling, but where the motive is to degrade or lower others, the tendency is neurotic: "Anger usually indicates that the person who is angry feels at a disadvantage, at least temporarily. Neurotics use it freely as a weapon. Patients with the anger habit are often clever in the selection of vulnerable points to attack in others, and are also great strategists in preparing situations so that they put others slightly in the wrong before they begin a fight. Envy is universally an expression of inferiority, though it may sometimes be a stimulus to useful action. In neurosis, however, envy of another does not go so far as practical emulation. It leaves the patient irritable and depressed."

Neurotics are much like the vaudeville "strong man," who pretends to lift a heavy weight, only to have a child come on stage and reveal the "trick" by carrying off the dummy weight with one hand: "Plenty of neurotics swindle us with such weights, adept in the art of appearing overburdened." But they do suffer intensely: "Every movement is tiring. Usually depressed, they continually demand more zealous care from others, and yet find it continually insufficient."

Chapter VII: The Family Constellation contains refinements of Adler's previous comments on this topic. He begins: "It is a common misconception that children of the same family experience the same environment. Of course, children in the same home share certain conditions, but the psychic situation of each child differs because of the

order of their birth. This idea has been misunderstood. The child's number in the order of births does not influence his character, but rather the situation into which he is born and the way he interprets it," a reference to the child's creative power. He then elaborates on the position of the first child, who is generally spoiled, and how this spoiling affects the child's construction of his life style. With the birth of a second child, the first one often suffers a "dethronement," which may lead him to fear being "pushed back," so that he develops a hesitating, neurotic attitude to the tasks of life: "Skeptical and indecisive, he becomes a great procrastinator." However, for various reasons, the first child may retain his favored position, and the second child may become "the problem." "If the second child loses hope of equality, he will try to shine more rather than be more."

Generally favored and indulged by parents and siblings, a youngest child may strive to lean on others; however, if over-indulged, he may resemble a second child, "competitively striving to overtake those setting the pace for him." *The Bible* and fairy tales of all cultures contain stories of youngest children as heroes and conquerors. Only children have their own set of difficulties: "Retaining the center of the stage without effort and generally pampered, they form a style of life based on being supported by others and at the same time ruling them." Each birth position has its pitfalls, and in any family, the way men and women are valued also significantly influences the children. Finally, parents must try to avoid "fanatical methods of education. Any exaggerated method of education will probably harm the child, as we can often trace in the children of teachers, psychologists, doctors, and people engaged in the administration of laws: policemen, lawyers, and clergymen."

In **Chapter VIII: Early Recollections**, Adler uses specific case examples to illustrate his theory concerning early recollections. Although he does not believe that these memories are necessarily factual or accurate, "what is altered or imagined also expresses the patient's goal," and is in line with "the unity of her main striving toward a goal of superiority." In recollections from the first four or five years of childhood, "we find primarily fragments of the individual's life style and indications of self-training to overcome the organic difficulties felt in the early environment. In many cases, the early recollections reveal signs of the person's degree of activity, courage, and social feeling." To understand the meaning of a memory, we have to "relate the early pattern of perception to all we can discover of the individual's present

attitude, until we find how one clearly mirrors the other.” Early recollections may “reveal an interest in movement, such as traveling, running, jumping, or riding in a car,” especially for people having difficulty with a sedentary job. Memories may also contain dangerous situations, especially for people “with whom the use of fear is an important factor in the style of life.” When we understand how a person's memories relate to the rest of her life, we find that they “contain the central interests of that person. They illuminate the origins of the style of life. The basic attitudes guiding an individual since childhood and in her present situation are reflected in those fragments she selects to epitomize her feelings about life, and to cherish in her memory as reminders. She has preserved these as her early recollections.”

Chapter IX: Further Useless Goals of Superiority continues the topic of Chapter I: “Goals of Superiority.” Adler states that the “goal of personal supremacy blocks the approach to reality. The more reality presents him with real, or even alluring possibilities of action, the greater the effort a maladjusted person will make to avoid it because his feeling of supremacy is proportionately increased thereby. The end result and logical culmination of such a life-line is, of course, total isolation in an asylum.” Cases of general paralysis reveal the highest goals of superiority, with the greatest loss of social feeling and mental control, as well as a high degree of cowardice. “Similarly, whenever we find a marked insensibility to the pain of others, or undervaluation of others' lives, as with murderers and criminals, we can trace the preparation for their development; they do it by deliberately breaking through the limits of social feeling, impelled by cowardice to seek relief on the useless side of life. Every murderer is a coward intoxicated with the idea of being a hero. The true psychology of these tendencies ought to be explained to everyone because such instruction would do much to prevent crime.” The goal of superiority magnifies one of life's tasks out of proportion, so that a person's ideal of success “becomes unnaturally limited to social notoriety, business success, or sexual conquest.” In the area of sexual perversion, Adler points out the major contribution of IP in identifying the masochist, as well as the sadist, as having a goal of superiority: “The purpose of most masochists is to escape love and marriage because they do not feel strong enough to risk a defeat. By means of their masochistic tendencies, they exclude all the really eligible members of the other sex,” who are unwilling to indulge them in their “demands to be bullied” and mistreated. Even the common masochistic fantasies of girls, rather than being submissive, reveal a “desire to exclude a realistic sexual objective

with its possibilities of defeat and humiliation. To be satisfied in a fantasy is to teach oneself, 'It is not necessary to have a real relationship.'" Masochism is an attempt to establish a great distance from others and normal behavior: "Nothing could be further from the truth than the idea that masochistic fancies indicate a desire for submission."

In **Chapter X: Occupational Choices and Sleep Postures**, Adler shows how the choice of occupation and sleep posture reflect the individual's style of life. In all workers, "the choice of occupation is foreshadowed by some dominant interest of the psychic prototype," for example, a) playing with soldiers may foreshadow a career in the military, or as the director of a department store; b) playing with sewing needles and thread could reveal a future tailor, or a surgeon; c) playing with dolls might indicate an interest in marriage and family, or in becoming a nurse or teacher. He emphasizes that "the more we educate the child in the direction of social interest, the more common-sense conceptions of superiority she will develop." As for body postures and sleep positions, both "indicate the manner in which an individual approaches her goal." The way a person carries herself, enters a room, and shakes hands indicates whether she has social feeling and wants to be connected to others. Postures adopted in sleep can be just as significant, for example, a) sleeping on one's back like a soldier at attention indicates that a person "wants to appear as great as possible"; b) sleeping on the stomach "betrays stubbornness and negativity." Those who wake with their head at the bottom of the bed and their feet on the pillow "express an unusually strong opposition to the world, with the neurotic attitude of often answering 'No,' before having understood the question."

In **Chapter XI: Organ Dialect and Dreams**, after opening with, "The style of life dominates the organ functions which is especially noticeable with the lungs, heart, stomach, organs of excretion, and sexual organs," Adler focuses on the expressiveness of the sexual organs. "Whatever partial sexual satisfactions the patient may provide for himself are an escape from the real problem. In this way the various forms of impotence are traceable to a common root in a disinclination and lack of training for relationships with other people." This particular sexual difficulty is often found in patients confronting the task of marriage. Whatever the patient's particular problem, Adler strongly advises the therapist not to reprimand the patient with the diagnostic words of IP, or with a moralistic attitude. Instead, he tells us that "a patient has to be gradually led into wanting to

listen and understand. Only then can he be influenced to live what he has understood.”

On the subject of dreams, he says, “Sleeping is another kind of waking.” In order to understand the unity of the waking and sleeping life, “we must give up the idea that they are contradictory states.” He explains, “The dream is not merely the substitute satisfaction of wishes unfulfilled in waking, rather it is a function of the entire style of life, more dynamically related to the future than to the past. The dreamer is engaged in molding his attitude and disposition to the coming events of his life, storing up a reserve of feeling and emotion which could not be acquired in the daytime by contact with reality or logical thinking.” The dream helps a person get ready to deal with a current problem through the use of metaphor, indicating that he “feels inadequate to solve it with common sense.” If he understood the metaphor, it would be ineffective for its purpose: “It is essentially a self-deception in the interest of his individual goal. The more the individual goal agrees with reality, the less a person dreams. Courageous people rarely dream, for they deal adequately with their situation in the daytime.”

* * *

The Case of Mrs. A. is based on a transcript of Adler's comments on notes concerning the case of Mrs. A, as presented by Dr. Hilda Weber, at a special meeting of the London Medical Society of Individual Psychology in 1931. In response to a request that he demonstrate interpreting a “life style,” Adler asked that a practicing physician present him with case notes “for his extemporaneous consideration and impromptu interpretation.” No one except Dr. Weber knew anything about the case until the notes were handed to Adler on the platform. When she first took the case notes, she had no interest in IP, and she did not alter them for this meeting.

Adler first makes introductory remarks on the basic principles of IP, beginning with, “If a human life can be understood, we will find a psychological development toward an ideal final goal.” From there, we must consider two points: when the symptom began, which indicates the patient's feeling of deficiency; and the nature of the patient's striving “toward an ideal form in order to overcome this felt deficiency.” In IP, we “look for the problem or difficulty which a person does not feel able to overcome. Therefore, we have to look for the wrong direction in

which this person is striving, one that is incompatible with a solution of the problem.” An individual's inability to overcome a difficulty originates in her lack of preparation in social feeling, courage, and cooperation. This lack of preparation leads to a hesitating or stopping attitude in the face of life tasks, which are all fundamentally social in nature. Instead of facing these tasks successfully, the unprepared person evades them and tries to insulate herself. In this state of mind, which Adler calls “the inferiority complex,” an individual constantly strives to compensate by feeling superior. “We must look for the point where the patient feels satisfied with simply feeling superior. She cannot feel superior in regard to a socially useful solution of her present problem, so her superiority is directed in a socially useless direction. This is the initial general diagnosis in each analysis of a psychological case.”

But finding out at what point and why a particular person has not been prepared is not easy: “We have to delve back into her past, find out in what circumstances she has grown up, how she has behaved toward her family,” and ask the open-ended kind of questions resembling those we ask in general medicine. The general diagnosis is only a beginning; we must arrive at a unique diagnosis for each patient by “testing our series of guesses,” based on the information we gather. “In medicine and surgery, as in IP, we have to guess, but have to support our assumptions with verifying evidence. We must be careful not to bias our conclusions by trying to prove a theory. As in other sciences, we must stay open to a wide range of potential influences. This perspective is very valuable, because it keeps us open to intuitive, free guessing and discovery. In this respect, IP fully agrees with the fundamental diagnostic procedures of medicine.”

Before Adler reads the case notes aloud, he comments, “We must focus on each word and turn it over in our mind, so that we get everything possible out of it.” He proceeds to demonstrate by doing precisely that. As he reads aloud, he guesses about the possible significance of each phrase and sentence. (Editor's note: This skill of intuitive guessing, based on a thorough knowledge of the full range of Adlerian theory, serves as a cornerstone of the Classical Adlerian approach to case analysis in depth psychotherapy.)

Adler now reads aloud the case notes for Mrs. A., supplied by Dr. Weber. A summary of Mrs. A.'s “story” follows, with brief excerpts from a few of Adler's extensive comments.

She came for treatment at the age of 38, married for eight years, with two boys, ages eight and four. Her husband was an elevator operator in a store, but felt humiliated that, unlike his brother, he could not get a better job because his right arm had been disabled in the war. Unsympathetic with his trouble, she was preoccupied with compulsive thoughts and fears of death, and “an almost obsessional hatred of dirt and love of tidiness.” This fear of death was related to a knife phobia, and connected to both suicidal and homicidal tendencies. (Adler: Suicide is always a sign of someone not trained in cooperation. Because this type of individual thinks merely of herself, when she faces a social problem for which she is not prepared, she has such a feeling of her own worth and value that she feels sure that, in killing herself, she hurts another person. We must look for the person against whom this phobia is directed. Undoubtedly, it is her husband, with whom, as we have seen, she must be in conflict.) She often wished to hit her husband or anyone else who annoyed her, even strangers in the street. She even had homicidal thoughts toward her younger, four-year-old son.

Her family history showed neurosis on both sides. Her father had been a laborer who often came home drunk on Saturday nights. Although her mother was a good homemaker, she left disciplining their eight children (four girls, of which A. was the second, followed by four boys) to the father, who beat them “unmercifully” for the smallest infractions. “He would then strike his wife as well as his children and openly threaten to cut their throats.” (Adler: She imitates the father in her compulsion idea: to kill somebody with the knife.) Similar to her father, A. hit her children “without adequate provocation.” She was a cheerful, happy child, who felt quite different from her older sister and oldest brother, both of whom she regarded as selfish.

Medically, she was healthy, but occasionally had difficulty breathing during times of stress. She did well in school and had no difficulty making friends. (Adler: Do not forget that such people, selfish from the beginning and striving to be in a favorable situation, do not lack all degrees of cooperation.) But she left school early at the age of fourteen, when she entered domestic service while continuing to live at home. New problems arose. (Adler: Domestic service means to submit, and this woman cannot submit. She must rule. She is not prepared for a situation in which others are ruling.) After a week at her job, “she was attacked by such bad carbuncles on her back that the doctor ordered her home.”

Soon, her father complained of having her home again, “eating her head off.” One morning, as she entered the kitchen for breakfast, “he rushed at her with a shovel, intending to hit her over the head.” Terrified, she ran from the house and hid in a churchyard. Vowing never to return home, she found another position as a domestic servant.

At the age of eighteen, she became engaged. But after two or three years, she “dramatically broke off the engagement by throwing the ring in the young man's face.” She took pride in his continuing devotion to her, even after her poor treatment of him. During the war, she met Lance, the man who is now her husband, while he was recuperating in a hospital. What appealed to her most about him was that he was tall and not an alcoholic. For a while, their relationship went well, until he became “careless and inconsiderate.” She considered breaking off this engagement as well, until she discovered she was pregnant with her first child. “Desperate about the pregnancy,” she had her first suicidal feelings. Lance then married her a few weeks later.

Both she and her husband were disappointed at the birth of their son; they had hoped for a daughter. “It may be pointed out in passing that A.'s desire for a daughter and subsequent disappointment were connected with her later hostility toward her sons.” Soon after, the situation got worse. She started to become jealous of her husband's popularity; “she interpreted passing words and looks of those around her as criticisms directed against herself.” She avoided making friends, and sang hymns in a loud voice to show the neighbors that, “first, she was not afraid, and second, that she at least had been well brought up.” She and Lance quarreled frequently, after which she stayed in bed, threatening “to kill herself and the child unless the situation improved.” Concerned about her condition, her husband took her to a doctor, who recommended that she have all her teeth extracted. (Adler: I presume this was meant as a punishment, not as a medical treatment!) The teeth were removed in two separate sessions. After the second procedure, she had a “hysterical outburst,” claiming that she had seen and felt the whole operation, despite the anesthetic.

When her second boy was born, she was again disappointed. Her neurotic tendencies grew, as her resentment of him increased to the point of later wishing to kill him. (Adler: Her importance weakens and becomes less since she now has to share with two children, and she wants herself to be the center, not the children.) She left her husband for

a while, living with his mother. But that did not go well either. Her obsessive thoughts grew, including a “terrifying dream of angels surrounding a coffin.” (Adler: This thought of death affects the husband. She has a dream of angels surrounding a coffin, so he has to take care of her.) She associated this dream with a picture of her old home, “at which she frequently gazed when pregnant with her first child.”

(Adler's final comment: “We understand that at this time she played with the idea of suicide. While looking at the picture, she imagined family members being impressed and fearful of the possibility of her suicide. With this threat, she felt she was 'the master of the game.' The rest of the case notes deal with treatment, which is not part of my lecture. I simply wanted to show you the coherence of a life style.”)

* * *

The Case of Miss R.: The Interpretation of a Life Story, translated by Eleanor and Friedrich Jensen, M.D., 1929. Adler originally presented the Individual Psychological interpretation of this autobiography to a group of psychiatrists and educators in Vienna. It was later published to give a wider audience a fuller understanding of IP. The Jensen's preface to the book, an overview of IP theory and practice, covers no new ground and therefore will not be summarized here.

Chapter I: Early Childhood. Adler begins with the question, “What other purpose can the study of psychology have if it does not give us some practical help with our difficulties, or at least make it possible to help ourselves?” Toward that end, he states that the purpose of this book is to give the reader “insight into the principles and techniques of IP,” a particular language he has developed to help us “know the symbols of the soul in order to read a life.” However, instead of using a famous person as his subject, he will use the colorful story of a girl “of ordinary station and no particular accomplishment.” Similar to his method in *The Case of Mrs. A.*, he will comment extemporaneously on each sentence of Miss R's autobiography as he reads it for the first time. As with every word of a patient, he will consider, “What is the real meaning of what she is saying? What is her attitude toward life? What do her words mean in light of her deeds? How does she meet the demands life makes of her? How does she behave toward her fellow human beings? How does she perform her duties (or fail to perform them)? Does she move toward reality or illusion?”

Highlights of Miss R.'s autobiography are now presented, in her voice, with brief excerpts from Adler's extensive interpretative comments.

I remember that father frequently asked me, "Do you feel well? Does anything hurt you?" (Adler: We infer that this girl will always see to it that she is pampered. She will want to be the center of attention, constantly trying to draw everyone's focus to herself. One of her organs may be deficient in functioning.) I never felt well and always had a temperature. I never liked to eat anything. The only thing that appealed to me was my mother's milk; I fought desperately against attempts to wean me. I nursed for five years, and I can still see my mother's beautiful white breast. When we had visitors, I had her sit where no one could see her nursing me.

I used to wear a blue cape with red lining and I wanted a hat. Whenever we passed a store, I cried, "Hat! Cape!" (Adler: Vanity and a great penchant for externals developed early.) They could not get me away from the stores. Mother had to detour around those shop windows. (Adler: The child has an influence over her mother strong enough to compel her to use tricks.) I was very happy with my first pair of shoes; they were hardly put on my feet when I opened the door and tried to run away with them. (Adler: That is an attempt to ensure their possession. Her father is a tailor; the whole family is prone to appreciate the external.)

There were many buttons in our home, and I used to play with them. They were my money. I also liked to play with silk pads; I would cut holes in the arms and put them on my dolls. I also played with beer bottles and played merchant with the coffee grinder. (Adler: Imagination and imitation strongly developed.) But my favorite occupation was talking to myself. I could imitate somebody for hours. I also imitated the baker. Later, I played the teacher, cutting eyeglasses for myself out of paper and using the back of the sofa as a blackboard. I even yelled at the disobedient children and shouted so loudly that my father told me not to get so excited. (Adler: Another method of securing her father's attention.)

When someone asked whom I wanted to marry, I always answered, "My father." I loved him very much and was even jealous of him. (Adler: A type of jealousy exists that originates in a striving for power. It is quite possible that all jealousy really springs from a striving for superiority.)

When my mother tried to caress him, I often interfered. When father traveled, he always brought me a present, frequently a book, which he would read to me as I sat on his lap. He also sent postcards; I always received two and they were always prettier than the others. However, I could not rest until everyone had given me his or her card. (Adler: She wants to have everything, a phenomenon of the increased inferiority feeling.)

Because of my sickly constitution, everybody was submissive to me. (Adler: This girl will put her sickliness into the service of her striving for superiority by the way she behaves. The pampered child is anxious to be an object of pity.)

Chapter II: Adolescent Difficulties. For one year I had whooping cough. For the first six months it grew steadily and it was a year before I was over it. One night I had such a choking fit that I wanted to climb out of the window in my stupor. People avoided me. Children were hurried away from me. At times, I heard my father say he would commit suicide if anything were to happen to me. His eyes were always resting on me with an expression of sorrow. At night, he washed me. I was afraid of water and always struggled against being washed. (Adler: The spoiled child does not do anything herself. Everyone around her is employed.)

When Lina, my sister, washed her feet, I crept to her on all fours and lifted her skirts to see what was beneath them. (Adler: Early sexual curiosity.) From the time I outgrew the baby carriage, I slept in my parents' bed. I went to bed every night in the following way: (Adler: A spoiled child makes trouble when going to sleep, especially when she is no longer attached to the mother.) First my father had to take me in his arms, dance around with me and sing a song: "None of the fairies is as pretty and fine as you, dear little darling of mine." He had to shake the pillows, arrange them correctly, and cover me. (Adler: Pampered child.)

Occasionally, we visited a restaurant where a military band played. As soon as the conductor raised his baton and the music began, I got a shock. My father had to leave the restaurant with me. I was also terribly frightened when I found a feather in my bed. I yelled as if it were a monster. (Adler: Anxiety is well known in the history of the pampered child. We notice how she arranges for this mood in advance by being interested in everything which can arouse anxiety. Our method of tracing the purpose and effect of an emotional expression has led us to notice

that anxiety is a first-rate method of ruling others. She uses everyone and everything in her constant mania to dominate.)

When I was five years old, the following happened. While I was playing with my doll, I felt myself forced mentally to call my parents and God bad names, such as dirty slut, lousy dog, and so on. It was as if the devil had whispered it into my ear. The harder I tried to restrain myself, the more violently I swore. (Adler: Let's see what happens psychically. "My thoughts are so strong and I am so innocent." Here lies the complete justification of the neurotic who complains that she feels forced to perform certain acts. Individual Psychologists are skeptical about wishes. As long as somebody wishes, she is sure that nothing will happen.)

Chapter III: The Development of a Neurosis. Nevertheless, I suffered from deep remorse. I looked at my parents and thought, "If you know what abusive remarks I make about you!" (Adler: Anyone not knowing the principles of IP might conclude that the girl pities her parents. The feeling of guilt is an inferiority feeling in disguise. It shows neither the intention nor any other indication that someone will thereafter make her life conform to or harmonize with social life. We do not believe she has given up her constant desire to be first. She now feels superior, for when she says, "If you knew what things I say about you," it means, "I am more than you. You are blind. You understand nothing.")

I wanted to escape these thoughts, but they seized me over and over again. They even disturbed me when I prayed at night; then I had to repeat my prayer. It was horrible. (Adler: This hammering, this underlining, this absolutely useless emphasis in description are part of the nature of neurosis; that is, to make something out of nothing. It brings the neurotic closer to her goal of godlikeness.)

I suffered from sleeplessness very early in life, at the age of six or seven. It was very hard for me to fall asleep, and in the morning I was first to awaken. (Adler: The night and sleep are the greatest enemies of all spoiled children. Nervous adults are also furious when others sleep. This disturbance is in the forefront of many neuroses. The patient wants to construct a broad chasm between herself and her pernicious, neurotically unattainable goal, which will absolve her of failure and give her a good excuse to stop struggling. The symptom disappears as soon as the patient realizes that her inability to sleep is a way of avoiding responsibility for the solution of life's problems. When she ceases to consider her

sleeplessness as inexplicable fate, she abandons this symptom.) My father was so concerned about my poor sleep that he himself could not sleep any more.

On our floor lived another tailor who had many children, four girls and two boys. One of the boys, Poldi, was my age; I played with him. He was a little roughneck, dirty and barefooted. I imitated him. (Adler: If we could uncover more of what went on in her mind, we would find a wish to change into a boy, the protest against being a woman in a world where men are generally considered superior; where they have the more advantageous positions. I have termed this manifestation “the masculine protest.”)

As a small child I would run up and down the steps in front of the church like one possessed. My mother had to drag me home with her by force. Father was very religious; he taught me at an early age to make a cross when I passed a church and he gave me religious pictures. I began to collect religious pictures. (Adler: We believe that children collect things because it makes them feel strong. This child collects in order to satisfy her striving for recognition.) In the evening I spread them in two rows under my pillow and on top I put a guardian angel. Otherwise, I could not have fallen asleep. I prayed until I was short of breath. I prayed for everyone I like, for my grandmother, uncles and aunts. (Adler: It is not difficult to train a child for such behavior. What does, “I prayed for everyone,” mean? The fate of this person is in my hand. Such a child feels superior. This form of praying, so incompatible with reality, is often a symptom of a compulsion neurosis.)

Chapter IV: The Style of Life. (Adler: In order to understand a person's life, we must discover the thread running through all her symptoms which can be traced directly to her goal. We call this thread the individual's style of life. The style of life is formed by early childhood influences, developed in early childhood, and guided by the goal of the person who follows it unquestionably.) A gloomy mood prevailed at home. My parents had quarreled again. I do not remember about what. (Adler: Children who are constantly the center of attention, like this one, cannot bear having their parents quarrel. Not because they want peace, but because they feel excluded when the others are busy with each other.)

Father asked me to stay in my room and turn my face to the wall because Santa Claus was just passing the window. Then a bell rang and we went into the Christmas room. A large Christmas tree stood on the table with candles burning. In front of it, I saw a big slate on a stand and beside it, a doll. I think I also got a picture book. I rushed to my presents, admired them, and immediately started to scribble on the slate with chalk. I could not write at that time. (Adler: She paid a great deal of attention to visual objects. The extremes of beauty and ugliness attracted her notice.) Next Christmas, Milli, a friend of mine, advised me to surprise my parents and Lina with written greetings. I bought stationery used for this purpose, trimmed with gold and angels. (Adler: We perceive the girl's qualifications for the decorative arts. Asked for what profession she should be trained, we would answer that she has trained in the direction of drawing, possibly dressmaker or fashion designer.)

Milli had a little book of Christmas wishes. She picked out three of the shortest for me and prepared to help me copy them. (Adler: This girl is capable of social interest.) Though she spelled every single word out for me, I spoiled a great many sheets. Again and again, I had to run downstairs to fetch fresh paper. I exerted myself to the utmost and was glad when I finished my letter at last. It was crammed with mistakes, but my parents and Lina enjoyed it immensely. (Adler: You see how others are induced to help this child, how well she is liked. She is accustomed to being favored. We can predict that when she is finally faced with a difficult situation, she will react acutely. She is like a hot-house plant. When she is in a less sheltered position and faces a situation where she has to give and cannot take, she will break down.)

Corpus Christi Day was almost as important a festival as Christmas Day. Father once gave a donation so that I could walk under a little canopy dressed up like an angel. I was awake at about five o'clock. We had to wait quite a while. My wings, made from goose feathers, became so heavy that Father had to take them off. Thus I trotted along, with a crown on my head, under the red canopy which was carried by four girls in white dresses. When we came near our house, I was too proud to look up to our windows. I imagined that I was almost an angel. (Adler: The child identifies herself with an angel to such an extent that she feels humiliated having to live in such a poor house.) Father followed along on the sidewalk, carrying the wings in his hand. (Adler: The girl's relationship to her father signifies that she dominates him.)

I never liked to eat. (Adler: Pampered, struggling child. The people around her overemphasize eating.) Following Father's example, I acquired the habit of reading while I ate. (Adler: She dislikes her feminine role. She imitates her father's manners, expressing that she would prefer to be a man like him.) Father told me one day that his former fiancée, Genevieve, had drunk her coffee without sugar. So I did the same. Mother took a lump of sugar in her mouth when she drank her coffee. I also imitated that. (Adler: This will be a significant point in her development. She knows that she is a girl and cannot become a boy. Though her remembrances reveal her longing to be like a man, they also show a struggle to repress this longing, to reconcile herself to the feminine role and adjust to it.)

I always loved animals. (Adler: This is a common trait among children who want to rule. Hardly anything in the world is more obedient than a dog or a rabbit. The real motive of this preference is the feeling of superiority.) I was immensely fond of ladybugs. When I found one, I took a box, pierced some holes through it, covered the bottom with cotton, put a fresh leaf over it and carefully put the ladybug on top of the leaf. I could play with it for hours and hours. And when it flew away, I began to cry and nobody could console me. (Adler: This girl searches for a way in which she can feel her superiority to the full.)

Chapter V: The Jealousy Mania. Our boarder used to accompany us when we went on an outing. One day he stayed at home. Mother was quite angry; Father noticed it immediately. On our way to the trolley station, they began to quarrel. (Adler: At an early age, this girl is made aware of jealousy in the family. She feels that her father does not like it when her mother shows an interest in other men. Jealousy shows a lack of self-confidence, representing an attempt to win power over a significant person. The victim of jealousy never realizes that by resorting to such means, she establishes at best only a semblance of power and more frequently, exercises an intolerable tyranny which backfires on the tyrant as surely as two and two make four.) Father: "You are annoyed because the boarder is not with us." Mother: "Be quiet!" (Adler: It sounds like a modest request and most people who ask for nothing but quietness believe that they demand little. But they fail to realize that, in fact, they demand a great deal. When I demand quietness, it means that I make laws for the behavior of others. It may sound modest, but it is a battle cry.)

Father: "Go and get him! Or stay home if you want to. You can live with him; I'm not going to stop you! If the child weren't alive, I'd have left you long ago." (Adler: We see the child standing in the midst of a matrimonial scene. She knows what it is all about. She receives impressions of married life. Such scenes certainly influence a child by giving her as graphic a picture of marriage as possible. Unfortunately, we become acquainted with the problem of marriage through our parents. Consequently, children frequently want to avoid marriage because it appears to them as a difficult problem, or they resolve to have a model marriage. Both resolutions lead to countless difficulties.) And they started yelling at each other. (Adler: A pampered child is made an involuntary witness of a quarrel between her parents. She is used to occupying the center of the stage. What does she do when she feels excluded? She interferes.) I cried and tried to reconcile Father and Mother. The quarrel was horrible for me. (Adler: That sounds well-meant. But it was horrible for her because she did not play a role in the argument, because she was a pure nobody.)

As far as I can think back in my life, my parents always quarreled. (Adler: Since it is so strongly emphasized in her memory, we suspect she will have difficulties in her own future love relationships. She will hesitate, retreat, or try to escape.)

Chapter VI: Sexual Development. (Adler: Let us survey the story of this girl through the magnifying glass of IP, in order to uncover all the connecting links which make her life a single chain. We want to examine how each fact, experience, and reaction fits in with the other parts in order to find the general thread, or as we call it, the style of life.

Here is a spoiled girl, excessively attached to her father, who gets what she wants whenever she expresses a wish, and in whose future, for that reason, we anticipate great difficulties. When a pampered child leaves the home where she has occupied a favorable position, she has not been trained to withstand hardship. Since she has some presentiment of what awaits her, she will try to preserve the old relationships as long as possible, fear decisions, and approach problems as slowly as she can. The hesitating attitude is typical for every neurosis. The neurotic says, "Yes," which is supposed to express her readiness and willingness, but right on the heels of "Yes" comes "But." It is probably the most succinct expression we can find to define a neurosis.

Also, we must prepare ourselves for the eventual outbreak of this girl's neurosis, in order not to overlook anything essential, or to lose the thread of her story. Consequently, the examination of even minute details may be important. In learning to understand her, we are not so much concerned with what is exciting in her experiences, but with what has attracted her. All the little incidents must be taken into consideration to gain a complete picture.)

Father was often sad. The reason for that was my unusual bodily weakness. (Adler: We see how much she is influenced by the fact that her father is anxious about her and that his life is devoted to her.) He used to sit in his accustomed place without saying a word and with a sad face, and if you spoke to him, he answered absent-mindedly. That always annoyed Mother and so there was another quarrel. During an exasperating quarrel, Father hit the glass door with his fist, hurting his hand badly. (Adler: The attitude of her father to her mother, so different from his attitude to his child, became apparent to the girl and she felt superior to her mother.) He couldn't work for several weeks, and had to visit the doctor every day. At that time he went out with me a good deal. I felt ashamed of being alone with him; I wanted Mother to be there, too. (Adler: At this point, he who does not fully comprehend the significance of the struggle for power may think that the girl wanted something she was too frightened to take. In reality, however, she wants nothing but the dominating position in the family, and she has it.)

Mother's position was not a favorable one. She was a pretty, cheerful woman and Father killed her cheerfulness. He wanted to keep her in the house to take care of the home and sew for him. (Adler: We are certain this fact had a dreadful effect on the child. She will begin to dread the fate of her mother. She fears that such a fate can change the course of one's entire existence, and that the same thing may happen to her that happened to her mother. In this way she nourishes her suspicions about the dangers of love and marriage. She will be on her guard and learn to evade such problems.)

In spite of everything, however, I idolized my parents and watched over them jealously. Once when I noticed that my father started to follow a girl, I clung to his arm and cried, "You aren't going to follow that monkey-face!" (Adler: We are not surprised. Her goal is not to preserve harmony between her parents, but to be apprehensive about her own loss of power. That is often the root of jealousy, particularly where love does

not exist and dividing relative power is the issue. Most neurotics cling to their family to an extraordinary degree. We are not criticizing close family ties. The final judgment of every human attitude and action may be based, on the plus side, on this attitude's degree of social feeling or altruism, and on the minus side, the degree of superiority striving or egotism. The same action can therefore be useful or useless, depending on whether it works with, without, or against social feeling.)

Chapter VII: The Problem of Love. I have forgotten to mention Tilda, my first friend. I met her on the street. I met her again in the fourth year at school and saw her often. She told me of her suitor, a ten-year-old boy, Henry by name, who had already promised to marry her. (Adler: We see how far-reaching the preparation for life is, even in a child's tenth year.) Then I made his acquaintance. I immediately tried to take him away from her. (Adler: Accustomed to being first, she had to choose this course when she found herself in such a situation.) I was half successful. We three went to the movies together, used to sneak into the garden of the insane asylum together and play at being married. (Adler: That is the beginning of sexual relations. Every individual uses the same sort of games as a preparation and training for adulthood.)

We often spoke of a friend of Henry's who was very good-looking, but who was also quite arrogant and didn't think much of girls. (Adler: We see how the variations in adult personalities are formed in early childhood. Children recognize these variations and also know how to react to them.) That sounded interesting to me, so I asked Tilda to arrange to have us meet. When she spoke to him about it, he said he would look me over. (Adler: I do not know if all my readers can comprehend how the girl is made to play a subordinate part. Obviously, the boy looked down on girls. His form of expression is degrading, which she understood. Anyone who is unable to hear this undertone, who is not musical enough to apprehend it, will not be able to grasp our way of thinking.)

We all met. We walked around a bit and our talk was soon of kisses. I asserted that I would never in my life let myself be kissed by anyone. The boy answered that he would prove the contrary to me, by force if necessary. I did not take him seriously. It was already twilight when we crossed the square, and he threw his arms around me. I struggled, called to Tilda for help, and freed myself after some effort. (Adler: The picture

recurs. Man is the aggressor, the girl the hunted animal. How hard things are; how careful one must be to avoid such attacks.) I upbraided him for his impudence and pointed out that a stolen kiss was not the same as one given voluntarily. (Adler: Notice how the ten-year-old girl can argue; she has learned it in her family.) And that, if I were a boy, I would never bother about stealing a kiss. (Adler: With that she degrades him.) I walked alongside him cautiously. Soon after, he asked for another appointment through Tilda, but I didn't care about seeing him again since I knew I could have him. (Adler: For the first time, this girl faces the problem of love. She must formulate a response. We may conclude from all that has gone before, and from the little test we have just read, that she will not regard love as a means of development, and certainly not as an expression of social feeling, but as a means to win power and significance. Provided, naturally, that she does not run away from the problem completely. We can measure the degree to which an individual is normal or neurotic by the degree to which she attempts to solve or evade problems.)

In the fourth year at school, Father was indifferent to my progress. He only concerned himself with my health. He was always careful to see that I had enough fresh air. He often went walking with me. We would pace quickly along the streets to the railroad viaduct. Then I waited, shuddering, until the train shot out of the tunnel. It appeared to me like a monster, a dragon, a devil. The moment it rushed passed me, I swore at it out of the smoke which threatened to obscure me. (Adler: Even this little incident is exaggerated. Even out of that she extracts the advantage of the possibility for anxiety. She will construct groundless fears until she cannot rid herself of her anxiety. That is the development of training toward an anxiety neurosis.)

When I was in high school, Father had a book with pictures illustrating the whole story of the persecution of the Christians in Rome. I couldn't read very well at that time, so he explained the pictures and told me the whole story. I would arrange the scenes with my doll. Most of the time, she would take the part of a king's daughter. Presumably under the influence of those pictures which presented the crucifixion, I composed the following play: a strange knight steals my doll and kisses her in front of her husband who has just come in. Her husband starts to scream. The knight, with the consent of the stolen princess (the doll) has the husband knifed by a couple of hangman's assistants, tortured with heated tongs, and then orders his skin torn off. And while I was imagining all that to

myself, I suddenly had the most peculiar feeling. (Adler: There we have the emerging of a sadistic-sexual fantasy. We have often remarked how she attempts to degrade others. We gather that her anxiety dreams, her liking for criminal films, do not remain merely as anxiety images in her, but go further and excite her erotically.)

When I was finally alone with one girl who was supposed to know a great deal, I asked her if she knew where children come from. She said, "Yes." I begged her to tell me. Then she said that one must have sexual intercourse in order to have a child. The expression "sexual intercourse" was not clear to me, so she described the procedure. Horrified, I cried, "That can't be true!"

Chapter VIII: The Shock of Sexual Knowledge. (Adler: IP has always believed that each person is an indivisible whole, a concentrated bundle of life, striving toward a goal. To attain this goal, she constructs a system embracing everything that may help her and rejecting all that may hinder her progress. When an individual has an experience that registers in her memory, it becomes a part of and belongs to her system. This system continues throughout her life, including all forms of expression. The life of an ordinary healthy person conceals this system; serious mental disorders reveal it distinctly. When we apply this idea to our story, we come much closer to an understanding of this girl's system. We are dealing here with a spoiled child who wants to occupy the leading position and avoid every situation which does not fit into her style of life. Let us see whether our hypothesis is confirmed.)

In spite of the exact description, I still doubted her words. It seemed too piggish to me. I thought that it was quite beyond good people, and in particular, my parents, to do anything of the sort. And a girl who would permit herself to do that was, in my eyes, contaminated and degraded. It was inconceivable to me how one could live through it. (Adler: Here appears the snag which appears unavoidable when enlightening a child about sex, since the child already has a fixed form of life. When such a child strives to be foremost, to shine in every respect, she receives the impression that sex is concerned with something debasing so she will, sooner or later, protect herself from the approach of the opposite sex. The degree to which she will repel advances will depend on how much she has fed her ambition. She will have difficulties and begin to resent her sex.)

Another girl said later that she had a thick medical book at home which she used to read secretly. Sexual intercourse was explained in that book in detail as well as the sexual organs, and there were also pictures. I asked her to lend me the book. We wrapped the book in newspapers and with a beating heart carried it to my house and hid it beneath a chest. After supper, I got it out and read with boundless excitement. Now I had it in black and white and could do nothing but accept the sexual act as a fact. But I still thought my parents incapable of doing any such thing. And I decided then never to marry. (Adler: We can anticipate what she is going to do or not do, according to the style of life developed up to now. She collects reasons to avoid love in which she fears a defeat.) On the rare occasions that Father and Mother were affectionate to each other, I would throw myself energetically between them and make them understand that I alone was the one to receive caresses. (Adler: Again, she expresses a vigorous reaction against sexuality. When we assume that she does this because she is jealous of her mother and wants her mother's place in relation to her father, we disturb the clear unity of her behavior pattern. In general, the jealousy of children does not express desire for sexual possession of the father or mother, but merely a wish to occupy a higher and more powerful position. It is an expression of the struggle for superiority.)

When I was in the second year of high school, I suddenly imagined that the calves of my legs were too thin ... (Adler: That is doubt of one's own beauty. The girl doubts easily. If she imagined that she were pretty, it would be an impulse in the direction of love. If she made her longed-for superiority a reality, she might be forced to face and accept a problem. Our girl needs doubt in her system; therefore, she makes these discoveries of which we will undoubtedly hear more.) ... and put on three pairs of stockings. My arms too seemed to me too thin. (Adler: We expect her to find many ugly points about herself with the consequence, "I cannot marry; I must exclude love completely from my life." She gathers reasons like a honeybee in order to avoid a love relationship.)

I was sitting in my room and brooding. It was a habit of mine then. (Adler: The tendency of busying herself with useless things grows more marked.)

One day Olga (my friend) found in the trunk of her father *The Memoirs of Casanova*. At that time I was in the third year of high school. We devoured the book. Then she discovered a lot of erotic books, bound in

black, with the title, *The Secret Library*, stamped in white. Trembling with excitement, we got the books out on the floor and read them aloud to each other. The books were called, *The Black Don Juan*, *The Lady with the Dark Spot*, *The Swimming Instructor in the Women's Bath*, and so on. The most awful things happened in those stories. (Adler: Naturally, superficial observers will take this as an expression of eroticism. It is more correctly understood as a deviation from eroticism, as an effort to give very little place in her real life to it. The reading of erotic descriptions indicated the exclusion of eroticism in reality.)

Funny that boys could not attract me when I thought they were superior. (Adler: Here we find a corroboration of the reason given for examining pictures and reading erotic books. She shuns love by occupying her fantasy with useless things. Boys are only there to be made fools of. When we depreciate the value of something which we originally wanted, we rid ourselves of a disagreeable duty or responsibility, and retain our good humor.)

Other girls disgusted me. (Adler: This is an attempt not to proceed further in the direction of homosexuality.)

My own person pleased me most. At that time I was in low spirits and went around with bowed head, not daring to look people in the face, imagined everyone could see through me and was afraid I wouldn't grow anymore. I was horribly unhappy. Finally I went to Father and whispered to him, "I have a confession to make." He asked me what was the matter now. (Adler: This sort of question is heard only in connection with spoiled children. They keep us busy with them the whole day long.) And I confessed with shame that I had done a certain thing. He said it didn't matter once, but I had better not do it again or I would harm myself. (Adler: She has found a more advanced road in eroticism; she has arrived at auto-eroticism. We can predict, in accordance with her style of life, that she will cling to it for a long time. This satisfaction offers her several advantages. First, she derives physical pleasure. Second, the problem of love is circumvented. The question of power is solved to her satisfaction since she threatens her father with the possibility of a sordid habit and is unstoppable. Retention of the habit over a long period indicates an asocial attitude. It is the eroticism of the lonely.)

Chapter IX: The Masculine Protest. When I was fourteen, I resumed my swearing at my parents and God. (Adler: We must assume that

difficulties have entered the life of this girl, as they obstruct the path of every spoiled child. Pampering cannot continue forever and this swearing represents anger at the deprivation expressed in degrading remarks.) Without moving my lips, the most abominable words used to enter my mind. I felt terribly depressed. (Adler: Depression is often found with a compulsion neurosis. A depression usually starts when an individual believes she is forced by some power to pursue a particular course of action. Since these courses of action usually obstruct the activities of others or, at least, prevent a focus on useful things, the resulting depression resembles a self-accusation and is viewed that way. Frequently, the depressed person expresses guilt about her depression, but we should not be fooled by it.)

When I saw my father before me with his weak arms, it hurt me dreadfully. I thought, "If he only knew." (Adler: She feels herself superior through her degradation of him. His weak arms!) I tried in vain to convince myself that I meant someone else when I thought of a bad name. (Adler: She wants to feel noble.)

Then came the thought in between, "Father is a . . ." In order to prove to myself that father was not a . . . I thought, "Father is not a . . . , his assistant is a . . . ," and cried, "He can go to the devil." Then I kept still and heard within me again, "Father is a . . ." Then it seemed to me as if all my cursing were aimed at Father, and I felt as if someone had hit me a hard blow on the head. (Adler: Her neurosis begins here. When we look back, we become aware of the prolonged preparation consistently leading to this point. Her entire behavior tends toward evading the duties of normal life in the society of her fellow human beings. She fills her time instead by occupying herself constantly with the matter of superiority in her own circle. When her superiority is endangered, and the problems of life approach more and more closely, the first compulsion symptoms appear. She curses her family and God, a habit she has practiced since childhood. Undoubtedly, she will sink more and more deeply into the mire of neurotic thought and behavior.)

In my thoughts I also had to swear at God. And then I heard a shriek as if it were from a devil, "You, you have said that." Inwardly I answered at once, "God is the most beautiful man, and the best one there is." While I was saying, "Our Father," I heard, "Holy Mary, I pray to thee. No, I don't pray to thee." Then there was an inward whisper again, "I pray to thee, Maria." I was perspiring with fear. (Adler: Such fixed ideas must shatter

the thinker. In this shattering lies the principal purpose of the neurosis. Now we understand the significance of feelings a little better. Feelings are never arguments; they run in the direction demanded by the style of life. We can go a step further; the arrangement works toward the goal of producing the appropriate feelings to help the neurotic obey (follow) her style of life. This girl helps herself by producing feelings which build themselves into an impassable barrier for her. We hear that she does not want to go out into society, that she does not train for a vocation, and that she will fail in the third test imposed by life, the task of love.)

When I drank coffee, I used to think that the heat of the coffee might crack the enamel of my teeth. I refused to drink anything too hot or too cold, and drank coffee, tea, soup, beer, even water, lukewarm. I ate nothing hard. I was afraid to break a tooth if I did. I ate no more bread crusts, no meat in which there was a bone. No chocolate and no sugar. Then I didn't chew anything any more. I let the foods melt in my mouth and swallowed them like a toothless hag. Then I avoided even bringing an eating utensil in contact with my mouth. Finally I ate only with my fingers. (Adler: She arranges her life so she is freed from every occupation.)

This delusion also lasted several months. But a still worse one followed. I had an excruciating youth. I was just returning from school. I had accompanied a friend and wanted to cross the street. A man approached us from the other side. He had a cloth around his face. When he came closer, I noticed that his whole face was eaten away. There was no nose, no lips, only a number of red holes. I felt as if someone had struck me. I was seized with such dread of this man that in order not to retrace his footsteps, I turned around and made a detour home. (Adler: Now comes the lupus phobia and with it the fear of infection. We now see more clearly and can prophesy that this fear of infection will lead her to strengthen her feeling of security and support her still more in her attempt to exclude love and marriage from her life.)

Chapter X: A Lupus Phobia. Still extremely frightened, I told Father what had happened. (Adler: Significantly, she tells it to her father and we may well ask why. The obvious answer would be that she is on good terms with him and has confidence in him. But we can find another reason for her behavior; she wants to make him understand what will follow – that she must attach herself still more closely to her family, lessen her contact with the outside world, appear laden with burdens and

incapable of doing anything or solving any problems.) He thought it was probably lupus. What was that? A devouring disease whose name in Latin means wolf. (Adler: The father, who had a morbid fear of tuberculosis, had two or three medical books which he often read – hence his knowledge. The girl trains herself. She takes the means which she can use and which appear serviceable to her in the specific situation, whether from her father or elsewhere. Supported by her fear of an infectious disease, she now believes she has the right to separate herself from the outside world.)

One afternoon a boy called for me, an acquaintance of Olga's who was attentive to both of us. We went for a walk together and happened to pass a street where there was a home for people suffering from lupus. All at once, I noticed where we were. I was horribly depressed, spoke not another word and turned to go home completely broken. I was as if lamed. My thoughts stood still and only one thing filled me, dread of lupus. (Adler: Just when she is with the boy attentive to two girls, something fills her with dread. Two reasons may explain: (1) the boy also likes another girl; (2) she can use her lupus phobia to escape the solution of any problem.) I felt as if I were surrounded by bars through which there was no way out. At the same time I felt I hated and loathed the lupus sufferers. (Adler: She acts correctly according to her system. If she did not have the accompanying feeling of hatred and loathing, then her behavior could rightly be called idiotic. A neurosis is always consistent, constructed on a scheme of private logic.)

Like a horrible, gigantic spider, the dread of the devouring disease crawled through me. If I had known of some way by which I could have killed myself quickly, I would have done it. But I knew none. (Adler: She has not gotten far enough to cut off her life completely. She still has one resource, her family. Such a girl could be driven to suicide by separating her completely from her family, for instance, in a sanatorium where she was not well treated, or if her parents were to withdraw from her and declare her hopelessly insane. She might then commit suicide as an act of revenge.)

I clung to the belief that the soles of my shoes were infected by having stepped on the same pavement on which the man with lupus had walked, and consequently, that the floor of our apartment was also infected and that perhaps one of the inmates had spit out the window and I might have trodden on the slime. My parents tried desperately to pry me loose from

this idea, but in vain. (Adler: Her position in the house has now been firmly established. She has become the central figure, much more than before in that she has succeeded in cutting off all connection with the outside world.)

Then I got the idea that one could never know whether money had been touched by a lupus sufferer or not. So I did not touch it any more unless I first covered my hand with a piece of paper. When I had to buy something, I wrapped the money in the inevitable paper and carried it to Minna. She had to accompany me and pay the bills. (Adler: Now she has a court attendant. Somebody has to accompany her on the street. That is agoraphobia.)

My family frequently had to go through the dangerous street. I asked them repeatedly to be careful not to touch anything there. Although they promised it over and over again, the suspicion would not leave me that they did not pay any attention to my caution. Now none of them was allowed to come near me any more. (Adler: We see how she aggravates her condition. Her radius of activity becomes smaller and smaller. She is the only one in the world who is pure, free from bacilli, the only one who realizes how all others plunge into misery. All other people are profane, depraved, infected; she alone is not. She is a saint. She achieves her goal of superiority on the useless side of life by cheap means.)

One day, brushing crumbs off the table, I carelessly dropped my pocket mirror on the floor. While picking it up, I saw that it had a few cracks. "How silly," I thought, "now I won't have good luck for seven years." (Adler: Here is another opportunity for compulsive thoughts and acts. This is the third time, proof that the disappearance of one symptom (the lupus phobia, for example) does not indicate a cure, but rather that a new symptom will be produced, and that the appearance of symptoms will not stop as long as she does not change her goal and style of life.)

Chapter XI: Yes! But –. Father had a little work basket of plaited straw in which he kept several pocket mirrors. I was afraid to break them, and was always very careful not to touch the basket. Finally Father decided to sell the mirrors to the same man who bought our remnants. (Adler: Her attention is concentrated on all the mirrors around her. Significant for the structure of every neurosis, this type of preoccupation becomes more conspicuous in a compulsion neurosis. She stands a greater distance away from the important problems of her life.

In order not to suffer a defeat in trying to solve her problems on the useful side of life, she spends all her time on useless activities.

The objection might be raised: Why is she anxious about breaking a mirror if the resulting bad luck would help her avoid the problem of love, and protected by her superstition, she would not even have to attempt to occupy herself with the dangerous question? The neurotic does not think so simply. She wants to appear to make every effort to respond to the demands of communal life. That is her “yes.” But then she throws a stone in her way which impedes her progress. That is her “but.” The result is that she has a good alibi for the evasion of the danger of love; she has reneged. I want to very much, BUT I cannot. That is the meaning of her fear of mirrors. As long as someone wants to, but excuses herself with a “but,” she does not want to.)

I was very friendly with the son of the proprietor of our favorite cafe. We had already played together when we were children. His name was Hans and he was as old as I. We often took walks together. But since I disliked being alone with a boy and wanted to make some new acquaintances, I asked him one day whether he knew of a friend for me. (Adler: The attempts of the girl to approach love relationships although they are very careful, do not surprise us. They are attempts to say “yes” in situations of little danger, in much the same way as someone who seems about to withdraw, yet makes a few hesitating steps forward only to express her “but.” This “yes! – but” as we have said before is the best definition of neurosis.)

Every corner was crowded with Father's tailoring business. We had often talked about putting me into an office. (Adler: She will now be brought face to face with the great, human problem of work. As a pampered child, she will also be badly prepared for this problem of life and will hesitate, stop, or run away.) After finishing business school, I did not do any work at all. I got up at ten in the morning, demanded food at once, and ate an awful lot. All day long, I visited friends and came home only for meals. Father was of the opinion that it could not go on like that any longer; I could either help a little at home or else get a job in an office. Household work did not interest me in the least. In an office, I could make some money. So, one morning, Father looked through the newspaper and found an advertisement inserted by a chemical factory for an office girl.

The next morning I woke up very early. Mother helped me dress. Then she gave me a thermos-bottle with hot tea, cold pork, bread and a few lumps of sugar. Father blessed me as if I were going on a long journey and told me to come home if there was anything I did not like. My parents were both quite upset. In a rather depressed mood, I started. (Adler: She probably expects great honor from her job. According to the usual nature of such office positions, we may assume that she will soon find her way back to her parents. The excitement she speaks of indicates the intense tension such people feel who do not think of the work or of other people, but solely of their triumph or possible defeat. At the same time, we find courage, self-confidence, and an optimistic attitude only among individuals who feel they are in contact with other human beings and at home with them. Courage is the result of a perfect social feeling.)

During my lunch time, I ate the bread and cold pork and drank the tea. But that was as good as nothing. I was used to devouring tremendous portions. Suddenly, I got severe abdominal cramps. I went to the ladies' room and had to keep going there all afternoon. Later on I broke the thermos bottle. And then it was five o'clock at last. I staggered exhausted to the car.

At home, each member of my family surpassed the other in pitying me. Lina took me in her arms and signed, "Poor child, you have had to work so hard!" Mother also embraced and kissed me. Then she cooked a delicious meal, all my favorite dishes. But I was so exhausted that I could not eat. That made Father excited. "Don't you see," he exclaimed, "she'll break down? If she goes to this office for only a few days, I'll have her lying here sick in bed! She can't stand that. She isn't going to go there again!" (Adler: Her attitude incites the pampering group to help her intention to give up her position. The retreat is complete.)

A little later on the idea came to my mind to become assistant to a dentist such as Lina had been. Soon I found an advertisement in the paper and applied as a nurse in a dentist's office. The first patient came in. I had to carry out the brass pot into which the patient spit, and sterilize the instruments. All this and the obnoxious odor of my hands sickened me to such a degree that I could hardly eat anything for lunch. At two o'clock I had to be back. Now the parade of patients began. However, I was cheated of the spectacle that I wanted to see most of all: no one had a tooth pulled. (Adler: Those who feel inferior and weak want to be present at the misfortune of others. Some children train and practice to

be cruel because they are ashamed of their weakness. The accomplished tyrant is always a coward and a weakling as well.)

Chapter XII: The Goal of Superiority. One day while we were taking a walk, Tilda's friend pulled her onto a gutter drain and held her on it. Both shook with laughter. Surprised, I asked them what that meant. Tilda answered, "Don't you know that a girl doesn't get a husband if she stands on a gutter drain?" Afraid of being pushed or pulled onto a gutter drain like Tilda with the result of never being able to acquire a husband, I went out with them quite reluctantly from that time on. (Adler: Again a new compulsion idea. The symptoms change like the colors of a chameleon, adjusting themselves along neurotic lines to changing environment and conditions. This girl goes further, step by step, in her compulsion neurosis. One restriction follows another, each more comprehensive. The entire construction of her neurosis is intelligent and consistent, demonstrating that even intelligence is merely an instrument used either to overcome life's obstacles or evade them, depending on the goal.)

Soon I could do nothing but believe in the mysterious connection between a gutter drain and its various consequences. The fear of gutter drains made going out almost impossible for me. In spite of my apprehensiveness about going around with men, the prospect of having to remain an old maid for the rest of my life seemed to me the most despicable fate. "Old maid" – the mere name terrified me. In sheer desperation, the idea came to me to retreat from this world and enter a cloister. (Adler: This fear of gutter drains places all responsibility for possible failure to find a husband on the drain, and leaves her personal attractiveness intact. Her vanity and pride are saved. If no one wants her, it is the fault of the gutter drain, just as before it was the fault of the broken mirror.)

My fear of gutter drains was supplemented by the following. One day I began to imagine that the trolley lines J and J2 would bring me misfortune. Eventually, I added to them the numbers 13, 3, 63, 43, and the letters A, Ak, B, Bk, D, and C. It became absolutely impossible for me to use these lines. I often walked many blocks, even when the weather was bad. I could tell many stories about my sufferings. Again I resolved to enter a cloister. (Adler: We see how she restricts her radius of action by the car phobia and, faced with the problem of love, seeks a way to avoid possible defeat by means of a cloister.)

Then it became quite impossible for me to go through certain streets. The members of my family were also forbidden to ride in the cars with the unfortunate numbers, or walk through streets taboo for me. If I found out that they had done it anyway, I did not let them come near me. And if I accidentally came in contact with them, I swore and fretted, tore off my dress and underwear, placed myself in front of the open window without a bit of clothing on in order to catch pneumonia and die, and finally threw myself in complete desperation on the bed. (Adler: Instead of overcoming her difficulties by means of creative power and choice of a generally useful occupation, which would also help her overcome her feeling of inferiority, she chooses to detach herself from and condemn the community and its offering, revenge herself on those who stand in her way, and acquire a fleeting feeling of superiority in experiencing mastery over her life and death. The streetcar phobia again gives her power over her family, the weakest part in her environment.)

To evade direct contact with all forbidden people who came to the house, I would withdraw to the bedroom. There I felt as if the evil eye which I ascribed to them penetrated the wall and brought misfortune upon me. So I went to bed and crept under the blankets. (Adler: When misfortune happens because of the evil eye, of course, she is not responsible. The evil eye is to blame. What patients call bad luck is usually their own mistakes and stupidities, the cause of which they seek somewhere outside instead of inside.)

After the slightest contact with forbidden people or things, I washed myself. I frequently washed my whole body. I never again used a piece of soap which fell on the floor. My parents and Lina were not permitted to wash themselves with this cake of soap either. So the soap which had fallen on the floor accumulated and soon there was a pile of unusable soap. At home I wore an old, torn dress, and a pair of Bohemian slippers; if I could have managed it, I would never have taken them off. Thus I sat like Cinderella in a corner of the kitchen on my broken chair with the rusty nails, in front of me all the things whose mere presence seemed pernicious to me, all the objects bewitched by the touch of residents of those execrated districts and streets, outside the gutter drains, houses, gas lampposts, coffee restaurants, trolley cars, stores threatening with their wicked magi; danger, mischief, and misfortune dogged my steps. (Adler: She describes her suffering with much skill and penetration. An antisocial, selfish life never leads to pleasure in the power which has been won over a few people at the expense of so much exertion. She sits

like a tyrant on a throne which can be overturned at any moment; she rules by fear and is ruled by fear. The protecting measures which have been arranged for her own security become weapons in the hands of her enemies. The more she thinks of her security and how to preserve it, the more insecure she becomes.

So-called logical arguments are of no avail in attempting to free this girl of her compulsion ideas and compulsion acts. She must be shown, step by step, the real construction of her behavior as we see it. She would have to learn to recognize what the purpose of her symptoms is and what she achieves thereby; that she wants unconsciously to detach herself by compulsion from the compulsion of communal demands; that she has built a secondary battlefield in her intense desire to avoid the principal battlefield of life; that she wants to fritter away her time so as to have none left for the accomplishment of her daily tasks; that she intends to evade life's demands with excuses, curses, alibis or ostensibly good reasons. She can then be led to change her style of life by unmasking the technical apparatus of her compulsion neurosis and helping her understand the whole course and consistency of her conduct.)

The following are excerpts from Adler's comments in the final section of this chapter, thus concluding *The Case of Miss R.* and Volume 9.

I have tried to give the reader a picture of the procedure followed in a psychological analysis. I want my reader to see how a psychologist armed with a store of experience listens to, apprehends, works over, and understands an ordinary and otherwise insignificant life story.

As I said in my preface, I have never seen this girl. All that I know about her has been written by her and by me in the present book. She mentions her present condition only once in the story, when she tells us that to this very day she still cannot bring herself to use certain street cars. We may assume from that remark that her compulsion neurosis has probably improved a great deal, but has not entirely disappeared.

Just as every step into a neurosis inevitably destroys courage, every step out of a neurosis builds up courage and with it strength and social feeling. That idea agrees with what I have heard about the writer of this story; namely, that insofar as she has been able to help herself without the aid of a psychologist, she has freed herself of her compulsion neurosis, and is taking courageous steps to solve her difficult life

problems. I shall leave to the imaginative power, psychological understanding, and intuition of my readers to divine how.