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**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
ALFRED ADLER AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
CHILD**



*Founded by C. K. Ogden*

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**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
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CHILD**

**MADELAINE GANZ**

Introduction by Pierre Bovet



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It matters little what we bring into  
the world, everything depends on  
what we make of it.

A. ADLER

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## Preface

MADemoiselle MADELAINE GANZ asks me for a preface to a book which, after being awarded the Lucien Cellérier prize by the University of Geneva, has gained for her the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. I have no qualification for introducing the work beyond having been its instigator and first reader. Having no personal knowledge of the institutions to which she has devoted her study, I will limit myself to saying why I am happy to welcome it into our *Collection d'Actualités Pédagogiques* and to place this monograph beside those which have so far attained that distinction.

Mlle. Ganz's intelligent and attentive description of the Adlerian schools and consultative methods comes as a timely addition to the accounts which Mr. Anderson and Mme. Loosli have given us of the Healy psychological clinic, and of the medico-psychological consultations at the Institut J. J. Rousseau.<sup>1</sup> Far from rendering each other redundant, these monographs will arouse in their readers a desire for information about other social services of the same kind. Why should we not also be told of the procedure at Leipzig and at Paris, at Guy's Hospital in London and at the observational station at Moll? Is it not encouraging to see that this work is proceeding on every hand, and singularly instructive to compare the methods employed?

What at first sight chiefly distinguishes psychological-pedagogical consultations from one another is the position

<sup>1</sup> H. H. Anderson, *The Psychological Clinics for Children in the United States and the Work of Dr. Healy*. 1929. Marguerite Loosli-Usteri, *Les enfants difficiles et leur milieu familiale. L'activité d'une consultation médico-pédagogique*. 1935.

## PREFACE

that they accord respectively to methods of gaining information; interrogation, clinical examination, experimentation or, to name only the two most controversial procedures, tests on the one hand, and, on the other, investigation into the subconscious. We have seen in Healy's work the considerable place assigned to tests of the most varied kinds; Mme. Loosli, who has acquired eminent competence in the application of the Rorschach test to children, has shown us how serviceable she has found this method, of a psychoanalytic tendency, in conjunction with others that seek to measure the aptitudes and the level of intelligence. With Adler, it is the interpretation of behaviour, as a function of desires for the most part unconscious, to which the greatest importance is attached.

May I state, briefly, from my personal experience, the present position in relation to concrete cases of this recourse to the psychology of deeper levels—to what the Germans call 'Depth-psychology'. It was a great satisfaction to me, at the Congress of the New Education held in South Africa in 1934, to see my experience exactly confirmed by the far wider experience of Boyd from Glasgow.

People send us children whose school records are wholly deplorable: their orthography, arithmetic, their German or Latin, or what you will—are so poor that we are asked whether some exercises in concentration, some kind of orthophrenic gymnastics are not indicated. We begin by simply measuring the intellectual capacity of the child according to the classic scale of Binet (and I do not yet understand how informed practitioners, those of Vienna for example, can voluntarily deprive themselves of such information as this affords). Frequently we find that the child's mental level is perfectly normal, that its intelligence quotient exceeds 100: one cannot ascribe its want of success at school to mental backwardness. The intelligence is not

## PREFACE

in question. Can it be, then, an emotional disequilibrium that is troubling the child's attention to study? The Rorschach test is of service in distinguishing any such instability. Other instruments of research are employed elsewhere. Boyd makes use, with great success, of a list of associations inspired by Jung. We can also tell whether it will be prudent to confide the further interrogation of the child to a psychiatrist, or whether the instability thus betrayed is such as an examination of the child's family and social surroundings can clarify, by placing ourselves at one or another of the points of view recommended by the diverse schools of psychoanalysis.<sup>1</sup>

Of these standpoints, as M. Claparède has lately demonstrated,<sup>2</sup> that of Adler is one of the most useful. And this monograph by Mlle. Ganz, which provides such an intelligent selection of such varied examples, will certainly be of great assistance to the practical psychologist and educator.

It goes without saying that general medicine has, in any case, its own contribution to make.<sup>3</sup> There is no further need to plead in favour of the medical examination of the difficult child. In every case one will also inquire into its material circumstances. Of this the recent book by Mme. Kaczinska<sup>4</sup> has once again shown the immense importance.

We are here concerned with schoolchildren, but our scholastic buildings have not, unfortunately, any monopoly in 'difficult children'. The phrase is nearly related to another—the 'problem child', which in Anglo-Saxon countries is by way of becoming a technical term. But so to describe the 'difficult children' of the family and the school becomes, after their school-leaving age, a euphemistic term

<sup>1</sup> Ch. Baudouin, *L'ame enfantine et la psychanalyse*, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Claparède, *Le sentiment d'infériorité chez l'enfant* (*Cahiers de pédagogie expérimentale* No. 1). Geneva, 1934.

<sup>3</sup> See the interesting preface by Claparède to the book by Mme. Loosli mentioned above.

<sup>4</sup> M. Kaczinska, *Succès scolaire et l'intelligence*, 1934.

## PREFACE

for those young delinquents whom the Belgians call 'children of justice'. The problems grow more difficult, the social disadaptation more flagrant, but the factors of misbehaviour remain the same, and therefore a psychological diagnosis of the case is also still necessary. This is not yet everywhere understood. It is but a few weeks since, at Geneva, a new regulation was imposed upon the Penal Court for Children, in which it was not possible to obtain the incorporation of the principle of obligatory medico-psychological examination. This must come, however, in every country, following the examples of the United States and of Belgium. May the books in this series—and this one in particular—bring that day nearer.

It is necessary—alas—before concluding this preface to inform the reader that he cannot now go to Vienna to verify Mlle. Ganz's observations (nor those of another writer in the present series, M. Dottrens<sup>1</sup>).

There are no more experimental schools in Vienna, neither Adlerian nor any others. The Austrian school is being wholly transformed by an attempt to align it with the new principles of State which impose the confessional idea and that of patriotism as the exclusive inspirations of education and culture. Many innovations dating from the scholastic reforms of 1919 and 1920 have been abandoned because they have been found—or are believed—to contradict this new political orientation. For this, as usual, present financial distress is also alleged, though that argument is feeble to anyone who remembers the state of the Austrian finances at the very time when Glöckel and Fadrus brought about an almost miraculous reform.

Let us not, however, paint the picture too black. The bell has been rung to reverse engines, but the teachers are not

<sup>1</sup> Robert Dottrens, *L'éducation nouvelle en Autriche*, also published in the *Collection d'Actualités Pédagogiques*.

## PREFACE

all showing much alacrity to go backwards. Many principles of the progressive school are yet in force. It is decreed that schools must give up the reading of complete works and return to the use of 'reading-books', but no such book has yet been published. Still, Vienna to-day is no longer, in this matter of schooling, the place that M. Dottrens and Mlle. Ganz have described, and we owe it to the reader to say so.

The storm has laid low many a tree that was in splendid bloom and able to bear rich fruit. Will these ever flourish again in the ground where they were first planted? To the great friends of children whose names we have recalled, we wish it with full hearts. But we are glad to know that, whatever may happen, the seeds of their planting are now being sown to the winds of the world, and that this book, too, will contribute to their dissemination.

*Geneva*

PIERRE BOVET

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## Translator's Note

ADLER's Individual Psychology is not a new subject, nor is this a new book about it; it is the translation of a treatise written as long ago as 1935. Both before that date and after it, books written in, or translated into, English have enriched our knowledge of Alfred Adler and of his contribution to the revolution in psychology.<sup>1</sup> What has still been lacking, however, is an eye-witness's account of the Adlerian psychology in action in the social surroundings out of which it arose. That is what Dr. Schmid-Ganz's book so admirably supplies.

Of the great Viennese psychiatrists Alfred Adler was unquestionably the one who looked, worked and lived most like the family doctor in his 'pastoral' function. He was also, by his social—and to a lesser extent political—sympathies a socialist; his psychology is essentially directed towards the reconciliation of the individual with society. Like Freud and his colleagues, whose debates he frequented in the early 1900's, Adler had to deal with the psychoneuroses that were rife in Vienna during its decline and still more so after its fall from imperial power. It was primarily from the treatment of adult patients, mostly of the middle and upper classes, that he acquired his psychological knowledge. But the normative principle of his 'Individual Psychology' was the *sense of the community*, and he early sought to have his therapeutic methods used more widely in the educational and psychosocial problems of his native city. In that epoch, which might well be called the psychological Enlighten-

<sup>1</sup> For recent examples, see Phyllis Bottome's biographical study *Alfred Adler, Apostle of Freedom* (Faber & Faber, 1939) and Lewis Way's *Adler's Place in Psychology* (Allen & Unwin, 1950).

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ment, it was Alfred Adler and his disciples who, more than any others, applied themselves systematically to the problems of the teachers and parents of primary schoolchildren.

The value of the Adlerian methodology is therefore not to be found only by theoretical comparison (important though that may be) with the doctrines of his great contemporaries. Nor is it proved by the wide currency that his ideas so quickly gained in Europe and America, nor even, perhaps, is it to be seen in the consulting rooms of the many psychiatrists who have learned from his methods and practise them with success. The value and validity of Adler's standpoint was best demonstrated by the teachers, physicians and psychiatrists whom he inspired to work in the shabby purlieus of the stricken metropolis—the devoted 'field-workers' whose labours are movingly recorded here by Dr. Schmid-Ganz.

Adler's name would not be written indelibly as it is, among those of the creators of the new depth-psychology, if the social insight which was his essential contribution had not found expression in such action. This school of psychotherapy could not have consistently confined itself to the prolonged and expensive treatment of individual sufferers from social decadence. The work that these devotees did in the Viennese schools was part and parcel of their whole psychological outlook, and Adler continued to promote and sustain their efforts until he was finally exiled by the political troubles that followed upon the rise of National Socialism over the German border.

Adler's work as a whole has been relatively underrated in recent years, and this particular expression of his ideas was never the most widely publicized. While the literature of Adlerian theory spread swiftly abroad, it was natural that the widest currency was obtained for what was most useful in private practice, or most attractive to general

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readers interested either academically or because of their own psychic problems. To some, the educational work savoured too much of something like philanthropic or missionary effort; and indeed it had to be carried on at sacrifice and was rarely profitable to write about by those engaged in it. The *International Zeitschrift für Individual Psychologie* was their professional organ, published only in German, and was all they had time for. It is fortunate that Dr. Schmid-Ganz was enabled to live for a while in Vienna expressly to produce the following study.

The outline of Adlerian principles with which she begins is as clear and comprehensive as any equally brief exposition available. Nor does it 'date' seriously, for Adler's death, followed so soon by the dispersal of his disciples and the disruptions of the war, inhibited further development of Adlerianism as a school of thought. Elaborations and refinements of principle and practice have been made by individual Adlerians, but these do not invalidate anything in Dr. Schmid-Ganz's summary, which gives the best possible idea of what was in the minds of those engaged in the activities she records. It also presents very effectively 'what every teacher ought to know' about Adler's contribution to education.

The translation of this book has been a congenial task for one who enjoyed for a time the great privilege of personal co-operation with Alfred Adler in his work. I am glad to be able thus to acknowledge the enduring debt that I owe in common with so many others for the humanity and stoicism of his example as well as for the wisdom of his teaching which seemed to alter one's entire relation to life. This book has many times turned my imagination back to the few days in Vienna where I saw the sage in action, as a lecturer and physician, at leisure in his house and garden at Suleymansdorf, and in conversation with his

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colleagues and disciples talking far into the night at the Café Siller. These are such memories as one would in any case recall from time to time with affection. But recollections of another kind, less likely to recur spontaneously, are no less vividly called up by this book—those of a late afternoon, in a bleak schoolroom in a poor quarter of the city, where one was privileged to be present at the proceedings of one of those psycho-pedagogic councils which furnished the main material of the present treatise. It was a moving as well as most instructive experience only to look on at such colloquies between mother and child, doctor and teacher, carried on generally with such tact and candour and transparent naturalness.

Whether anything resembling these advisory councils could or should be instituted elsewhere is a question for those more competent to answer it. These institutions arose in an urban society with its own unique characteristics, in a certain prolonged crisis of its history. They were suspended during a phase of further social destruction, and had no conspicuous place in the post-war reorganization of education in Vienna. But Dr. Oskar Spiel, mentioned in this book, is head of a high school there, working in the same spirit and tradition. And that there is a revival of Adlerian practice is shown by the reappearance of the *Zeitschrift*.

Dr. Schmid-Ganz's treatise is of an interest beyond that of its psychological content: to the sociologist it represents the effort of a highly civilized society to cope with forces of disintegration that threatened the intimate structure of its biological life, a response to one of the challenges of history. The Austrian metropolis is not the only one that is thus menaced now after a second world war. For this reason also, sociologists as well as teachers will be glad to have access to the data that this author has put on record.

## Foreword

OUR residence in Vienna during the winter of 1932-3 has enabled us to record our personal experience of an inestimable work which a few persons, heroically devoted to their vocation as educators, have accomplished in conditions of dire poverty. It is our heartfelt desire to make this known to all whose lives bring them into daily contact with children—with those little people who depend so much upon us to-day, but who to-morrow will be the managers of the world.

Day after day we followed the course of instruction in the remarkable experimental school of Adlerian pedagogy, collecting as much documentation about it as we could, and never failing to amplify our own observations with the invaluable information that the teachers were so willing to impart. It gives us the greatest pleasure here to express our warm gratitude for this to Drs. Spiel, Birnbaum, and Scharmer, the devoted triumvirate who were the life and soul of that school.

The better to estimate the work this school was doing, we also visited about sixty classes in the ordinary public schools, receiving everywhere, we are happy to acknowledge, the same benevolent courtesy.

It should be said in advance that our participation in the proceedings of the medico-pedagogic councils differed a good deal under the different directors who presided over them. Sometimes we were only listeners taking shorthand notes, whilst in other instances we ourselves took part in conversations with the parents and with the children. We

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were then privileged to share the invaluable experience of direct personal contact with the individuals, more or less unstable, who came to ask for advice. At other times, moreover, where a case needed to be studied and influenced in its own surroundings, we were entrusted with the task of visiting a child regularly at its home.

Thanks to the Adlerian doctors and advisers, who with such great geniality initiated us into their pioneer work, we were able to supplement our observations by those which had been made before our stay in Vienna. Mesdames Lehn-dorff, Löwy, Deutsch, Holub, Seidler, Lazarsfeld, Friedmann, as well as Mm. Wexberg, Deutsch, Krauss and Zanker, by whose generosity we were enabled to collect the necessary material, are entitled to all our gratitude for this. Nor do we forget, after having been received with such cordiality by the Viennese psychologists and teachers, who rightly profess their keen admiration for the Institute of Science and Education, that we owe it also to the kindness of Professor Pierre Bovet. This adds to our pleasure in recording here our feelings of profound thankfulness for the advice and encouragement he has so often and abundantly supplied.

Dr. Adler himself, who, since his appointment to Long Island Medical College at New York, was no longer available for regular consultation, willingly placed at our disposal the records kept for several years, and from these we have taken the cases described on pages 152, 162, 164. To Dr. Adler we owe all the devotion of a disciple to the master who has shown him the right way, and we heartily wish, for the work of so great and so modest a man, an ever-widening influence. May his noble example be followed by the steadily-growing number of those who understand that psychological harmony—to which humanity has so long aspired—can be realized only in the creative synthesis of