

The psychoanalytic pedagogy of Anna Freud¹

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“Side by side with lifeconstraints, love is the great educator, and is the love of those who are closest to him/her that the incomplete human being is induced to comply with the commands of needand to spare from punishment befalling any violation thereof.”

(Sigmund Freud, 1916, p.326)

Summary

Based on the work developed in the psychoanalytical clinic for children, Anna Freuddeveloped ideas about Education. Through lectures and essays, the author pursued to build a pedagogy focused on the needs and impulses of children as well as their conflicts with the internal and external world. Although being developed almost half a century ago, her works deal with questions that can provide insightful reflections, still lingering in the world today. Accordingly, her proposal for a psychoanalytic pedagogy is presented in addition to mentioning important aspects of her career.

Theoretical review

According to Anna Freud (1973), psychoanalysis has always faced difficulties with pedagogy because it essentially proposes the understanding of the individual before developing any work with him/her. While Pedagogy seeks external means to interferewith the subject’s behavior, psychoanalysis aims at building internal bases and references, without which the subject does not find sense to meet the demands of the environment. Even today the idea that reality is responsible for imposing conditions and rules of coexistence in society is perpetuated, which only causes the child to imitate the adult without internally building a sense of responsibility. This reproduction of roles ultimately makes the subject unable to adapt to later influences.

In order to approach Anna Freud’s ideas, above all it is essential to knowher experiences in the field of Education. Indeed, there are numerous reports in her biography, and therefore we dare to present some of them. We start telling some peculiarities about her school life.

According to Young-Bruehl (1992), Anna Freud joined school in 1901, at six years old. It was her first private elementary school. From 1903 to 1905, she attendedGrünentorgasse. There were friends who were not necessarily of Jewish origin, but she was never invited to go to their

houses. The author says that Anna's school years were described as in the poetic work she liked most "Das Buch der Bilder", by Rainer Maria Rilke: "*The school with its hours of anguish creeps in waiting and boredom. O loneliness, O slow passage of time...*".

Anna did not really like to go to school, she often complained and cried. She even needed a private teacher, Elsa Reiss, until she was enrolled in a high school called Liceu da Cabana Salka Goldsman - for girls between ten and sixteen years old (Young-Bruehl, 1992). Although she had done well in this school, in a letter she wrote that she did not like the classes in Hebrew, because they used to teach the alphabet in Hebrew on one side of the page and the German letters on the other page, but they did not teach the most important thing, the meaning of the words, which made her forget everything later on. Anna said she strove to be what others expected her to be, that is, "diligent", and so she did. Soon, her school experiences helped her to build her analytical work with children.

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For her, writing and reading were as special as sewing and weaving. She also loved fairy tales. In her own analysis, one of the themes was her "disgust to school in the summer", but the curious thing is that she eventually decided to be a teacher. Anna did not have a classical education and studied what we would call today high school, and its subject matters consisted of religious training, writing in German, French, English, geography, history, arithmetic and geometry, science and handwriting. It is possible that her inspiration to study did not come from her teachers, but from visits her family received and conversations and experiences with her father, Sigmund Freud (Young-Bruehl, 1992).

Accordingly, we can say that Freud encouraged his children to the appreciation of psychoanalytic studies, and because of that, Anna had her first contact with psychoanalysis when she was 14, in one of her conversations with him. In June 1914, she was approved to start a course in order to teach in a primary school, which made Freud delighted, although he wished that his children would never leave home.

For almost six years of work as an apprentice and teacher, they used to say she had the gift to teach. She prepared her lessons painstakingly and with care, being careful and keeping classes with discipline. Her students said she "she was an oasis of warmth and enthusiasm in their boring and difficult wartime lives" (Young-Bruehl, 1992, p.61). In 1917, she had tuberculosis and moved away from work. Soon, she continued traveling with her family and

ended up working on the 1918 summer as a teacher near Budapest. She continued writing poetry and prose. In 1920, after the loss of her sister, Sophie, she plunged into work, but at the end of the year she gave up teaching in order to take care of her health.

With an increased contact with psychoanalysis, Anna continued developing her studies and had her first independent educational experience says Young-Bruehl (1992). Around 1927, together with Eva Rosenfeld and her friend Dorothy Burlingham, established a school in the residence of the Rosenfelds and later in a building back area. Children between seven and eleven years old, who were under psychoanalysis or whose parents were being analyzed, attended school, with Peter Bloss as their teacher and Erik HomburgerEriksen, as the helper. The school was characterized by the use of ludic interaction with experiments and debates.

Around 1936, Edith Jackson who had been Freud's patient, gave Anna money in gratitude, and with this money, in Vienna Anna invented an experimental nursery school for poor children with less than two years of age: a nursery school called Jackson. The work developed here was to get to know the children, especially in the second year of life. Further on Anna linked the nursery school to Haus der Kinder, led by Montessori Society of Vienna. The nursery school started accepting children in need and not bearing infectious diseases in order to avoid contagion, since they came from poor families and would not afford to treat them in case there was a need. It was inaugurated in 1937. Anna worked tirelessly.

With the coming of World War II, because they were Jews, Anna and her family had to escape to London, but that did not prevent her from continuing working and studying. Even after her father's death, in September 1939, Anna continued dedicating to assist those in need. She set up temporary shelters for child victims of war (Young-Bruehl, 1992). With donations and materials that were brought from nursery school Jackson, she created the ChildSleep Center in Wedderburn Road 13, intended for children who could not be evacuated without their mothers or those with difficulties upon adoption. Later in 1942, after the financial crisis, Wedderbun Road became a kindergarten.

In 1941, Anna Freud expanded and opened two more buildings: a country house for older children in New Barn in Essex, and the Baby Sleep Center in Netherhall Gardens 5 in Hampstead (Young-Bruehl, 1992). The Hampstead nursery school was intended to get absent parents involved in their children's lives. For this purpose, they could even work there and so take care of the children. It was known for its singular psychoanalytic appearance. Through these experiences, Anna developed theories such as that trauma is caused by how the separation takes place. Additionally, she sponsored trainings, seminars, symposiums...

IMAGE

The Leisure Center. Captured on September 29, 2012, at 22h09 on the website

<http://www.annafreud.org/pages/history.html>

Hampstead has always been kept up with donations, so that Anna always tried that any institution would adopt it so that it could be kept. So when Marilyn Monroe died in 1962, the nursery school got a large sum (Schneider, 2008). Marilyn, who had been raised in various foster homes, left a large part of her possessions to her former analyst Marianne Kris, so that she could choose an institution that would develop a meaningful work with children. There they developed study groups and even a magazine intended for submitting the researches: *Bulletin of the Hampstead Clinic*, directed by Joseph Sandler (Young-Bruehl, 1992). The clinic trained students after a four-year course, where they learned to index cases and to work with the diagnostic profile. They also participated in conferences. Eventually, the clinic started offering consultations and short courses for the community. The clinic exerted great influence on everyday life in hospitals and organizations for children. The research center remains, but now under the name of Anna Freud Centre, named after Anna (<http://www.annafreud.org/pages/history.html>). It is also a reference in graduate, masters and research courses, as well as helping children, youth and their families. Moreover, it has professionals such as Peter Fonagy.

IMAGE

The Center today. Captured on September 29, 2012, at 22h09 on the website

<http://www.annafreud.org/pages/history.html>

The path taken by Anna at the University has also had milestones. In 1950 she delivered lectures at *Universidade Clark* and she received a certificate, her first university degree, says Young-Bruehl (1992). In these lectures, Anna approached a number of questions correlating analytical work with Education. In the 1960s, she was invited to take a position at *Yale Law School*. At this time, Anna, quite old, liked better being a student than a teacher, and was amused by the presence of young people. In 1977, the clinic *Hampstead* sent its thirteen years of work, in the profile and in contents, to the National Institute of Mental Health in Washington. On October 9th, 1982, she died at her home at *Maresfield Gardens* 20.

Among her several writings, conferences and symposia, Anna Freud (1973) proposed three points of view of psychoanalysis. The first one refers to the time division: the author states

that the first year of life takes place up to five years of age. Then follows latency up to 12 years of age. Ultimately, we enter puberty that will head us to the adult world. Therefore, it is necessary to know feelings and attitudes involved in each stage as well as their instinctual development, in order to be able to understand what appears to be a contradiction, which belongs to desire and which belongs to the possibility of fulfillment. As an example, the author mentions that shamelessness a feature of early childhood and puberty will cause embarrassment in latency and adulthood. As a result, we must understand children in their instinctual life, ego and superego (second point). Only then we can understand what is behind a child's behavior and thus develop a work to help him/her to internalize the way he/she should act. So the third point consists of "*the outcome of individual fight of the child ego with an instinctive desire that is undesirable to him/her, depends on reactive power of isolated feelings, hence on the availability of libido in relation to the instinctive desire, compared with the opposite energy repression trend stimulated by the superego.*" (Anna Freud, 1973, p.52).

Therefore, Anna Freud proved to be very innovative and challenging for the time in which she lived, 40 years ago. She asked in different ways whether it would be better to let children enjoy their free creation and play (Anna Freud, 1973). Playing with their genitals, playing at being the father, playing with their nakedness, behaviors previously regarded as unsuitable, do not inhibit the ability to love and can make the person productive and free to feel pleasure. Moreover, the author points out that punishments that were intended to educate did not reach success, but concluded that the oscillation between extremes –which is allowed or not, inhibition versus excessive freedom etc. – it is harmful for the child because it ultimately inhibits it or not, rather than helps him/her understand the meaning of limits. Furthermore, the author recalled that in every child there is always a mixed bag of emotions, feelings that often, when expressed, make it difficult to work for both the teacher who inherits from his/her family and for the analyst who receives it indoctrinated by the school.

Therefore, the author drew attention in those days to the fact that psychoanalysis has already proposed three things: criticizing existing forms of education; expanding knowledge of the educator through their contributions (ego, libidinal investment) and thereby improving the relationship between the child and the educator; and being a treatment method that tried to repair the damage caused by education. And in that sense, Anna (1973) sought to create a psychoanalytic pedagogy, able to understand the subject in his/her individuality and thus obtain results in the context in which it is inserted, and not vice versa.

I finish these scribbles assured that Anna Freud's enthusiasm continues to influence the work not only of psychoanalysts, but also educators and all those who believe that childhood

deserves a supportive look and a listen so that they can play and so enjoy their freedom of creation.

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