

# Anna freud

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Anna Freud (3 December 1895 - 9 October 1982) was the sixth and last child of Sigmund and Martha Freud. Born in Vienna, she followed the path of her father and contributed to the newly born field of psychoanalysis. Alongside Melanie Klein, she may be considered the founder of psychoanalytic child psychology: as her father put it, child analysis 'had received a powerful impetus through " the work of Frau Melanie Klein and of my daughter, Anna Freud"'.

Compared to her father, her work emphasized the importance of the ego and its ability to be trained socially. The Vienna years Anna Freud appears to have had a comparatively unhappy childhood, in which she 'never made a close or pleasureable relationship with her mother, and was really nurtured by their Catholic nurse Josephine'. She had difficulties getting along with her siblings, specifically with her sister Sophie Freud (as well as troubles with her cousin Sonja Trierweiler, a " bad influence" on her).

Her sister, Sophie, who was the more attractive child, represented a threat in the struggle for the affection of their father: 'the two young Freuds developed their version of a common sisterly division of territories: " beauty" and " brains"', and their father once spoke of her 'age-old jealousy of Sophie'. As well as this rivalry between the two sisters, Anna had other difficulties growing up - 'a somewhat troubled youngster who complained to her father in candid letters how all sorts of unreasonable thoughts and feelings plagued her'. It seems that 'in general, she was relentlessly competitive with her siblings... and was repeatedly sent to health farms for thorough rest, salutary walks, and some extra pounds to fill out her all too slender shape': she may have suffered from a depression which caused eating disorders. The

relationship between Anna and her father was different from the rest of her family; they were very close. She was a lively child with a reputation for mischief. Freud wrote to his friend Wilhelm Fliess in 1899: 'Anna has become downright beautiful through naughtiness'. Freud is said to refer to her in his diaries more than others in the family.

Later on Anna Freud would say that she didn't learn much in school; instead she learned from her father and his guests at home. This was how she picked up Hebrew, German, English, French and Italian. At the age of 15, she started reading her father's work: a dream she had 'at the age of nineteen months... [appeared in] The Interpretation of Dreams, and commentators have noted how 'in the dream of little Anna... little Anna only hallucinates forbidden objects'. Anna finished her education at the Cottage Lyceum in Vienna in 1912. Suffering from a depression, she was very insecure about what to do in the future.

Subsequently, she went to Italy to stay with her grandmother, and there is evidence that 'In 1914 she travelled alone to England to improve her English', but was forced to leave shortly after arriving because war was declared. In 1914 she passed the test to be a trainee at her old school, the Cottage Lyceum. From 1915 to 1917, she was a trainee, and then a teacher from 1917 to 1920. She finally quit her teaching career because of tuberculosis. In 1918, her father started psychoanalysis on her and she became seriously involved with this new profession.

Her analysis was completed in 1922 and thereupon she presented the paper "The Relation of Beating Fantasies to a Daydream" to the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society, subsequently becoming a member. In 1923, Freud

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began her own psychoanalytical practice with children and two years later she was teaching at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Training Institute on the technique of child analysis. From 1925 until 1934, she was the Secretary of the International Psychoanalytical Association while she continued child analysis and seminars and conferences on the subject.

In 1935, Freud became director of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Training Institute and in the following year she published her influential study of the "ways and means by which the ego wards off displeasure and anxiety", *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*. It became a founding work of ego psychology and established Freud's reputation as a pioneering theoretician. In 1938 the Freuds had to flee from Austria as a consequence of the Nazis' intensifying harassment of Jews in Vienna following the Anschluss by Germany. Her father's health had deteriorated severely due to jaw cancer, so she had to organize the family's emigration to London.

Here she continued her work and took care of her father, who finally died in the autumn of 1939. When Anna arrived in London, a conflict came to a head between her and Melanie Klein regarding developmental theories of children, culminating in the Controversial discussions. The war gave Freud opportunity to observe the effect of deprivation of parental care on children. She set up a centre for young war victims, called "The Hampstead War Nursery". Here the children got foster care although mothers were encouraged to visit as often as possible.

The underlying idea was to give children the opportunity to form attachments by providing continuity of relationships. This was continued, after the war, at the Bulldogs Bank Home, which was an orphanage, run by <https://assignbuster.com/anna-freud/>

colleagues of Freud, that took care of children who survived concentration camps. Based on these observations Anna published a series of studies with her longtime friend, Dorothy Burlingham-Tiffany on the impact of stress on children and the ability to find substitute affections among peers when parents cannot give them. In 1947, Freud and Kate Friedlaender established the Hampstead Child Therapy Courses.

Five years later, a children's clinic was added. Here they worked with Freud's theory of the developmental lines. Furthermore Freud started lecturing on child psychology: Siegfried Bernfeld and August Aichorn, who both had practical experience of dealing with children, were among her mentors in this. From the 1950s until the end of her life Freud travelled regularly to the United States to lecture, to teach and to visit friends. During the 1970s she was concerned with the problems of emotionally deprived and socially disadvantaged children, and she studied deviations and delays in development.

At Yale Law School, she taught seminars on crime and the family: this led to a transatlantic collaboration with Joseph Goldstein and Albert Solnit on children and the law, published as *Beyond the Best Interests of the Child* (1973). Freud died in London on 9 October 1982. She was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium and her ashes placed in a marble shelf next to her parents' ancient Greek funeral urn. Her lifelong friend Dorothy Burlingham and several other members of the Freud family also rest there.

One year after Freud's death a publication of her collected works appeared. She was mentioned as "a passionate and inspirational teacher" and in 1984 the Hampstead Clinic was renamed the Anna Freud Centre.

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Furthermore her home in London for forty years was in 1986, as she had wished, transformed into the Freud Museum, dedicated to her father and the psychoanalytical society. Major contributions to psychoanalysis Anna Freud's first article, 'on beating fantasies, drew in part on her own inner life, but th[at]... made her contribution no less scientific'.

In it she explained how 'Daydreaming, which consciously may be designed to suppress masturbation, is mainly unconsciously an elaboration of the original masturbatory fantasies'. Freud had earlier covered very similar ground in "' A Child is Being Beaten'" - 'they both used material from her analysis as clinical illustration in their sometimes complementary papers' - in which he highlighted a female case where 'an elaborate superstructure of day-dreams, which was of great significance for the life of the person concerned, had grown up over the masochistic beating-phantasy... one] which almost rose to the level of a work of art'. 'Her views on child development, which she expounded in 1927 in her first book, *An Introduction to the Technique of Child Analysis*, clashed with those of Melanie Klein... [who] was departing from the developmental schedule that Freud, and his analyst daughter, found most plausible'. In particular, Anna Freud's belief that 'In children's analysis, the transference plays a different role... and the analyst not only "represents mother" but is still an original second mother in the life of the child' became something of an orthodoxy over much of the psychoanalytic world.

For her next major work in 1936, her 'classic monograph on ego psychology and defense mechanisms, Anna Freud drew on her own clinical experience, but relied on her father's writings as the principal and authoritative source of

her theoretical insights'. Here her 'cataloguing of regression, repression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against the self, reversal and sublimation' helped establish the importance of the ego functions and the concept of defense mechanisms, continuing the greater emphasis on the ego of her father — 'We should like to learn more about the ego' — during his final decades.

Special attention was paid in it to later childhood and adolescent developments — 'I have always been more attracted to the latency period than the pre-Oedipal phases' - emphasising how the 'increased intellectual, scientific, and philosophical interests of this period represent attempts at mastering the drives'. The problem posed by physiological maturation has been stated forcefully by Anna Freud. " Aggressive impulses are intensified to the point of complete unruliness, hunger becomes voracity... The reaction-formations, which seemed to be firmly established in the structure of the ego, threaten to fall to pieces".

Selma Fraiberg's tribute of 1959 that 'The writings of Anna Freud on ego psychology and her studies in early child development have illuminated the world of childhood for workers in the most varied professions and have been for me my introduction and most valuable guide spoke at that time for most of psychoanalysis outside the Kleinian heartland. Arguably, however, it was in Anna Freud's London years 'that she wrote her most distinguished psychoanalytic papers — including " About Losing and Being Lost", which everyone should read regardless of their interest in psychoanalysis'.

Her description therein of 'simultaneous urges to remain loyal to the dead and to turn towards new ties with the living' may perhaps reflect her own

mourning process after her father's recent death. Focusing thereafter on research, observation and treatment of children, Anna Freud established a group of prominent child developmental analysts (which included Erik Erikson, Edith Jacobson and Margaret Mahler) who noticed that children's symptoms were ultimately analogous to personality disorders among adults and thus often related to developmental stages.

Her book *Normality and Pathology in Childhood* (1965) summarised 'the use of developmental lines charting theoretical normal growth " from dependency to emotional self-reliance"'. Through these then revolutionary ideas Anna provided us with a comprehensive developmental theory and the concept of developmental lines, which combined her father's important drive model with more recent object relations theories emphasizing the importance of parents in child development processes.

Nevertheless her basic loyalty to her father's work remained unimpaired, and it might indeed be said that 'she devoted her life to protecting her father's legacy... In her theoretical work there would be little criticism of him, and she would make what is still the finest contribution to the psychoanalytic understanding of passivity', or what she termed 'altruistic surrender... excessive concern and anxiety for the lives of his love objects'. Jacques Lacan called 'Anna Freud the plumb line of psychoanalysis. Well, the plumb line doesn't make a building... but] it allows us to gauge the vertical of certain problems'; and by preserving so much of Freud's legacy and standards she may indeed have served as something of a living yardstick. With psychoanalysis continuing to move away from classical Freudianism to other concerns, it may still be salutary to heed Anna Freud's warning about

the potential loss of her father's 'emphasis on conflict within the individual person, the aims, ideas and ideals battling with the drives to keep the individual within a civilized community. It has become modern to water this down to every individual's longing for perfect unity with his mother...

There is an enormous amount that gets lost this way'. About essential personal qualities in psychoanalysts " Dear John ... , You asked me what I consider essential personal qualities in a future psychoanalyst. The answer is comparatively simple. If you want to be a real psychoanalyst you have to have a great love of the truth, scientific truth as well as personal truth, and you have to place this appreciation of truth higher than any discomfort at meeting unpleasant facts, whether they belong to the world outside or to your own inner person.

Further, I think that a psychoanalyst should have... interests... beyond the limits of the medical field... in facts that belong to sociology, religion, literature, [and] history,... [otherwise] his outlook on... his patient will remain too narrow. This point contains... the necessary preparations beyond the requirements made on candidates of psychoanalysis in the institutes. You ought to be a great reader and become acquainted with the literature of many countries and cultures.

In the great literary figures you will find people who know at least as much of human nature as the psychiatrists and psychologists try to do. Does that answer your question? " In perhaps not dissimilar vein, she wrote in 1954 that 'With due respect for the necessary strictest handling and interpretation of the transference, I feel still that we should leave room somewhere for the

realization that analyst and patient are also two real people, of equal adult status, in a real personal relationship to each other.