

Critique of an Attitude Expressed by Anna Freud

Editorial note:

We agree with the author of this note. However, we must add that the opinion which he criticizes is the logical result of the psychoanalytical concept of the unconscious mind. According to this concept, the unconscious mind is composed of nothing but asocial drives which, quite logically, *must* be suppressed. According to the psychoanalytic view, it does not contain any instincts which are essential for the process of living. All social and cultural attitudes are "sublimations" of antisocial drives. In short, psychoanalytic theory assumes that the unconscious is the *last* biologically given realm; that there is nothing behind what the analyst can find in the depth of the person. This theory knows nothing of the bio-energetic functions in the core of the living system; neither does it penetrate deeply enough into the realm of bio-energetic functioning to realize that the "polymorphous perversity" and antisociality of the unconscious are artifacts of our culture which suppresses the naturally given bio-energetic emotions; it does not realize that these artificial, "secondary drives" (Reich) are constantly fed by frustrated libido.

This outlook is, of course, quite hopeless as far as the prevention of neuroses is concerned: If the unconscious, antisocial drives are biologically given, if the child is born a "wild, cruel, asocial animal," then there is no end in sight for the emotional plague. Children from birth on are conditioned and adapted to the culture based on suppression of the secondary drives. The psychoanalyst sees nothing but thwarted life which he mistakes as the naturally given biology of man. The armoring which takes place from birth onward obfuscates completely the *artificial* nature of what the psychoanalyst sees and describes.

However, we know today, on the basis of orgone-therapeutic as well as educational experiences with *unarmored* children, that an entirely different character structure results from a self-governing upbringing, a fact which is unknown and, we believe also unacceptable, to the psychoanalytic educator. He judges correctly WITHIN HIS OWN FRAMEWORK OF EXPERIENCE, WITHIN THE ARTIFICIALLY PRODUCED STRUCTURE OF MAN.

Outside this realm, however, these teachings are thoroughly wrong, hopeless and dangerously misleading.

When a person with the influence of Anna Freud presents an attitude toward children as the basis for child-rearing and education, it can do much good or much harm. I feel that her recent expression of such an attitude can be very harmful to children, and can help undo much good work in the field of preventive mental hygiene.

Sigmund Freud first formulated the theory of a "libido" or instinctual sexual energy based on his clinical observations and inescapable deductions regarding infantile sexuality and the pleasure-unpleasure principle. Much later he added his "death instinct" theory which served to account for certain therapeutic failures and much of human destructiveness. Wilhelm Reich, continuing the painstaking clinical work which Freud had established, was able to show that wherever and whenever human destructiveness appears, it can *invariably* be shown to be secondary to conflict. The conflict results from an instinctual energy seeking direct expression and a prohibitive force from the environment which blocks the direct expression of the energy. This block consists of punitive attitudes by parents, teachers, neighbors and others individually, and by the current social and cultural mores. Reich subsequently, in his biophysical research, discovered the orgone energy, the basic life energy universally present, and showed the correspondence between certain of its manifestations and those of the "libido," Freud's early term for the instinctual sexual energy.

Anna Freud goes far afield from the early work of her father and from the orgonomic principles formulated by Reich. In the March 7, 1949 issue of the *New York Times*, page 24, an unsigned article carries the title: "Nursery Schools Held No Cure Alls." The subtitle reads, "What They Can Achieve and What Not to Expect Outlined by Dr. Anna Freud." The body of the article quotes excerpts from an article by Anna Freud entitled, "Nursery School Education—Its Uses and Dangers" appearing in the Spring, 1949 issue of *Child Study*, "A Quarterly Journal of Parent Education." (Published by Child Study Association, 132 East 74th Street, New York 21, New York.) According to the newspaper item, the article was released at the annual conference of the Child Study Association on "Perennial Concerns of Parents" held at the Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, on March 7, 1949, the day the newspaper item appeared.

After a discussion of the function of nursery schools in relation to material care and needs, and of times and ages for referral of the children to the schools, Anna Freud is quoted as follows: "A group of toddlers is,

after all, a community of savages. So far as the children are left to themselves, might goes for right. What young children acquire under such conditions are modes of attack, defense and escape, habits of giving in to superior strength, or skill in avoiding unpleasantness by devices of sharing."

The newspaper article continues in the next paragraph:

"The deep reaching, laborious processes that produce such qualities as courage, generosity, self-sacrifice, pity, and shame," she declares, "are rooted *exclusively* [italics mine—M. S.] in the love for the parents and in the child's identification with them."

The newspaper item concludes with Anna Freud's recommendations that a child not be sent to nursery school too soon after the birth of a sibling and with her observations that poor speaking ability tends to deteriorate while feeding and motor behavior improve in nurseries.

It is true that the quotations in the newspaper were out of context, and that they give a more startling impression than the article itself in its entirety. In the original article, for example, Anna Freud indicates the role of observation and experience when she says: "The hopes were not fulfilled that group life in a children's community would in itself serve to socialize the individual where the attachment to the mother and the family was lacking." This directly precedes the passage quoted above, "A group of toddlers is, after all, a community of savages . . ."

Nevertheless, even a careful reader gets the following impressions:

1) Anna Freud appears to believe that children are "constitutionally," "innately" or "born to be" "savages," meaning that they rely on their destructive abilities to achieve gratification. This is certainly a reflection on "savages" as we have come to know them through the work of anthropologists such as Malinowski and others. She again raises the bogey of biologically-determined destructive instinctual energy, which is contradictory to Sigmund Freud's early scrupulously detailed clinical observations, and Wilhelm Reich's later work, both clinical and biophysical. The reader's impression is strengthened when he reads that the child acquires "skill in avoiding unpleasantness by devices of sharing." Is all human cooperation and mutual consideration merely "a device to avoid unpleasantness?" Shades of Machiavelli!

2) Anna Freud removes some of the emphasis from the destructiveness ascribed to children by referring to its component as "superficial, strictly

utilitarian attitudes." But then she states unequivocally that the "laborious, deep-reaching processes of character formation which produce qualities such as courage, generosity, self-sacrifice, pity, shame, etc. . . . are rooted *exclusively* [italics—M. S.] in the love for the parents and in the child's identification with them." The impression one gets is that the child itself lacks the capacity to develop these admirable characteristics, and must acquire them from without. It almost seems that Anna Freud even goes beyond the theory that a child is born with the "instinctive urges: sex and aggression" (p. 58) and feels that a child is born "aggressive" only, and has to acquire from without the qualities that make for happy life. It should be emphasized that Reich has shown clinically and biophysically that the child is born with the single cosmic life energy, orgone energy, corresponding in part to Sigmund Freud's "libido," and that there is no special "hate" or "destructive" energy.

3) Earlier in her article, Anna Freud says: "The child, who begins life as a *self-centered, egoistic* being [italics—M. S.], takes notice of the outside world owing to the pressure of his wishes."

The words "self-centered" and "egoistic" carry certain adult meanings which can no more be applied to a newborn child than to an amoeba or to any other non-human organism. Such terminology referring to human adult character traits, when applied as Anna Freud applies them, carry anthropomorphic, or more correctly, "adult-anthropomorphic" implications which make for confusion in thought and practical application or action.

I feel that Anna Freud's statements can be harmful by re-enforcing the already all-too-prevalent idea that children need to be "trained," "controlled," and otherwise rigidly "handled" to prevent them from becoming destructive "savages" and to ensure the development of those desirable qualities "rooted exclusively in the love for the parents." Workers such as Neill, educationally, and Reich, bio-energetically, have shown that the child can naturally develop into a healthy individual capable of loving, working, and learning if he is not prevented from doing so by "training," "control" and other environmental pressures, having as their focal point sex-negating repression. Moreover, the road to health need not be "laborious" in the absence of such repression.

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Projeto Arte Org

Redescobrimo e reinterpretando W. Reich

Caro Leitor

Infelizmente, no que se refere a orgonomia, seguir os passos de Wilhelm Reich e de sua equipe de investigadores é uma questão bastante difícil, polêmica e contraditória, cheia de diferentes interpretações que mais confundem do que ajudam.

Por isto, nós decidimos trabalhar com o material bibliográfico presente nos microfilmes (Wilhelm Reich Collected Works Microfilms) em forma de PDF, disponibilizados por Eva Reich que já se encontra circulado pela internet, e que abarca o desenvolvimento da orgonomia de 1941 a 1957.

Dividimos este “material” de acordo com as revistas publicadas pelo instituto de orgonomia do qual o Reich era o diretor.

01- International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research (1942-1945).

02- Orgone Energy Bulletin (1949-1953)

03- CORE Cosmic Orgone Engineering (1954-1956)

E logo dividimos estas revistas de acordo com seus artigos, apresentando-os de forma separada (em PDF), o que facilita a organizá-los por assunto ou temas.

Assim, cada qual pode seguir o rumo de suas leituras de acordo com os temas de seu interesse.

Todo o material estará disponível em inglês na nuvem e poderá ser acessado a partir de nossas páginas Web.

Sendo que nosso intuito aqui é simplesmente divulgar a orgonomia, e as questões que a ela se refere, de acordo com o próprio Reich e seus colaboradores diretos relativos e restritos ao tempo e momento do próprio Reich.

Quanto ao caminho e as postulações de cada um destes colaboradores depois da morte de Reich, já é uma questão que extrapola nossas possibilidades e nossos interesses. Sendo que aqui somente podemos ser responsáveis por nós mesmos e com muitas restrições.

Alguns destes artigos, de acordo com nossas possibilidades e interesse, já estamos traduzindo.

Não somos tradutores especializados e, portanto, pedimos a sua compreensão para possíveis erros que venham a encontrar.

Em nome da comunidade Arte Org.

Textos da área do desenvolvimento infantil

Texts from the area of child development

International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research

Children

- 01 Ernst Walter. A Talk With a Sensible Mother 1936
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number 1 1942
Interval 16-22 Pag. 11-17
- 02 Paul Martin. Sex-Economic Upbringing 1942
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number 1 1942
Interval 23-37 Pag. 18-32
- 03 Editorial. Physiological Anchoring of Psychic Conflicts 1942
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number 2 1942
Interval 83-85 Pag. 177-179
- 04 A.S.Neills. The Problem Teacher I 1939
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 1 Number 2 1942
Interval 86-90 Pag. 180-184
- 05 A.S.Neills. The Problem Teacher II 1939
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International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 2 Numbers 2 3 1943
Interval 61-65 Pag. 153-157
- 07 Theodore P. Wolfe. A Sex.economist Answers I 1943
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 2 Numbers 2 3 1943
Interval 66-73 Pag. 158-165
- 08 Paul Martin. Reviews Which Kind Progressive Education 1943
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 2 Numbers 2 3 1943
Interval 83-96 Pag. 175-188
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International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 2 Numbers 2 3 1943
Interval 106-112 Pag. 198-204

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International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Number 1 1944
Interval 67-75 Pag. 62-70

11 Theodore P. Wolfe. Reviews The Boy Sex Offender 1943
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Number 1 1944
Interval 87-91 Pag. 82-86

12 A.S.Neills. The Problem Teacher IV 1939
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Number 1 1944
Interval 92-101 Pag. 87-96

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International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 3 Numbers 2 3 1944
Interval 124-136 Pag. 220-232

16 A.S.Neills. Coeducation and Sex 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Number 1 1945
Interval 56-60 Pag. 54-58

17 Felicia Saxe. A case History 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Number 1 1945
Interval 61-73 Pag. 59-71

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Interval 117-130 Pag. 115-128

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Interval 34-50 Pag. 156-172

22 Lucille Bellamy Denison. The child and his Struggle 1945
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23 A.S.Neills. That Dreadful School III 1945
International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research Volume 4 Numbers 2 3 1945
Interval 107-130 Pag. 228-251

24 Felicia Saxe. Armored Human Beings Versu the Heathy Child 1947
McF 207 Annals of the Orgone Institute, Number 1. 1947
Interval 21-40 Pag. 35-72

25 Ilse Ollendorff. About Self-Regulation in a Healthy Childe 1847
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Interval 44-49 Pag. 81-90

26 Elizabeth Tyson. The Armored Teacher 1947
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Orgone Energy Bulletin

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Interval 12-14 Pag. 160-164

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Interval 26-28 Pag. 189-193

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Interval 22-28 Pag. 194-206

08 Wilhelm Reich Armoring in a Newborn Infant 1950
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Interval 3-13 Pag. 121-138

09 Editorial. Protection of Life 1953
McF 315 Orgone Energy Bulletin. Vol. 5, No. 1,2. Mar. 1953
Interval 3-4 Pag. 2-4

Wilhelm Reich Orgonomic Functionalism

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