PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A LOOK AT THE CONTRIBUTIONSS OF ANNA FREUD, MELANIE KLEIN, ERIK H. ERIKSON, SUSAN ISAACS, BRUNO BETTELEHEIM, E.C.M. FRIJLING-SCHREUDER AND MARGARET RIBBLE

BY

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III. APPLICATIONS OF PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Particular theoretical beliefs have in the past led to particular educational practices. One of the major forces is psychology—the psychoanalytic—made a penetrating impact on knowledge of child development and child behavior.

The psychoanalytic theory stemming from the work of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) saw the individual as governed by irrational impulses as she/he passed through a series of psychosexual stages (Cowles, 1976). These stages were:

- . the oral period
- . the anal period
- . the phallic or oedipal period
- . the latency period

How a child passed through these stages deter ined to a large degree how healthy or unhealthy an adult he became. Freudian theory emphasized unconscious motivation, the beginnings of sexual development, the inevitable conflicts between social expectations and spontaneous behavior and the impact of emotions on behavior.

In the 1920's there was an attempt to create psychoanalytic pedagogy utilizing theory from Freudian child-analysis. Psychodynamic theory was to be translated directly into educational goals and practices. But as Biber (1977) points out:

... psychological theories do not of them elves specify what the immediate or ultimate purposes of education shall be. They do have an important screening influence on curriculum building in its broadest sense as well as on decisions about priorities of experimental content

and choice of methods and strategies. In a sense, they are channels through which to navigate toward the selected educational goals. 1

A psychodynamic theory may serve as a framework for "... consistency with a specific theoretical perspective rather than specification by a particular theory."²

In this paper I will examine the implications of psychodynamic theory for teaching and learning in early childhood education. The individual pioneering efforts of Anna Freud and Melanie Klein in understanding childhood neurosis and in developing child analysis and "play therapy" will be described and compared. Anna Freud's strong early convictions of the need for a psychoanalytic pedagogy and later disillusionment will be discussed. Basic psychoanalytic terms such as "the unconscious." "Id, Ego, Superego," "transference" etc. will be broadly defined to illuminate early psychoanalytic theory. A psychohistorical perspective on initial attempts to create a psychoanalytic pedagogy in Europe will be synthesized and current pre-school developmental programs in North America described, programs which draw from psychodynamic theory. The theories of Eric H. Erikson, Susan Isaacs, Bruno Bettelheim, E.C.M. Frijling-Schreuder, and Margaret Ribble will be presented. In conclusion some criticisms of the psychodynamic theories' impact on education will be aired.

Psychodynamic learning theory is based on the premise that not all learning or motivation is conscious.

> Traditional conceptions of how human beings think and learn have started from a natural but incorrect and

misleading assumption that we think and learn consciously. This is not true. Conscious processes are important not for thinking but for sampling, checking, reality testing, correcting, ruminating, and communicating. Even the intake of bits of information, whether from the source or from the outer world, is predominantly preconscious. It consists largely of an incessant subliminal bombardment which goes on unceasingly whether we are awake or asleep ... But whether the input is largely from distance and surface receptors (as in the normal waking state) or predominantly from within the body (as in sleep), the major input is always subliminal. The conscious component is never more than a fragment of the total input. This neglected but psychophysiological fact is of major significance and is relevant to all · educational processes. 3

Although the psychoanalytic position does not deal directly with classroom teaching and learning, it can be useful, as a theory of behavior, in deepening our understanding of the unconscious motivations of all children, their needs, the particular needs of "disturbed" children and our awareness of the role of adults in the children's development.

The "child-centered" focus which resulted from the psychodynamic position in Early Childhood Education is not mainly concerned with techniques and skills but rather with the kind of relationship which enables children to grow emotionally and to gain faith in themselves as feeling individuals.

The child who has faith in himself believes in himself. He has convictions which are an integral part of him. He makes decisions for himself and carries them out. He expresses himself freely and fully and does not fear that he will be condemned for his feelings or his beliefs. The child who feels faith knows what he wants to do, what he can do, and what he will do. He trusts his own feelings.4

To look more clearly at the roots of psychodynamic theory one must become acquainted with its language. Although the use of the terminology of psychoanalytic theory has been fairly popularized since the turn of the century, the following terms broadly defined in a rough-and-ready fashion by Nancy Proctor-Gregg, translator or Anna Freud's The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Children, will serve as explanations which may make future references in this paper to psychoanalytic theory more intelligible.

"The unconscious" - the highly active self within us of which we are not directly aware. (Some of its activities are revealed in dreaming or in particular awakened states.)

"Repression" - the process applied to impulses, notions, etc. unwelcome to our conscious selves, which we mean to, but cannot discard; repression throws them into the unconscious—making the material unconscious. There is no conscious memory of this process.

"Id, Ego, Super-ego" - the unconscious, the conscious and the "conscience" functions of self - (internal judge of self created from internalized requirements and ideals to which the self at some period has given allegiance; usually

parents—whether consciously or child's imagination.)

"Transference" - an emotional attitude assumed by client, under the direction of unconscious in analysis towards analyst; a projected overlay created by one person towards another person of importance in her/his life.

"Latency period" - a time usually beginning about the fifth year of a child's life and lasting until puberty; the child's highly active and highly varied sexual impulses become largely latent; the energy supplying them is to a great extend diverted.

"Oedipus complex" - a way of denoting the whole set of feelings attached to the natural impulses of all children to crave for exclusive love, usually from a parent of the opposite sex.

"Analysis" - a treatment to alleviate symptoms and enable the mitigation of the impact of the superego, thereby lessening anxiety associated with instinctual forces, and freeing the individual so that psychic energy flows freely.

The following description of the historical connection between psychoanalysis and education will serve as an introduction to the later contributions of particular psychoanalysts in educating the young child, and in understanding psychodynamically-based child development theory.

In 1905 Sigmund Freud and his early circle were fascinated by the meliorative potential of a new education informed by psychoanalysis, what Freud called "the princely education along psychoanalytic lines."

From 1920-1930 "psychoanalytic pedagogy" thrived among the continental psychoanalytic community.

Freud writes in An Autobiographical Study that although he had little to do with the direct application of psychoanalysis to education, "... analytic discoveries about the sexual life and mental development of children should attract the attention of educators and make them see their problems in a new light."7

In Freud's fundamental book on child development, Three Essays On the Theory of Sexuality, his theories of infantile sexuality, developmental stages and significance of early childhood experiences lay the groundwork for the psychoanalytic pedagogy of early childhood.

Although Freud was cautious about making direct proposals regarding education before sufficient research had been done to understand the child, his work of the analysis of a child--"A Phobia in a Five Year Old Boy,' the famous little Hans case, confirms Freud's speculations regarding "... the importance of early childhood, the existence of infantile sexuality, the role of the parents in the aetiology of neurosis, and the therapeutic effects of sexual enlightment." 8

Freud felt his findings on the importance of human instincts and the need for conserving rather than supressing the instinctual deserved to be regarded by educators as an invaluable guide in their conduct toward children. On the question of what sort of early education was best, harsh or lenient Freud wavered. His main thrust was education that called upon the findings of psychoanalysis in order to understand development and avoid neurosis. "Whatever we can expect in the way of prophylaxis against neurosis in the individual lies in the hands of a psychoanalytically enlightened education," Freud said.

With the emergence of a branch of applied psychoanalysis—child analysis—the fusion of psychoanalysis and education occurred. Child analysis served as a bridge between the two. "Teachers, most of them women, most of them originally kindergarten, nursery, elementary, or high school teachers, became the first child analysts." Anna Freud in central Europe and Melanie Klein in London were

important figures in establishing the role of child analysis. Anna Freud subsequently attempted to combine psychoanalysis and education into a psychoanalytic pedagogy which, by preventing neurosis might downway with the need for analysis. In 1927 she declared "Child analysis furnishes a transition to a sphere of application which, as many think, should in the future be one of the most important for psychoanalysis: to pedagogics, or the science for upbringing and education."

The role of the teacher was clear: the psychoanalytic educator focuses upon thwarting direct instinctual gratifications and promoting the ability to delay and rechannel gratifications. Diversionary tactics are used: for example, Anna Freud's suggestion of sand and water play as a substitute for play with feces and urine and the use of paint and chalk as a substitute for impulse behavior. She also suggested play as an opportunity for pleasure in achievement, task completion and independent problem solving.

The ingenious discoveries of child development phenomena by Sigmund Freud and his classical psychoanalytic model necessitate modifications and adptations to suit the unique needs and unconscious of the child as his model was postulated restrospectively through adult analysis.

Both Anna Freud and Melanie Klein succeeded in developing such modified and adapted theory and technique in child psychoanalysis.

Anna Freud's notion of child analysis is the "... maintenance of unimpeded flow of energy between the three psychic domains, such that there is no permanent blockage which will lead to the type of pathology evidenced in adulthood." Her prescription of child analysis pertains to children where it is fairly certain that blocked psychic energy may lead to permanent developmental damage and thereby her theories are suitable for "disturbed" children in the main.

Melanie Klein's notion of child analysis corresponds closely to classical. Freudian analysis. Her aim is to lessen the impact of the Supergo thereby lessening the anxiety associated with instinctual

forces. ".. By focusing on the interactions between Supergo and Id, a stronger Ego will emerge as a natural consequence, thus facilitating the child's natural line of growth at every stage of development."13 Her prescription of child analysis pertains to all children who could benefit from working through unconscious material as it arises and is most accessible to the child's consciousness. She believes analysis will provide individual children with optimal chances for future healthy adjustment. Hence her theories may offer help to anyone working with children, especially those in close daily contact such as educators.

In the following chart (See Appendix A) Anna Freud's psychoanalytic theories are compared and contrasted with those of Melanie Klein as to which children can benefit from psychoanalysis, how to proceed, to what extent environment should be involved, and the specific use of psychoanalytic therapeutic tools. It is from these basic premises that future educational goals and practices were influenced.

Lecturers, courses, seminars and training programs in psychoanalytic pedagogy were started between 1926-1931. In 1928 Sigmund Freud wrote of the application of psychoanalysis to the education of young children in The Question of Lady Analysis. Psychoanalyst Rudolf Elkstein, a former Viennese teacher labelled the new education-"progressive education."

The handful of experimental schools employing psychoanalytic pedagogy included Kinderheim Baumgarten, a co-educational residential school for jewish refugee children which was run by Siegfried Bernfeld Anna Freud called the school "a first experiment to apply psychoanalytic principle to education." 14

Bernfeld was concerned with the children's maximum psychological development and tried to help the children through a permissive milieu. The experiment lasted nine months.

"In 1927, Anna Freud, along with her good friend and sister, child analyst Dorothy Burlingham, collaborated in the establishment of a school for children." 15 Erik Erikson and his wife Joan were among the teachers. Erikson's biographer, Robert Coles described the school. The

children helped plan the day's activities and chose the subject matter. Science, history, geography, english, poetry, drawing and painting were part of the curriculum. There were no grades. The children were treated as individuals. It was a "progressive" school.

Erik H. Erikson's extensions and elaborations of Freud's theory are considered important in contributing to education a greater appreciation of differences, especially in terms of unconscious motivations. Teachers are also offered an avenue of increased self-awareness and growth necessary for most effective teaching.

Of the eight stages of the human life cycle described by Erikson, the first three apply most directly to early childhood education: trust vs. mistrust; autonomy vs. shame and doubt; and initiative vs. guilt.

Erikson focuses on the relationships between the child and her/his milieu, and emphasizes specific external social demands upon the child as influencing her/his development. Erikson's first three stages are critical periods in which the child's healthy, adaptive resolution of the crisis of each stage determines to what extent he later possesses a sense of basic trust, is autonomous, and has initiative. The degree to which the child fails to make a healthy crisis resolution determines to what extent he later feels a sense of basic distrust, is ashamed and doubtful in his relationships, and is handicapped by guilt.

The major implication of Erikson's work is that teachers must provide an emotional environment in which children engage in both anxiety-producing and pleasure-producing experiences. To learn to cope with life a child must face anxiety-producing experiences but successful, pleasurable experiences are also necessary for healthy growth.

The proponents of three types of child development programs, the traditional nursery schools's Head Start and the Bank Street College of Education program, draw in varying degrees from Erikson's theory in the construction of learning climates conducive to healthy emotional development. 16

Looking back again to the 1920s experiments in psychoanalytically-based schools were also attempted in Russia and England. (The Moscow Children's Home and Psychological Laboratory; Summerhill). "Permissive" schools in the U.S.A. drew from psychoanalytic theory by developing goals which included prevention of neurosis, i.e. "mental hygiene" or "mental health".

By the late 1930s psychoanalysts were disillusioned with original goals of psychoanalytic pedagogy. Many children who had experienced the experimental schools developed personality problems which required analysis. Anna Freud declared "the hope of extirpating neurosis from human life is found ... to be illusory." 17

In 1937 at the "Four Countries Conference" in Budapest Anna Freud summed up the long history of trial and errors. "After years of intensive work by some of the best psychoanalytic research workers, we are certain only that there still exists no practicable psychoanalytic pedagogy." 18 The struggle to specify immediate and ultimate purposes of early childhood education from psychological theory ended. Instead psychological theory became a screening influence on education.

An example of more recent contributions of psychodynamic theory to early childhood programs is found in the philosophy of the Bank Street College of Education in New York City. Psychodynamic theory is one of the two lines of psychological theory (the other being cognitive learning theories) behind their developmental rationale.

Both theories aim toward optimal human functioning and are aware of the interaction between cognitive and emotional functions although each places relative emphasis on the emotional or cognitive aspects of development.

Four major processes of the developmental sequence which are presented as the framework for specifying educational goals and teaching strategies competence, individuality, socialization, and integration. 19

Teaching strategies for preschool education concern teacher-child relationship, curriculum content and instructional principles, and motivation.

Specific program activites relate learning experiences to program goals. 20 Biber, Shapiro and Wickens (1971) define these goals:

- 1. To serve the child's need to make an impact on the environment through direct physical contact:
- exploring the physical world (equipment, space, physical protection)
- constructive, manipulative activities with things like blocks, clay, sand, wood.
- 2. To promote the potential for ordering experience through cognitive strategies:
- extending receptiveness and responsiveness
- developing facility with language
- stimulating verbal-conceptual organization of experience and information.
- 3. To advance the child's functioning knowledge of his environment:
- observation of functions within school
- story-reading
- observation of functioning environment outside the school
- discussion of contemporary events which children hear about.
- 4. To support the play mode of incorporating establishing models of human interexperience:

- setting the stage for dramatic play
- freedom to go beyond the restraints of reality in rehearsing and representing experience.
- 5. To help the child internalize impulse control:
- communicating a clear set of non-threatening controls (limits, rules, regulations)
- creating a functioning adult authority role.
- 6. To meet the child's needs to cope with conflicts intrinsic to this stage of development:
- dealing with conflict over possession displaced from the family scene
- alleviating conflict over separation related to loss of familiar context of place and people
- accepting ambivalence about dependence and independence.
- 7. To facilitate the development of an image of self as a unique and competent person:
- increasing knowledge of self
- clarifying sense of self
- advancing integration of self.
- 8. To help the child establish mucually supporting patterns of interaction:
- building informal communication channels, verbal and nonverbal
- cooperative and collective childgroup relations
- creating supportive adult role (source of comfort, troubleshooter, solver of unknowns, invested in child learning)
 - change which value individuality.

These principles are statements concerning the child's course of development and the important influences on the child during his or her development and they represent a selective integration of principles of psychodynamic and developmental theories. 21

In terms of the physical organization of Bank Street School's preschool classrooms "the overall aim is to create the atmosphere of a workshop, and enjoyable community with an admixture of structure and openness of spontaneity and control that serves learning and facilitates gratifying, productive social living."22

The philosophy, goals and environment of the school reflect psychological theory which combines cognitive and affective functions.

Susan Isaacs, Bruno Bettelheim, and E.C.M. Frijling-Schreuder have also contributed richly to child-development theory. The following chart briefly synthesizes their major ideas and contributions (see Appendix B).

A new emphasis in psychodynamic development theory is in the current professional limelight. At the First International Congress on Pre and Peri-Natal Psychology held in Toronto (July 1983 - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) papers were presented by Barnett, Buchheimer, Catano, Chamberlain, Earnshaw, Eng, Fedor-Freyburgh, Hull, Jacobs, Keller, Liley, Milakovic, Stewart, Watkins, and others on the psychology of the relationship of pre-natal events to later child development and the important role of early maternal bonding to psychodynamic development theory. The field has come into its own in the past twenty years.

Forty years ago, in a related field of study, Margaret Ribble, pyschiatrist and psychoanalyst, author of The Rights of Infants attempted "... to take up a vital aspect of infant care which food and general hygiene—that is, the feeling life of a baby, the emotional reactions which gotheir initial momentum and direction in the primary relationship..." She covered the first two years of development. The deeply significant evidence of tender

feeling--fondling, caressing, and singing or speaking to a young child elicit awareness and trust, which Ribble advocated when she defended a child's need for a mothering experience to enable the child to grow mentally and physically. She believed the psychological role of the mother and the father is vital in helping the newborn's nervous system to mature and to give her/his brain time to develop without stress. The primitive biological activities of the young--breathing, sucking, crying, sleeping, eliminating--which are firmly linked to mental life.

These links between what is somatic and psychic have never been made sufficiently clear. The inner needs and tensions due to the growth of the brain and nervous system in infancy are poorly understood, and the beginnings of the emotional reactions and of the thinking process have never been sufficiently studied. Yet these bio-psychological connections are highly important because the development of vital personality in the adult depends on the way the premental hungers of the baby are satisfied and on the help he gets in bringing his own behavior mechanisms into selfcontrolled action so that he can later satisfy his emotional needs and further his own intellectual curiosity, or desire to $\mathrm{know.}^{\,24}$

Research in these areas is multiplying in the 1980s as evidenced by the recent Congress.

Margaret Ribble advocated the child's right for guidance in the development of her/his emotional life when she/he begins to show specific emotional responses (around the fourth month of life). The child experiences an emotional hunger. "The skill and tenderness of the mother and her actual

presence have far-reaching effects in bringing out the most complete mental development."25

In the years of World War II, WPA nursery schools and Lanham-Act day care centers provided opportunities for the study of children. But there were years of little money available for research. After the war, many middle-class children went to nursery schools and day-care centers. Not until 1950 when the White House Conference attempted to consolidate what was then known about personality development did the special contribution of infancy and pre-school years come into light. "Trust, worthy selfhood, initiative-these were the watchwords for the nursery years, while mastery was highlighted in the elementary school years. The scheme set forth implied the constant interplay between the child's emotional concerns and his developing understanding of the world. In the language of today, cognition and effective development were seen as intertwined."26

The future work of researchers in the area of developmental studies and the continued efforts of existing psychodynamically-based, developmental preschools ensures an eclectic, child-conscious, development pedagogy.

Although psychodynamic theory is widely acknowledged it has its critics. In particular if one traces the psychodynamic theory back to its Freudian roots it provokes controversy in the minds of many educators. Platt (1969), Weinstein (1969), Kris (1948), and Lederer (1964) are reluctant to see any connection between Freudian concepts and changes in education. Zachary (1941) overemphasizes the liberationist orientation of Freud's educational prescription. Although the vastness of Freud's theoretical construction made his work vulnerable to distortion, some of the more valid common criticisms (Hamacheck, 1979, p. 10-11) of his work are:

1. The theory was generated out of a preoccupation with the pathology of abnormal people. It is doubtful that such a theory can effectively deal with the normal personality.

- 2. The theory may overemphasize the breadth and depth of unconscious processes in behavior. It could well be that normal people are more aware of the origins of their motives for behaving than this theory gives them credit for.
- 3. The theory was established on the basis of emotional disturbances among middle-class people in Vienna over half a century ago. There is no compelling evidence to suggest that the theory is equally applicable to other kinds of people in other cultural settings.

Not all psychoanalysts discussed in this paper are strictly Freudian. Erikson, Bettelheim, Frijling-Schreuder and Ribble came from psychoanalytic backgrounds to establish more contemporary neo-psychoanalytic, developmental frameworks. From these adaptations, extensions and new theories, come new theories come new knowledge about child behavior which help educators better understand children and how to educate them.

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APPENDIX A

ANNA FREUD

MELANIE KLEIN

Eligibility for Child Analysis

- pre-required ego development; cautious prescription
- child arrested in development;
- fairly well developed
 personality;
- neurotics and severely disturbed
- verbal, bright child

- children of all ages and all levels of functioning
- 3 particular age groups: early, latency, puberty

Psychoanalytic Techniques:

- similar to adult analysis
- play materials for child's comfort and interest and to assess drives, attitudes, etc.
 - No interpretations
- interpret child's drawings and verbal descriptions
- interpret dreams
- encourage day dreans
- use transferences for interpretations
- interpret ego defenses and and resistances

- play analysis child expresses fantasies, wishes and actual experiences
- direct interpretation to child
- Young Child: assortment small toys, immediate play interpretation
- Latency Child: interpret repressed curiosities, establish relations with child's unconscious
- Adolescent Child:
 - gain access to anxiety
 - recognize fantasy
 - verbal association

Involvement of the Environment:

- ideal of having parents, especially mother, in therapy
- be in touch with parents
- do not expect gratitude from parents
- minimized parental involvement
- contact not necessary
- changes in child may elicit change in parental interaction

Use of psychoanalytic Therapeutic Tools:

- . Child's suffering and insight into illness/problems
- help the child see his source of suffering as internal
- establish positive relationship with child
- rely on parents to bring child to therapy at rough times
- after several sessions a child will be motivated to return because of relief of anxiety
- encourage play to discharge fantasies

- . Free Associations
- play, puppetry, drawings only partially successful
- play analysis to express fantasies, wishes and experiences - successful

APPENDIX A

ANNA FREUD

MELANIE KLEIN

. Transference	 early view: did not believe child transference possible later view: caution in interpreting a transference—like experience 	- child able to transfer - interpret and review constantly .
. Dreams	heavy use of dreams with childrendream analysis by analyst and child	 Klein focused on latent content of play dreams dealt with like adult therapy did not elicit dreams

Educational Theory-Method or Recommendation

- faith in child's ability to learn in her/his own way through imposing order on her/his own materials "finding out"
- . play therapy
- . "learn by doing"
- . nurture individual intelligence
- . Montessori influenced
- draw on fantasy life of child
- . free activity

- apply psychoanalytic therapeutic techniques in education to normal children
- . play therapy
- . no premature, forced academic studies
- . in Kibbutz experimentssuggests successful educational group homes away from parents (goal: to create a radically new personality in a single generation)
- follow individual path of development
- . favors Montessori method

Role of Teacher

- . to stimulate active inquiry of the children themselves
- to bring within children's immediate experience every range of fact to which their interests reached out
- awareness of fantasy life of child and relationship to intellectual interest
- to help children "learn by doing"
- . to provide for development of child's own bodily skills, social skills and means of expression

- . establish good relationship with child
- see child's learning experience through the eyes of the child respect his subjective viewpoint
- . do not interfere, elicit spontaneous response
- . awareness of psychological reasons for errors rather than always being the result of lack of skills, knowledge or attention
- empathy around errors in order to strengthen the child's ability to cope with the task at hand

- . bonding with students
- influence child's self-esteem positively
- . stimulate intellectually
- . guidance toward mental health
- . awareness of socialization

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	SUSAN ISAACS	BRUNO BETTELHEIM	E.C.M. FRIJLING-SCHREUDER
Works related to E.C.E.	. The Nursery Years . Intellectual Growth in Young Children . Social Development in Young Children	Love is Not Enough-The Treatment of Emotionally Disturbed Children Dialogues with Mothers The Children of the Dream: Communal Child Rearing and American Education A Home for the Heart The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales On Learning to Read: The Child's Fascination with Meaning	. Children, What Are They?
Major Theoretical Framework	 psychoanalytically oriented - Freudian Gesell inspired directress The Malting House School (1924-1927) 	 psychoanalytically oriented Neo-Freudian Erikson inspired director of University of Chicago's Orthogenic School 	. psychoanalytically oriented . Freudian
Development Theory	 child-centered - "whole" child affect and personal aspects of child's understanding emphasized cognitive functioning researched influenced by Gesell's model in conflict with Piaget 	. child-centered . Erik Erikson's model	. child-centered . Freudian stage theory