

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

EXPERIMENTAL FUTURES AND IMPOSSIBLE PROFESSIONS: PSYCHOANALYSIS,  
EDUCATION, AND POLITICS IN INTERWAR VIENNA, 1918-1938

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

PHILLIP J. HENRY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2018

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
INTRODUCTION	1
Red Vienna	6
Interwar Psychoanalysis	20
Psychoanalysis, Education, and Politics in Interwar Vienna	35
CHAPTER ONE      Between Seduction and Sublimation: The Emergence of a Psychoanalytic Theory of Education, 1896-1914	44
Unstable Foundations	45
<i>Verführung</i> and its Vicissitudes	50
<i>Erziehung zur Realität</i>	65
The Possibilities for Prophylaxis and the Elusiveness of Sublimation	78
Psychoanalysis and the New Education	91
CHAPTER TWO      Recasting Bourgeois Psychoanalysis: Education, Authority, and the Politics of Analytic Therapy in the Freudian Revision of 1918	99
Out of the Wilderness, Into the Wasteland	104
Suggestion and its Discontents	110
Forming a Class Body for Psychoanalysis	119
The Ways and Means of Psychoanalysis	123
Beyond the Classical Paradigm	135

CHAPTER THREE	Fashioning a New Psychoanalysis: Exceptional States and the Crisis of Authority in Analytic Practice, 1919-1925	139
	States of Exception	146
	Analysis for the Masses	157
	Ego Politics and the Pedagogy of Reconstruction	167
	<i>Psychoanalytisches Neuland</i>	177
	The Limits of Analytic Therapy	184
CHAPTER FOUR	The Mass Psychology of Education: Freudian Experiments in Collective Upbringing in Postwar Vienna	193
	Confronting the Masses, Theorizing the Revolution	195
	Youth in Motion	202
	Education to Community	217
	Wayward Youth and Surrogate Fathers	230
	Nursery Politics and the Problem of Aggression	241
	Living with the Father's Ghost	253
CHAPTER FIVE	Thinking at the Limits of Education: Siegfried Bernfeld and Socialist Pedagogy in Red Vienna	261
	School Reform and Class Struggle	266
	The Pedagogical Construction of the New Person	276
	On Pedagogy and Pedagogues	286
	Limits Without and Limits Within	293
	A Pedagogical Politics of Disillusionment	305
CHAPTER SIX	Psychoanalytic Pedagogy and the Politics of Enlightenment	

in the Interwar Austrian <i>Kulturkampf</i>	316
Educating the Educators	324
Autonomy and Enlightenment	337
<i>Sexuelle Aufklärung</i> and the <i>Kulturkampf</i> Within	348
The Future of Enlightenment	359
CHAPTER SEVEN   Anxiety, Aggression, and the Defense of the Ego: Anna Freud and the Psychoanalytic Education of the Child	370
The Psychoanalysis of the Child	376
Birth Traumas, Death Drives, and the Problem of Anxiety	395
Analyzing the Defenses I	405
Analyzing the Defenses II	412
Education in a New Light	418
CONCLUSION	429
BIBLIOGRAPHY	435

“[W]e have never prided ourselves on the completeness and finality of our knowledge and capacity. We are just as ready now as we were earlier...to learn new things and to alter our methods in any way that can improve them.” With these words, delivered to a psychoanalytic congress in the last months of the Great War, Sigmund Freud inaugurated a period of far-reaching revision and open-ended experimentation for his science. Over the following two decades, Freudians in central Europe would push their thought in new directions, developing revised models of the mind, innovative theories of the relationship between individual and society, and experimental therapeutic techniques while simultaneously pioneering novel applications of analytic thought and practice to social problems. As they fashioned these new methods and perspectives, psychoanalysts were reflecting on and responding to a series of crises that wracked interwar Europe in the aftermath of total war and the dissolution of venerable empires. Yet at the time Freud spoke, crisis appeared to be closely bound up with opportunity – the political upheavals of the moment seemed to augur new possibilities for the refashioning of social life through the application of new modes of expert intervention. Focusing on Vienna, the hub of the interwar psychoanalytic movement and the site, after 1920, of an ambitious experiment in municipal socialism, this project explores how psychoanalysts sought to reconstruct and renovate society by recasting their own theory and practice between the world wars. In so doing, Freudians were not only reflecting on the crises that marked the interwar conjuncture but were effectively rethinking selfhood and the social bond for a new era.

The intimate relationship between psychoanalysis and the vibrant, conflict-ridden modernity of the interwar has become a standard trope of historical scholarship. Yet no existing

study has shown how fundamentally the crises unfolding without were interwoven with those that emerged within psychoanalytic thought. In the wake of the war, established guidelines for the exercise of therapeutic authority and orthodox psychoanalytic theories appeared to be both invalidated by recent experience and detached from the new social and political order. A product of a liberal bourgeois milieu, psychoanalysis found itself untethered from its prewar moorings in the mass democratic era that dawned in the aftermath of war and revolution. In the fraught process of recasting their science, Freudians were forced to renegotiate the commitments at the heart of their profession by rethinking the means and ends of their thought and practice in the new context.

Education loomed especially large in this endeavor. Like many contemporaries, particularly in “Red” Vienna, Freudians saw a reformed education as vital to confronting the catastrophic postwar conjuncture: their attempts to bring psychoanalytic insights to bear on broad social pathologies led to the creation of novel pedagogical experiments and to wide-ranging contributions to contemporary education debates. As they sought to rethink the upbringing of children along psychoanalytic lines and to expand the social reach of analysis, Freudians were forced to consider how their own therapeutic practice constituted a form of education, one that either sustained or subverted social structures. In both facets of what came to be known as the “psychoanalytic pedagogy” movement, Freudians were drawn ever closer to the tasks of governing and thus to the political problems that dominated the interwar moment. Together, educating, healing, and governing – the “three impossible callings” in Freud’s words – would be intimately bound in novel ways in interwar psychoanalysis.

Amid this far-reaching experimentation, a number of important shifts can be discerned. Prewar psychoanalysis, as Freud argued in 1905, was a practice intended primarily for the cultivated and ethically “valuable” members of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, subjects possessing a

modicum of personal autonomy but oppressed by the sexually repressive culture into which they had been reared. Yet with the undermining of bourgeois society amid the upheavals of war and revolution, the questions of who psychoanalysis was intended for and how it cured were far less certain. Plunged into an era of the masses, one in which the supposedly autonomous bourgeois individual – the imaginative foundation of liberal politics – seemed in danger of vanishing into the anonymous collective, psychoanalysts began to fashion novel therapeutic practices for types of suffering and classes of sufferers that previously had lain beyond their therapeutic purview. Reflecting the unprecedented levels of collective vulnerability generated by the recent upheavals, Freudians increasingly turned to subjects whose mental suffering seemed intimately connected to their exposure to the violence of their environments. It was around these subjects – war neurotics, youth delinquents, lower-class borderline patients, and above all, children – that analysts fashioned their experimental therapeutic and pedagogical techniques between the wars.

The turn to subjects beyond the constitutive limits of classical psychoanalysis was inseparable from both a rethinking of the self and a recasting of analytic authority, a fraught process in which the identity of psychoanalysis and its basic ethicopolitical commitments seemed up for grabs. Faced by selves exposed to overwhelming, traumatic forces in their environments, psychoanalysts reoriented their practice around the ego, the anxious, vulnerable agency tasked with upholding the borders between within and without and with securing the subject's adaptation to normative social demands. With the turn to the ego, analytic therapy assumed new responsibilities, ones that often exceeded, and indeed transgressed, the liberality of classical psychoanalysis. Connecting the psychic and the social, analysts sought both to shore up the ego's capacity to resist the forces in its environment and to facilitate its readjustment to cultural norms as a means of recovering social stability. In place of the private, individualist orientation of

orthodox psychoanalysis, the post-classical techniques developed by analysts like Sándor Ferenczi, Wilhelm Reich, Siegfried Bernfeld, August Aichhorn, and Anna Freud were understood to extend analytic therapy beyond its classical setting as a means of responding to the urgent social necessities of the times. If classical psychoanalysis had sought to safeguard the independence and uniqueness of its patients by placing strict limits on the exercise of the analyst's authority, the post-classical techniques that emerged over the interwar years were often as educational as they were purely analytic. Coupling what Sigmund Freud termed the "strict and untendentious" work of orthodox analytic therapy with pedagogical tasks, they sought to reinforce the fragile ego and to realign it with a reconstructed social order.

While this undertaking spanned the European continent, it was in Vienna that the rethinking of analytic practice and its application to social problems was pursued most intensively between the wars. If this in part reflected the profoundly disruptive impact of the war on urban life in Vienna, it was also closely connected to the emergence of the Social Democratic experiment and the far-reaching biomedical and pedagogical attempts to reconstruct and renovate society that flourished in the socialist metropolis. Vienna would also, however, be the site of the emergence of a new hegemonic vision of psychoanalysis that consolidated over the years of Social Democracy's collapse and destruction over the half decade following the onset of the global economic depression in 1929. Following a period of postwar experimentation, of eager attempts to push beyond the limits of orthodox psychoanalysis – attempts that often provoked resistance among fellow analysts and set off far-reaching controversies – a more modest, circumspect post-classical psychoanalysis would emerge in the ego psychology of Anna Freud and her followers. With the darkening of the political horizons, radical politics and radically revisionist techniques were increasingly marginalized. What emerged in their place was a mode of psychoanalysis

committed not to liberation but to the defense of the vulnerable ego, a reconstructed liberal psychoanalysis defined by circumspection and a distrust of the political. It was this form of psychoanalytic thought and practice, one that took shape in the work of Viennese analysts like Heinz Hartmann, Ernst Kris, Robert Wälde, and above all, Anna Freud, that would dominate mainstream psychoanalysis in America and the U.K. over the decades following the 1938 annexation of Austria by the Nazis and the expulsion of the Jewish psychoanalytic community.

– Acknowledgements –

It is a not uncommon practice to begin one's acknowledgements with a disclaimer. As anyone who has spent years working on a project like a dissertation is keenly aware, the expressions of gratitude that preface the work are woefully inadequate to their task. No matter how profuse, they inevitably feel perfunctory. Comprehensiveness is out of the question. To attempt to recount the list of one's debts in full would be to produce a document as long as the dissertation itself and still littered with omissions and distortions. So how to proceed.

Perhaps the easiest point of entry into this impossible task is also the most concrete and literal. The money that made both my graduate education and the research and writing of this project possible came from a number of sources (though I will mention only the institutions and organizations here). In addition to my five years of stipend funding, the University of Chicago Department of History and Division of the Social Sciences supported my work with a short-term research grant and two travel grants that funded research excursions to Washington D.C., Vienna, and London. Through the Austrian Fulbright Commission, in conjunction with the Österreichische Austauschdienst (OeAD), I received a Fulbright-Mach Fellowship that made possible a wonderful ten-month period of research in Vienna. Lastly, a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (for Russian) offered a bit of financial support together with a grant that funded one final trip to Vienna.

Over the course of these research trips, I accumulated debts of gratitude that cannot possibly be discharged, in part (but only in part) because I have forgotten (or never knew) the names of many of my benefactors. Numerous archivists and librarians helped make these research stints productive and made locations like the Wien Bibliothek, the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, the Library of Congress, and the archives of the Freud Museums in London

and Vienna such wonderful places to work. One librarian in particular, Katharina Gratz (now of the IWM in Vienna), generously offered her expertise and assistance at various stages in the project. I am especially grateful as well to the Austrian Fulbright commission – so ably directed by Lonny Johnson – and to the invaluable support of Martina Laffer and Molly Roza, without whom I would likely still be waiting (in the wrong line of the wrong building to speak to the wrong official) to secure an *Aufenthaltsbewilligung*. At the Universität Wien, Friedrich Stadler, Eveline List, Oliver Rathkolb, and Margarete Grandner helped me navigate a foreign institutional context while offering valuable feedback about the project. And finally, Mitchell Ash, my Fulbright advisor, provided astute guidance over my time and Vienna and has generously continued to serve as an advisor in the years since.

Closer to home, the University of Chicago has offered a wonderfully stimulating and supportive environment over the past nine years. On the administrative side of things, Carol Baker, Brett Baker, Gretchen Holmes, David Goodwine, Sonja Rusnak, and Lindsey Martin have been incredibly helpful and unflappably genial in handling my insistent (often obtuse) queries. Their role in alleviating the anxiety and uncertainty of graduate school cannot be overestimated. In the History Department, I have benefited enormously from being surrounded by inspiring scholars in a collaborative intellectual environment. Over the past five years, the *Transnational Approaches to Modern Europe*, the *Central Europe*, the *Social Thought*, the *Medicine and its Objects*, and finally, the *History and Philosophy of Science* workshops at University of Chicago have provided forums for the presentation of my work. The participants in those workshops and especially the commentators – Zachary Barr (twice), Katya Motyl, Tamara Kamatovic, and Ryan Dahn – showed great patience working through long, often convoluted, drafts and their questions and comments have helped me clarify and deepen my thought.

Intellectually and professionally my greatest debts, however, are to the three members of my fantastic committee – John Boyer, Tara Zahra, and Jan Goldstein (a list that should certainly also include Michael Geyer, an unofficial advisor for many years). Each in his or her own way, they have impressed on me a deep appreciation of the seriousness of historical scholarship while offering inspiring examples of the creativity and passion that can be brought to bear on historical problems. It is perhaps self-flattery, but I like to think the influence they have had on my work runs deeper than any specific position or perspective, rather it is of the sort that cannot be neatly summed up because it patterns the very way one thinks. Together, they provided me with the space and time to lose myself in the material and to eventually find my own way while periodically leading me back to the fold when I threatened to stray too far from the objective demands of the discipline. In particular, John Boyer, my chair, has shepherded this project with remarkable patience and has continually helped me keep sight of both the forest and the trees when one or the other threatened to vanish from my purview.

Graduate school and dissertation writing in particular are often quite lonely experiences. Yet the bonds of intellectual comradery and collective solidarity that emerge over those years do much to compensate for the isolation imposed by research and writing. Throughout, I have been the beneficiary of a wonderful community of central Europeanists at University of Chicago including Tamara Kamatovic, Ke-chin Hsia, Lauren Stokes, Katya Motyl, Ryan Dahn, Zachary Barr, Lisa Scott, and Michaela Appeltova among others. I have also been exceedingly fortunate to have brilliant interlocutors on all things psychoanalysis in the Society for Psychoanalytic Inquiry and the affiliated Analytic Social Psychology working group, especially, Jeremy Cohen, Greg Gabrellas, Scott Jenkins, Benjamin Fong, Christie Offenbacher, Benjamin Kodischek, and Christopher Crawford. Many of the friendships that have done the most to sustain me over the

long (but also remarkably quick) years of graduate school, however, cannot be placed into either category. In Vienna, I am especially grateful to Caitlin Gura, Lukas Redl, Leopold Kögler, Oliver Mertens, Barbara Friemals, and again, Katharina Gratz. In Chicago, Christopher Dunlap, Anna Jones, Ana Ilievska, Trevor Tucker, Zachary King, Diana Schwartz, Korey Garabaldi, and Terri Smith deserve especial mention.

Finally, my greatest debt, of course, is to my family. I have been extraordinarily fortunate to have lived in such close proximity to my family over the years of graduate school with my parents – Pam and Tim – together with both of my brothers – Matt and Bill – and their partners – Felicia and Addie – all residing in greater Chicagoland for most of the past nine years. Collectively, they have provided a network that – emotionally, physically, and not least, financially – has supported me more than they can imagine and than I could possibly express. It is to them that I dedicate my dissertation.

In a 1925 preface to a seminal investigation of delinquency by the Viennese psychoanalyst and educator August Aichhorn, Sigmund Freud offered a wryly cynical assessment of the efficacy of psychoanalytic therapy: “at an early stage,” he wrote, “I had accepted the bon mot which lays it down that there are three impossible professions – educating, healing, and governing (*Erziehen, Kurieren, Regieren*).” Already “fully occupied” with one, Freud admitted that he had little time to devote to the other two callings.<sup>1</sup> Yet he acknowledged what amounted to a fundamental link, one in which the impossibility of the professional activity of the therapist and physician seemed to bind it to the work of educating and governing. It was a connection that could give rise to a very different outlook at the time Freud penned his preface. Indeed, Aichhorn’s work was a welcome indication of the expanding scope and growing influence of his science and one that furthermore helped to open up a promising field for the development of psychoanalytic theory and practice: “Of all the applications of psychoanalysis,” he wrote, “none has excited so much interest or aroused so many hopes, and none, consequently, has attracted so many capable workers, as its use in the theory and practice of the education of children.”<sup>2</sup>

The increasing application of psychoanalysis to education appeared to Freud to be a natural and logical outgrowth of its scientific concerns. Given the long-standing interest of psychoanalysts

---

<sup>1</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Geleitwort zu *Verwahrloste Jugend*,” in *Gesammelte Werke: Chronologisch Geordnet* (hereinafter *GW*) ed. Anna Freud et al., 18 volumes (1961-83), vol. XIV (1925): 565-67, at 565. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Freud’s work are from *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey et al. 24 volumes (London, 1953-74).

<sup>2</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort,” 565 (translation modified). The following year, Freud would make a very similar statement to the Swiss pastor and psychoanalytic educator, Oskar Pfister: “Of all the applications of psycho-analysis the only one that is really flourishing is that initiated by you in the field of education. It gives me great pleasure,” he continued, “that my daughter is beginning to do good work in that field.” Freud to Pfister, 21 November 1926, *Psycho-analysis and Faith: The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Oskar Pfister*, ed. Heinrich Meng and Ernst L. Freud, trans. Eric Mosbacher (London, 1963), 106.

in the persistence of early childhood conflicts into adulthood and with reconstructing the stages of psychosexual development from infancy to maturity, it was little wonder, Freud noted, that the expectation had arisen “that psychoanalytic concern with children will benefit the work of education.”<sup>3</sup> Yet with his witticism of the impossible professions, Freud signaled a certain distance from the optimism he saw around him: even as he greeted the indications that psychoanalysis was expanding its purview and colonizing new terrain, he sought to temper the resulting enthusiasm with caution, in the process, admonishing his followers not to lose sight of the limitations at the heart of analytic therapy.<sup>4</sup> Tracing a contrapuntal tension that would play out on a larger scale within the interwar psychoanalytic movement, far-reaching hope thus came up against ironic circumspection in Freud’s 1925 preface, enthusiastic expansion against skeptical withdrawal.

At the moment Freud wrote, optimism and expansion were far more in evidence in the movement his ideas had inspired. New psychoanalytic societies were springing up across the European continent – and indeed, across the globe – and established ones were experiencing a sudden influx of new members.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, Freudian thought was beginning to permeate cultural life and social practices to an unprecedented degree, reshaping both the way modern subjects thought about themselves and a wide range of expert forms of social administration and disciplinary knowledge.<sup>6</sup> Expansion, of course, entailed transformation. As psychoanalytic

---

<sup>3</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort,” 565.

<sup>4</sup> Knowing his admonition would have a conservative ring, Freud insisted in his preface that education was “*sui generis*,” “not to be confused with psychoanalytic influence” nor “replaced by it.” If this limit constrained the expansion of his science, it served, in Freud’s eyes, to protect the identity of psychoanalysis by situating it within its own limits around its specific – impossible – task. Freud, “Geleitwort,” 566.

<sup>5</sup> Two histories that expertly reconstruct this process of expansion are George Makari, *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 2008) and Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> The profound impact of Freudian thought on the way individuals understood and experienced their own interiority was attested to by numerous contemporary observers. So thoroughly had Freudian ideas saturated the surrounding culture (becoming, by the time of Freud’s death, “a whole climate of opinion,” in W. H. Auden’s famous words) that it was no longer possible to think of subjectivity in a pre-Freudian fashion. See, for example, Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* ed. Hannah Arendt,

societies were flooded with new members, a more politically progressive second generation of analysts took shape that would draw the Freudian movement in new directions over the coming years. In the course of this generational shift, new currents of psychoanalytic thought would emerge, ones marked by a twofold commitment: namely, to drawing analytic therapy out of the traditional clinical setting (or to rethinking this setting itself) and to bringing psychoanalytic theory to bear on social and political problems of a collective nature.

As Freudians refashioned their profession, they were drawn with particular force to education. A new hybrid project, the most vibrant within this expanding field of psychoanalytic activity, would emerge at the juncture of education and analysis over the postwar years. Known by contemporaries as psychoanalytic pedagogy, this new undertaking brought together a wide range of endeavors to bring analytic insight to bear on the enculturation of children – from educational experiments that combined Freudian thought with the theories of contemporary reforming pedagogues to attempts to enlighten parents and teachers about the psychosexual development of the child. No less important for the emergence of the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement, however, was the inverse impulse, namely, to rethink the work of analytic therapy through the lens of education. Especially as they sought to embrace an ever-wider range of mental and characterological disorders across a broader social spectrum, Freudians became ever more conscious of how their therapeutic work impacted the social – how, that is, it inevitably constituted a kind of education that either sustained or subverted social structures. And as psychoanalysis and education overlapped and interpenetrated to an ever-increasing degree, both callings were drawn into closer proximity to their impossible third term of governing.

---

trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1968 [1936], 235; Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday: An Autobiography* (Lincoln, 1946 [1942]), 69; Elias Canetti, *Die Fackel im Ohr. Lebensgeschichte 1921-1931*, 137-39.

“Experimental Futures and Impossible Professions” is a study of the intersection of psychoanalysis, education, and politics between the world wars. The First World War inaugurated a period of profound crisis in central Europe, one characterized by the destruction of established political orders, the volatilization of social relations, and the recasting of identities. For all the dangers that attended these upheavals, the impact of total war also opened new horizons of possibility for the remaking of established structures.<sup>7</sup> While the anxiety generated by the postwar crises reverberated throughout psychoanalytic thought, the opportunities offered by the emerging conjuncture were ones that psychoanalysts were eager to seize. Doing so, however, required refashioning their theory and practice to suit the times, a need that Freud himself acknowledged in the opening lines of an address to Fifth International Psychoanalytic Congress in September of 1918: speaking on the cusp of the revolutions that would topple the imperial regimes of central Europe and usher in a new era of democratic experimentation, he declared, “we have never prided ourselves on the completeness and finality of our knowledge and capacity. We are just as ready now as we were earlier...to learn new things and to alter our methods in any way that can improve them.”<sup>8</sup> Freud’s address was followed by a period of far-reaching revision and open-ended experimentation for his science. Over the ensuing decades, Freudians in central Europe would push their thought in new directions, developing revised models of the mind, innovative theories of the relationship between individual and society, and experimental therapeutic techniques while pioneering novel applications of analytic thought and practice to social problems.

Interwar psychoanalysis was a product of the conjunction of crisis and opportunity that took shape following the war, yet the depth to which the wider transformations intruded into and

---

<sup>7</sup> See on this subject, especially, Peter Fritzsche, “Did Weimar Fail,” *Journal of Modern History* 68/3 (1996), 629-53. An interpretation of the interwar decades as the crisis years of “classical modernity,” can be found in Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York, 1992 [1987]).

<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie,” in *GW XII* (1918): 183-94, at 183.

remade Freudian thought and practice over these years has largely eluded historians. There exists at present a marked disconnect between the historiography on interwar central Europe and historical studies of psychoanalysis.<sup>9</sup> Yet in Freud's own uncertain fluctuation between enthusiasm and caution are mirrored the tensions of a historical epoch that felt itself to be untethered from its prewar moorings and suspended between radically disjunctive possibilities.<sup>10</sup> By destroying so much of the world in which psychoanalysis emerged, war and revolution undermined established Freudian precepts and prompted a rethinking of its psychological theory and therapeutic practice. As they recast their own profession, Freudians were reflecting on the broader conjuncture they faced, and in the process, fashioning new forms of critical social thought for the new era.

A product of a liberal, bourgeois milieu, psychoanalysis was forced into bracing confrontation with what lay beyond its prewar limits between the wars and was furthermore riven by conflict between competing practical and theoretical models. The new era into which Freudians

---

<sup>9</sup> This despite the fact that the intimate relationship between psychoanalysis and the vibrant, conflict-ridden modernity of the interwar has become a standard trope of cultural and intellectual history. Peter Gay's classic history of Weimar culture offers one striking example of this intertwinement in its use of psychoanalytic concepts (e.g. "The Trauma of Birth," "The Revolt of the Son," and "The Revenge of the Father") to organize its analysis of the cultural trends of the era. Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York, 1968). On the relationship between psychoanalysis and interwar central European (specifically Weimar) modernity, see Veronika Fuechtner, *Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond* (Berkeley, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> This interpretation of interwar psychoanalysis draws from recent historiography on the experience of temporality and the general cultural *Stimmung* in interwar central Europe. Much of this work has sought to critically nuance or challenge older assessments that the prevailing mood was one of cynicism and grim anticipation of future catastrophe by recovering the optimism with which many contemporaries faced the task of reconstructing society and politics after the war. See especially Rüdiger Graf, *Die Zukunft der Weimarer Republik: Krisen und Zukunftsaneignungen in Deutschland 1918-1933* (Munich, 2008), 83-133. Graf, "Optimismus und Pessimismus in der Krise. Der politisch-kulturelle Diskurs in der Weimarer Republik," in *Ordnungen in der Krise. Zur politischen Kulturgeschichte Deutschlands 1900-1933*, ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig (Munich, 2007), 115-40. Peter Fritzsche, "Historical Time and Future Experience in Postwar Germany," in *Ordnungen in der Krise*, 141-64. Thomas Mergel, "High Expectations, Deep Disappointment: Structures of Public Perception of Politics in the Weimar Republic," in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, ed. Kathleen Canning et al (New York, 2010), 192-210. For broader reflections on conceptions of temporal experience – or what Martin Geyer terms *Zeitsemantik* – in the Weimar era, see Geyer, "'Die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen'. Zeitsemantik und die Suche nach Gegenwart in der Weimarer Republik," in *Ordnungen in der Krise*, 165-87, and Graf, *Die Zukunft der Weimarer Republik*.

were plunged was an era of the masses, one in which the supposedly autonomous bourgeois individual – the imaginative foundation of liberal politics – seemed in danger of vanishing into the anonymous collective. With the advent of what the psychoanalyst Paul Federn would term in 1919 “the fatherless society,” the constituents of the masses were imagined as children, ones orphaned by the recent upheavals, exposed to unprecedented levels of violence, and dependent on new forms of educational and political authority.<sup>11</sup> Reflecting this broader shift, Freud would write in his preface to Aichhorn’s 1925 work – significantly a study of an experiment in *mass* pedagogy – that “the child has become the main subject of psychoanalytic research” and has displaced the (adult) neurotics “on whom its studies began.”<sup>12</sup> The result of this displacement was a process of comprehensive refashioning – at once, exhilarating and intensely fraught – in which the identity of psychoanalysis and its most basic ethico-political commitments appeared up for grabs.

### Red Vienna

While broadly situated in interwar central Europe, the project’s center of gravity is Vienna, the capital of the nascent First Republic of Austria and the site of an ambitious interwar experiment in municipal socialism, one that would come to be known as “Red Vienna,” between the wars. The devastating impact of four years of total war on the civilian population of the former Habsburg imperial capital and the disorientating effects of the political upheavals that ensued all but demanded a far-reaching biomedical and pedagogical response by the political authorities. Together with experts from across the human sciences, Freudians would be deeply involved in the progressive effort to reconstruct and redesign the fabric of urban life, and it was here that the work of psychoanalysts to bring their knowledge to bear on social problems was pursued most

---

<sup>11</sup> Paul Federn, *Zur Psychologie der Revolution. Die vaterlose Gesellschaft* (Leipzig, 1919).

<sup>12</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort,” 565.

intensively over the interwar years. For all the differences that separated them from the Social Democratic project – differences that will be taken up below – the galvanizing impact of the broader experiment in democratic social renovation was vital to the expansion and flourishing of the progressive intellectual culture this project explores.

Masses of children and “childlike” masses were the privileged objects of Social Democratic interventions no less than psychoanalytic theory and practice between the wars. An experiment in mass culture – in organizing, disciplining, and elevating the lower classes – Red Vienna, in the words of one contemporary, was also the “capital city of the child.”<sup>13</sup> It was around the child, “the bearer of the future society,”<sup>14</sup> that many of the political aspirations of interwar Social Democracy converged, from the eugenic aim of repairing the biological stock of the nation, to the political imperative of educating citizens for a republic, to the revolutionary hope of creating “new people” who would bring about the transition to socialism.<sup>15</sup> Across a range of overlapping projects – involving the provisioning of immediate material assistance to ensure the physical well-being of newborns and efforts to inculcate a rational-hygienic and properly socialistic understanding of childrearing in parents (above all, mothers) – Social Democrats strove to refashion the urban sociocultural environment around the perceived needs of the child.

Red Vienna, however, was only one iteration of a broader movement to reform education that emerged in the decades prior to the war and crested in its wake.<sup>16</sup> The reform pedagogy

---

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Gerhard Benetka, *Psychologie in Wien. Sozial- und Theoriegeschichte des Wiener Psychologischen Instituts 1922-1938* (Vienna, 1995), 132.

<sup>14</sup> *Das Kind als Träger der werdenden Gesellschaft* was the title of an influential work of socialist pedagogy by Kurt Löwenstein from 1924.

<sup>15</sup> The most comprehensive overviews of the cultural politics of interwar Austrian Social Democracy are Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture, 1919-1934* (New York, 1991); Ernst Glaser, *Im Umfeld des Austromarxismus. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des österreichischen Sozialismus* (Vienna, 1981); and Josef Weidenholzer, *Auf dem Weg zum Neuen Menschen. Bildungs- und Kulturarbeit der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> On the importance of education in the postwar context see Ulrich Hermann, ed. ‘*Neue Erziehung*’ ‘*Neue Menschen*’. *Ansätze zur Erziehungs- und Bildungsreform zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur* (Weinheim, 1987); Heinz-Elmar

movement in central Europe was a heterogeneous phenomenon, one nourished by a range of cultural sources and harnessed to a variety of political commitments. Many of its most prominent representatives, however, saw the work of reforming education as an essential component in the democratization of society.<sup>17</sup> A broad liberalizing ethos united the vast majority of reform pedagogues: whether they saw their mission as bringing about cultural renewal through the emancipation of the child – its free development being understood as essential to the flourishing of culture – or the inculcation of the self-regulating habitus deemed essential for responsible citizenship in a liberal democracy – a loosening of external constraints being understood as critical for the internalization of social norms.<sup>18</sup> Amid the rapid and sweeping changes in social and political life over the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, a growing number of critics took issue with what they saw as the excessive formalization and rigidity of existing educational methods.<sup>19</sup> For reformers, the mechanistic, authoritarian pedagogy practiced in the traditional school exerted a deadening and stultifying effect on the pupil's intellectual and emotional

---

Tenorth, "Erziehungsuotpien zwischen Weimarer Republik und Dritten Reich," in *Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit*, ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig et al. (Munich, 2003), 175-198; and Peter Dudek, *Grenzen der Erziehung im 20. Jahrhundert. Allmacht und Ohnmacht der Erziehung im pädagogischen Diskurs* (Bad Heilbrunn, 1999).

<sup>17</sup> See on this subject, Marjorie Lamberti, *The Politics of Education: Teachers and School Reform in Weimar Germany* (New York, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> For overviews of this movement see, in addition to Lamberti, Wolfgang Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung, 1900-1932. Eine einführende Darstellung* (Weinheim, 1969); Jürgen Oelkers, *Reformpädagogik. Eine kritische Dogmengeschichte* (Munich 1989). The movement to reform education was very much a transnational phenomenon though, of course, one that was always articulated within the idioms of different national cultures and in response to their specific political conjunctures. The above studies focus primarily – though far from exclusively – on the movement as it emerged in the German-speaking lands, but many of the figures whose careers and thought they reconstruct had an influence that reached far beyond Central Europe and were, in turn, influenced by prominent reform educators like Maria Montessori and John Dewey.

<sup>19</sup> Poets and novelists often took the lead in articulating this critique of the established school and elaborating the new pedagogical ethos that emerged at the beginning of twentieth century. In a review of the famous work *The Century of the Child* by the Swedish author (also a reform pedagogue and feminist activist), Ellen Key, Rainer Maria Rilke would declare that "the creation of free children will be the loftiest duty of the coming century." Perhaps the most damning literary critique of the traditional school (in this case the prewar *Gymnasium*) came from the pen of Stefan Zweig in his memoir *The World of Yesterday* (1942). Other famous literary critiques of the established school and of the treatment of youth in society in general can include Heinrich Mann's *Professor Unrat* (1905), Hermann Hesse's *Unterm Rad* (1906), and Robert Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (1906).

development. In contrast to what reformers castigated as the prevailing materialistic conception of education, which hinged on the impersonal transmission of established content, the new pedagogy emphasized the development of the child's capacities in the face of an increasingly indeterminate future. Central to almost all strands of the reform pedagogy movement was the conviction that education had to take the child itself as its point of departure – for reformers of many stripes, the phrase *Erziehung vom Kinde aus* (“education from the child out”) captured the new pedagogical ethos that crystallized at the fin-de-siècle.

The commitment to grounding education in an intimate knowledge of the child gave a powerful impetus to collaboration between reforming educators and the nascent discipline of experimental psychology (at that time, still a subfield of philosophy in the Austrian and German university system). If education, in the words of one reformer, was to be nothing more than “applied psychology,” psychology, in turn, derived both professional legitimation and practical orientation from its alliance with reform pedagogy.<sup>20</sup> While this collaboration initially favored experimental psychology, dynamic and depth psychologies would increasingly contest this privileged relationship in the years prior to the war by claiming to offer essential insights into the processes by which children not only acquire knowledge but also internalize cultural norms and are thus drawn into the social world. Foremost among these were Freudian psychoanalysis and the offshoot movement of Individual Psychology that emerged around Alfred Adler, a former adherent who broke with Freud in 1911. Both movements would increasingly insist on the fundamental importance of their insights to the work of the educator, whether parent or teacher – as Freud himself wrote in his 1925 preface, “Every person” involved in the bringing-up of children

---

<sup>20</sup> The reformer in question was Berthold Otto, coiner of the phrase “*Erziehung vom Kinde aus*.” Quoted in Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung*, 86. The importance of the professional alliance with education for orientating and legitimating psychology is discussed in Gerhard Benetka's excellent history of the Psychological and Pedagogical Institute, *Psychologie in Wien*.

“should receive a psychoanalytic training, since without it children, the object of his endeavors, must remain an inaccessible problem (*unzugängliches Rätsel*).”<sup>21</sup>

Interwar Vienna – epicenter of the Freudian and Adlerian movements, and host, from 1922, to the pioneering Psychological and Pedagogical Institute of the City of the Vienna – witnessed a flourishing of pedagogical psychology in tandem with its vaulting educational ambitions.<sup>22</sup> Building on a tradition of progressive educational activism that reached back to the turn of the century, reform of the public school system would be a central priority of Austrian Social Democracy between the wars. Limited in their aspirations to create a more democratic, secular, and equalitarian Austrian school system by the national political dominance of Christian Social Party, Social Democrats would focus much of their energy on the transformation of the educational institutions of the municipality through the construction of experimental schools and the comprehensive reform of teacher training.<sup>23</sup>

Yet the renovation of formal education – the construction of “school city Vienna” – was only one dimension of a broader effort to transform the urban landscape and the mechanisms of proletarian socialization between the wars.<sup>24</sup> A “gigantic educational movement,” Red Vienna

---

<sup>21</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort,” 566. As a number of the following chapters discuss, education played an even greater role in the development of Individual Psychology. Adler and his followers would insist on the fundamental importance of their insights to education both earlier and more insistently than psychoanalysts. In the words of Bernhard Handlbauer, a leading historian of *Individualpsychologie*, Adler’s thought developed into a “pragmatic,” praxis-oriented, “pedagogical psychology” in the wake of the Great War, a development that owed much to the influence of Red Vienna but that was, in fact, already evident in the years immediately following Adler’s break with psychoanalysis in 1911. Handlbauer, *Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Individualpsychologie* (Vienna, 1984), at 115. See also Wittenberg, *Geschichte der individualpsychologischen Versuchsschule. Eine Synthese aus Reformpädagogik und Individualpsychologie* (Vienna, 2002) and Almuth Bruder-Bezzel, *Geschichte der Individualpsychologie* (Göttingen, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> The founding of the Psychological Pedagogical Institute – under the direction of Karl and Charlotte Bühler – was one in a succession of psychological institutes in German-speaking central Europe tasked with furnishing the knowledge of child development deemed necessary for instructional and curricular reform. See, on this subject, Benetka, *Psychologie in Wien*, especially 31-2.

<sup>23</sup> The political struggles surrounding the reform of the public school system are the subject of Michael J. Zeps, *Education and the Crisis of the First Republic* (Boulder, 1987). Charles A. Gulick also devotes a chapter to the subject in his monumental *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler* (Berkeley, 1948), ch. 16.

<sup>24</sup> The contemporary description of the Social Democratic metropolis as “school city Vienna” is quoted in Wittenberg, *Geschichte der individualpsychologischen Versuchsschule*, 17.

brought together Marxian socialists and progressive liberals in a “late Enlightenment” political culture that aimed to remake the social through the modification of consciousness.<sup>25</sup> In and through its dense network of child guidance and marriage advice clinics, its ambitious adult educational curricula, and its extensive publishing apparatus, Social Democrats strove to disseminate a form of political Enlightenment that would not only render its recipients immune to the blandishments of religious superstition and the enticements of capitalism but would pave the way for the rational, methodical, and fully conscious transformation of society. Focused especially on the young, this ambitious program of mass *Aufklärung* was accompanied by the construction of a network of party organizations that sought to remove the developing subject from the deleterious process of subject formation under capitalism in order to facilitate the flourishing of a socialistic ethos in the coming generation.<sup>26</sup> At its most radical, this project aimed for the creation of “new people” (*neue Menschen*), subjects who, by virtue of their upbringing, could “think and feel only as socialists.”<sup>27</sup>

All of the strands that comprised the broad and variegated educational movement of Red Vienna had deep roots in the party’s prewar history. Emerging out of a workers’ educational association in the late 1880s, the Social Democratic Worker’s Party (SDAP) had, from the outset, conceived of its political mission in pedagogical terms – as Victor Adler, the leader of the party, put it in 1907, “winning voters was useful and necessary, [but] educating Social Democrats was

---

<sup>25</sup> Alfred Pfabigan describes Red Vienna as a “gigantische Erziehungsbewegung” in his *Max Adler. Eine politische Biographie* (Frankfurt a. M., 1982), 198. The term “late Enlightenment” is from Friedrich Stadler’s important article “Spätaufklärung und Sozialdemokratie in Wien, 1918-1938. Soziologisches und Ideologisches zur Spätaufklärung in Österreich,” in Franz Kadmoska ed., *Aufbruch und Untergang. Österreichische Kultur zwischen 1918 und 1938* (Vienna, 1981), 441-73.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Scholing and Franz Walter, “Der ‘Neue Mensch’. Sozialistische Lebensreform und Erziehung in der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung Deutschlands und Österreichs,” in *Solidargemeinschaft und Klassenkampf. Politische Konzeptionen der Sozialdemokratie zwischen den Weltkriegen*, ed. Richard Saage (Frankfurt a. M., 1986), 250-73, at 255.

<sup>27</sup> Max Adler, *Neue Menschen. Gedanken über sozialistische Erziehung* (Berlin, 1924), 81.

both more useful and more necessary.”<sup>28</sup> To an even greater extent than other socialist parties in prewar Europe, the leaders of the Austrian Social Democratic party framed their authority in intellectual terms, as a mandate deriving from their capacity to account for political, social, and economic developments to their base. This commitment to aligning party policy with a philosophically sophisticated, historically grounded, and broadly compelling understanding of changing circumstances would give rise, in the years prior to the war, to a pioneering school of social thought known as Austro-Marxism. In the wake of the war, as socialism went from being a “distant future prospect” to a “practical task of this age,” in the words of Otto Bauer – a leading Austro-Marxist theorist who assumed leadership of the party following Victor Adler’s death in 1918 – the decisive factor for Social Democracy became “the improvement of the individual” through “the melioration of the mind.”<sup>29</sup>

If seizing the opportunities opened up by the upheavals of the preceding years appeared to require a renewal of the party’s pedagogical mission, the demographic crisis the war generated necessitated its expansion and redefinition. The experience of total war was nothing short of a biological catastrophe for the population of the lands that would constitute the Republic of German-Austria founded in November of 1918. Vienna was particularly devastated – a conjunction of grinding hunger and virulent epidemics compounding the effects of wartime dislocation and unprecedented loss of life.<sup>30</sup> Fittingly, in the seminal 1916 lecture “Das Tor der Zukunft” by the socialist school reformer Otto Glöckel – later to be the Republic’s first minister of education – a vision of the transformation of the public school system was elaborated against

---

<sup>28</sup> Viktor Adler, “Neue Aufgaben,” *Der Kampf. Sozialdemokratische Monatsheft* 1 (1907): 8.

<sup>29</sup> Otto Bauer, “Schulreform und Klassenkampf. Ein Vortrag über die Funktionen der Schule in der Gesellschaft,” reprinted in *Otto Bauer. Werkausgabe* vol. 2 (Vienna, 1976 [1921]), 405-426, here 424 and 419.

<sup>30</sup> On the impact of the war on the “home front” see especially, Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (New York, 2004).

the backdrop of a comprehensive program of welfarist social intervention, one centered on the needs of the most vulnerable. While long familiar, from his work as a *Volksschullehrer*, with the brutal material hardships confronted by working class children, the level of collective vulnerability generated by total war lent new urgency to Social Democratic politics.<sup>31</sup> Envisioning a new social order in which “care for the child would begin before birth” and would be continued in a system of “nurseries, children’s homes, and kindergartens” run by “capable and educated people,” Glöckel’s address fundamentally rewrote the social contract with a new set of principles at its base. In his address, human needs, specifically those of the immature and exposed, superseded fiscal imperatives and suspended political divisiveness – regardless of the expenditure, “it must come to the point (*es muss so weit kommen*) that there are no hungry and freezing children in Austria.” “In the hour of inner doubt and despondency,” Glöckel concluded, “concern for the child lends us new energy time and again.”<sup>32</sup>

As the Social Democrats assumed control of the former Habsburgs *Haupt- und Residenzstadt* in 1919, Vienna underwent a dramatic shift in its ideological valence. From the “bastion of traditional *bürgerlich* morality and dynastic social stability” that it represented over the previous two decades of Christian Social municipal hegemony, Vienna was recast, in the wake of the war, into a “totalizing instrument of revolutionary hope,” John Boyer has argued.<sup>33</sup> Yet while intimidating to its enemies and inspiring for its supporters, Red Vienna was always a vulnerable project, a consequence of the profound crises that beset the First Republic. Even in the eyes of sympathetic commentators, the republic that was founded in the wake of the Empire’s

---

<sup>31</sup> Otto Glöckel, “Das Tor der Zukunft,” in *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, ed. Erik Adam (Vienna, 1983 [1917]), 334-49. For his experiences as a *Volksschullehrer* see Glöckel, *Selbstbiographie. Sein Lebenswerk: die Wiener Schulreform* reprinted (in abridged format) in *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik*, 324-330.

<sup>32</sup> Glöckel, “Das Tor der Zukunft,” 336, 348.

<sup>33</sup> John Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 8, 380.

dissolution was little more than a remainder, the rump state left over after the imperial lands had been carved up into the new nation-states of central and east-central Europe.<sup>34</sup> Deemed by many to be economically unviable and thus “incapable of life” (*Lebensunfähig*), the First Republic would be divided throughout the interwar period between a “Red” metropolis and a “Black” (conservative, Catholic) hinterland.<sup>35</sup> The ideological polarization reflected in this division would deprive the new order of a stable foundation of political consensus, fueling a bitter clash of worldviews that rent the fragile republic.

Born in conditions of revolutionary upheaval that fed off and exacerbated the social bitterness generated by four years of total war, the First Republic would be further destabilized by profound economic turmoil. Following a period of rampant inflation, the restoration of monetary stability after the 1922 Geneva Protocols, which the Christian Socials negotiated unilaterally with the former nations of the Entente, ushered in a period of chronically high unemployment. By imposing a regime of fiscal austerity on the young republic, the Geneva Protocols marked the definitive closure of the postwar hopes of Social Democrats for a rapid transition to socialism through the expansion of social welfare provisions and the comprehensive restructuring of the economy. Having been forced into opposition in the national elections of 1920, however, the Social Democrats – despite vociferous protests – were powerless to oppose the stipulations of the

---

<sup>34</sup> Attributed, perhaps apocryphally, to the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, a presiding figure at the Treaty of St. Germain that formally concluded the war between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Entente, the famous phrase “Der Rest ist Österreich” (“the rest is Austria”) captured this sense of victimization.

<sup>35</sup> This is something of an oversimplification since, as John Boyer notes, the conflict that divided center and periphery, also rent the cultural and intellectual life of Vienna itself in the interwar period. Across the 1920s and early 1930s, Red Vienna was locked in a fierce struggle with a “Black” nemesis, an “aggressively confident” Catholic conservatism, that thrived in the most prominent cultural and intellectual positions within the metropolis. John Boyer, “Silent War and Bitter Peace: The Revolution of 1918 in Austria,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 34 (2003), 1-56, at 45. While his central contention that “Black” intellectuals were the hegemonic force in the urban public sphere is not beyond critique (overly indebted as it is to a model of *Öffentlichkeit* that the Social Democratic project aimed to contest), Janek Wassermann’s *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918-1938* (Ithaca, 2014), offers a rich survey of the cultural landscape of interwar Vienna.

1922 agreement. With the national government in the hands of Christian Social led coalitions over the entire period from 1920 to 1934, Social Democrats were effectively constrained to focus their progressive ambitions on redesigning the municipality of Vienna, after 1920 an independent state within the First Republic.

For all the problems that marked the postwar conjuncture, however, the year 1927 has often been identified as a disastrous turning point in the history of the republic. The immediate cause of this catastrophe was an egregious miscarriage of justice. On July 15, two right-wing vigilantes who earlier that year had killed a young boy and a war invalid after opening fire on a group of Social Democratic demonstrators, were acquitted by the jury of the district court in Vienna. In response, the Viennese working-class rose in protest, yet the leaders of the SDAP were caught in a bind: despite denouncing the verdict as a virtual declaration of civil war, they were hesitant to condone demonstrations that could potentially threaten the embattled institution of trial by jury.<sup>36</sup> Having opted to refrain from organizing the embittered workers, the party forfeited control over the protestors, who directed their ire at the Palace of Justice, setting it ablaze and preventing fire engines from reaching the building. In response, Ignaz Seipel, a Catholic prelate and Federal Chancellor, and Johann Schrober, the Chief of Police, directed armed officers to march on the protestors. What followed was a massacre – described by its leading historian as a “shooting psychosis” – that left eighty-five civilians and four police officers dead.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> The denunciation of the acquittal as an act of civil war was from the leading editorial of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* on July 15 and was written by the paper’s editor-in-chief, Friedrich Austerlitz. “Die Arbeitermörder freigesprochen. Der Bluttag von Schattendorf ungesühnt,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung* 40 no. 193 (15 July 1927), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Gerhard Botz quoted in Stefan Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York, 2013), 4. Jonsson’s brilliant study begins with a gripping description of the upheaval, so central to the history of the First Republic, but uses it as a point of entry into a discussion of the figure of the masses in Central European thought between the wars. The upheavals of July 15, 1927 figure in many historical accounts partly as a turning-point and partly as the moment when the vulnerability of Social Democracy was simply exposed in its fullness. For a fuller account of July 15 and its resolution see Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934* (Munich, 1976), 141-60.

In their spontaneity, the protests of July 15 recalled the wave of strikes that wracked Austria between 1917 and 1919, and they seemed to vividly instantiate the party leaders' worst fears should the masses elude their disciplining grasp. The violence lent a new degree of toxicity to the political climate, with Seipel praising the police force as "the most steadfast protector of the order of the state" and being condemned, in turn, by the Social Democrats and their allies as the "prelate without pity" for his unrelenting animus.<sup>38</sup> From the violent suppression of the revolt emerged an emboldened radical right: over the coming years, as conservative political forces sought to roll back the democratic achievements of the revolution and erode the independence of the Social Democratic stronghold of Vienna, the nationalist paramilitary organization, the *Heimwehr*, would intensify its efforts to precipitate a fascist-backed putsch with the aim of demolishing the "Red" menace of Social Democracy. With the onset of the global economic depression in 1929, skyrocketing unemployment further undermined the ability of the SDAP to both defend and discipline its constituents. In this context of deepening despair, the increasing attacks on the democratic order – including the suspension of parliament by the Christian Social chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss in 1933 – provoked an abortive uprising by the members of the SDAP's own paramilitary organization in February of 1934. Following a brief civil war, the SDAP was abolished, its leadership either incarcerated or exiled, and the republican constitution – already weakened by years of authoritarian revisions – was replaced by a Catholic corporatist state (*Ständestaat*) presided over by an Austrofascist regime.

The ultimate inability of the SDAP to effectively resist the rising tide of illiberalism has given rise to a historiography dominated by the paradigm of failure and devoted to uncovering the

---

<sup>38</sup> Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy*, 33 and "Die Rede des Pharisäers," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 27 July 1927, 1.

causes of Social Democracy's presumed impotence.<sup>39</sup> Building on critiques that were formulated already in the interwar period, historians have emphasized how the Social Democrats were hamstrung by their divergent political commitments (to Marxist revolution and constitutional democracy), exposed by the discrepancy between their radical rhetoric and reformist practice, and undermined by their own increasingly defensive politics. What for many represented the proudest achievement of the party between the wars – the construction of a formidable network of party institutions that could embrace the individual's life “from cradle to grave” – has subsequently been reinterpreted as a symbol of its very immobility: in the face of its relentless attrition after 1927, the party only deepened its vulnerability, Anson Rabinbach has argued, through a “fetishistic clinging to the institutionalism of the ‘enclave’ of Red Vienna,” a defense mechanism that went hand-in-hand with attempts to demobilize radical youth.<sup>40</sup> Echoing interwar critics of the cultural politics of Red Vienna, historians have interpreted the party's emphasis on education as a testament to its inability to alter the material-economic bases of social reproduction. “Sheep in wolves' pelts,” the Social Democrats were ultimately exposed by historical developments, their educational idealism revealed as a façade for an underlying impotence.<sup>41</sup>

In a particularly robust version of this critical narrative, the party's social and cultural politics have been held up as part of a fundamentally disciplinary undertaking. Intended to provide a “foretaste of the socialist utopia of the future,” in Helmut Gruber's words, Red Vienna ultimately

---

<sup>39</sup> Key works in this vein include Norbert Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus. Der Austromarxismus als Theorie und Praxis* (Vienna, 1985 [1968]); Anson Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism: From Red Vienna to Civil War, 1927-1934* (Chicago, 1983); Gruber, *Red Vienna*; Ernst Hanisch, *Der grosse Illusionist. Otto Bauer (1881-1938)* (Vienna, 2011); and Wasserman, *Black Vienna*.

<sup>40</sup> Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism*, 79.

<sup>41</sup> The inversion of the Biblical aphorism was, in fact, originally used in a cautionary vein in an 1899 letter to the revisionist Social Democrat Eduard Bernstein by Victor Adler. For Adler, the controversies that Bernstein's critical interventions had generated, by bringing about public discussion of the inconsistencies in Social Democratic politics, threatened to expose the underlying fragility of their position. In Norbert Lesers's seminal study, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus*, the twin images of “Wölfen im Schafspelz” and “Schafen im Wolfspelz” figure as an apt metaphor for “die Tragik und Zerrissenheit der austromarxistischen Position” (31-2).

only enshrined the bourgeois presuppositions and prejudices of the party leaders, whose detachment from and contempt for working class subcultures undermined their own pedagogical politics.<sup>42</sup> Far from an emancipatory enterprise, the attempt to mold the working-class – to “keep the proletariat alive, to enlighten it, and to bring it forward” – was part of an authoritarian project of cultural elevation, these historians have argued.<sup>43</sup> In a telling example, the new cadres of largely female welfare workers that fanned out over the city and entered proletarian domiciles in increasing numbers over the interwar years figure in this revisionist historiography not as the symbols of a commitment to social equality and (an albeit limited) form of gender emancipation but rather as the instruments of a new regime of social control, representatives of a paternalist authority that sought to coercively socialize the working class into bourgeois norms of order and hygiene.<sup>44</sup>

If the narrative of failure is to some extent both irrefutable and compelling, in its more one-sided iterations it has also had the regrettable consequence of foreclosing more nuanced consideration of the challenges Austrian Social Democracy faced between the wars. Part of a continent-wide crisis of liberal, constitutional democracy, the inability of the SDAP to defend the achievements of the revolution has been too easily ascribed to the specific shortcomings of its leadership. As they sought to manage a range of crises that extended well beyond the borders of the First Republic, Social Democrats faced the impossible task of navigating a set of commitments

---

<sup>42</sup> This thesis has been developed most forcefully in Helmut Gruber’s *Red Vienna* (quote at 5), but in its essential features it was anticipated by J. Robert Wegs, *Growing Up Working Class: Continuity and Change Among Viennese Youth, 1890-1938* (University Park, PA, 1989). Elements of it are also strongly present in Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism*.

<sup>43</sup> Quote from Julius Braunthal, *Victor und Friedrich Adler. Zwei Generationen Arbeiterbewegung* (Vienna, 1965), 176.

<sup>44</sup> See, for instance, Helmut Gruber’s chapter “The Worker Family: Invasions of the Private Sphere” in *Red Vienna*, 146-79. The disciplinary role of social workers is also emphasized (albeit in a more balanced assessment) in Gudrun Wolfgruber, *Zwischen Hilfestellung und sozialer Kontrolle. Jugendfürsorge im Roten Wien, dargestellt am Beispiel der Kindesabnahme* (Vienna, 1997).

that appeared both inseparable and increasingly irreconcilable. In the face of reactionary assaults on the republican order, the SDAP's dedication to constitutional democracy came to appear less a certain and legitimate path to attaining power than an obstacle that left it hamstrung and exposed. Equally vexing, if confronting this impasse seemed to require political education, how could one educate without depoliticizing, without that is, treating one's subjects as deficient – whether in insight or character – and thus immature. In both cases, Social Democrats were facing problems borne less of their own limitations than of tensions at the very heart of their politics, ones that the crises of the interwar laid bare at their most implacable and irresolvable.

The paradox of Austrian Social Democracy was that its strengths were intimately connected to its weaknesses. If the vitality of Red Vienna derived from its ability to synthesize and galvanize a broad array of cultural and intellectual currents, this same quality would later appear inseparable from an indecisiveness bordering on paralysis. In a similar vein, if the capacity to organize and discipline the masses was responsible for Social Democracy's emergence as a formidable political force, the emphasis on unity that this formative phase bequeathed to the party's subsequent history would appear, at moments of crisis, to be a reflection of and compensation for immobility. Recognizing the aporetic character of the challenges Social Democracy confronted, however, expands the frame of reference in productive directions and opens onto a more generous mode of critical engagement.<sup>45</sup> As intellectuals who self-consciously interrogated the impossibility of the three callings at the crux of the Social Democratic project,

---

<sup>45</sup> Against the insularity of much existing historical scholarship on First Republic Austria, attunement to the irresolvable contradictions exposed by the postwar conjuncture can serve as a valuable point of entry into the vibrant literature on the interwar. In particular, it would help to overcome the disconnect between the historiography on Austria and the vibrant field of Weimar studies in ways that would vitally enrich both. Perhaps the most telling example of this disconnect is the neglect of the subject of education in the field-defining *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes et al. (Berkeley, 1995); the recent compendium *Weimar Thought: A Contested Legacy*, ed. Peter E. Gordon and John P. McCormick (Princeton, 2013); and the pioneering *Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism* book series, ed. Edward Dimendberg, Martin Jay, and Anton Kaes, 50 vols. (1991-2016).

psychoanalysts probed the contradictions that beset the political culture of Red Vienna, and the crises of the interwar more broadly, with unparalleled sophistication.

### Interwar Psychoanalysis

If psychoanalysis was uniquely attuned to the “crises of classical modernity” between the wars, its origin as a product of profound social, cultural, and political transformation helps account for its critical purchase. To date, three broad paradigms have been developed to account for the historical emergence of psychoanalysis. In the first, the product of the seminal work of Carl Schorske, Freud’s discovery of the unconscious – like the flourishing of modernist impulses in fin-de-siècle Vienna more broadly – was a consequence of profound disappointment bordering, indeed, on trauma.<sup>46</sup> With the erosion of liberal political power in the Habsburg Empire at large over the last decades of the nineteenth century, and especially its destruction in Vienna itself at the hands of the anti-Semitic Christian Social party, the sons of the liberal bourgeois fathers who had presided over much of Austrian and Viennese politics in the 1860s and 1870s withdrew from the harsher political landscape emerging around them. The deepening sense of vulnerability that accompanied the rise of a more strident, mass politics – termed by Schorske a “politics in a new key” – over the 1880s and 1890s prompted a turn inwards, to an interior realm of radical aestheticist engagement or introspective analysis. Whether read with Schorske as a retreat from the political or, as John Toews has suggested, as a working-through of political attachments on a more intimate stage, the

---

<sup>46</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1980), especially 181-207. Schorske’s thesis has been deepened and enriched by William J. McGrath, *Freud’s Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria* (Ithaca, NY, 1987).

emergence of psychoanalysis was a response to historical upheavals that appeared tantamount to an overturning of the rational course of history.<sup>47</sup>

Shifting the discussion into a less catastrophic register, the second paradigm – developed by Peter Homans – casts psychoanalysis as a “creative response” to the loss of religious and cultural traditions brought about by the social transformations of modernity. In Homan’s account, dissolution and fragmentation figure as the dominant motifs of modernity but their impact was far from unambiguously negative. While the loss of “communal wholeness” organized by shared symbols and traditions generated a need for mourning, the “breaking up of attachments to the common cultures of the past” simultaneously opened up a new range of individualizing and introspecting possibilities – through “integrative and depth-psychological” investigations of one’s inner world (i.e. “analytic access”) the individual ego could embark on a process of diachronic break with the communal past. This conjunction of dissolution and liberation would reach its “greatest intensity,” Homans argues, with the emergence of psychoanalysis.<sup>48</sup>

The third paradigm, represented by the work of Eli Zaretsky, places the emphasis even more firmly on emancipation. Psychoanalysis emerged in the midst of the second industrial revolution as what Zaretsky terms “the practice and theory of personal life,” the historically novel “experience of having an identity distinct from one’s place in the family, in society, and in the social division of labor.” No longer securely anchored in family-based units of production and consumption and faced by an emerging mass-market society, personal identity became both “a problem and a project for individuals,” one expressive both of the disorientation caused by these

---

<sup>47</sup> John E. Toews, “Historicizing Psychoanalysis: Freud in His Time and for Our Time,” *The Journal of Modern History* 63 (1991): 504-45, at 531-35.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Homans, *The Ability to Mourn: Disillusionment and the Social Origins of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago, 1989), at 1, 4-5, and 9. Recently, Joel Whitebook has employed Homans’s thesis as one of the two interpretive axes of his astute study *Freud: An Intellectual Biography* (New York, 2017).

social transformations and the emancipatory hopes awakened by the declining authority of the traditional patriarchal family.<sup>49</sup> With its central concept, the personal unconscious, signifying a “lived sense of disjuncture between the public and the private, the outer and the inner,” psychoanalysis both reflected and valorized the possibilities opened up by the transition to late capitalism.<sup>50</sup> At its core, Zaretsky argues, was the objective of *defamilialization*, of individual liberation from “unconscious images of authority originally rooted in the family.”<sup>51</sup>

Trauma, loss, disillusionment, and liberation – the experiences that historians have identified to account for the emergence of psychoanalysis at the fin-de-siècle would resurface with far greater intensity at the end of the First World War. Paradoxically, the moment in which Freud spoke bitterly of his “imminent proletarianization,” bemoaned the “pile of crap” the Habsburgs had left in their wake, and anxiously prophesied “bloody resistance,” was also the moment in which psychoanalysis was on the cusp of its most dramatic expansion.<sup>52</sup> In contrast to Freud’s own generally bleak outlook, for many who turned to psychoanalysis at this juncture, especially from the radical wing of the Austrian and German youth movement, Freudian thought was an integral part of a process of individual and collective emancipation from the fetters of the past: in its honesty regarding the most intimate and unsettling aspects of personal life, psychoanalysis exploded the hypocritical morality of the previous, “bourgeois” era and helped fashion the rudiments of new forms of sociality. By amplifying the very conjunction of factors that gave rise

---

<sup>49</sup> Eli Zaretsky, *Political Freud: A History* (New York, 2015), 20.

<sup>50</sup> Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 2004), 6.

<sup>51</sup> Zaretsky, *Political Freud*, 21.

<sup>52</sup> Freud’s “prophecy of our imminent proletarianization” is from a letter he received from his close follower and friend, Sándor Ferenczi, in which the latter was repeating Freud’s own, most likely spoken, words to him. Ferenczi to Freud, 7 November 1918, in *Briefwechsel. Band II/2, 1917-1919* (Vienna, 1996), 183. Freud’s statement about the “pile of crap” left by the Habsburgs and his prediction of a “bloody reaction” are both from letters to Ferenczi, dated 17 November 1918 and 9 November 1918 respectively, in *Briefwechsel II/2*, 186 and 185.

to psychoanalysis, the “great and powerful shocks of this volcanic epoch” would pave the way for the “second birth” of the movement.<sup>53</sup>

In the wake of the war, psychoanalysis spoke directly to the enormous optimism about the capacity to renovate society that the upheavals of war and revolution had generated. With its sophisticated model of mental functioning, psychoanalysis seemed to offer a new means of conceptualizing the psychological underpinnings of social life and a radically new technology for reshaping the social world by taking hold of the individual psyche. In the labile climate of postwar central Europe, these new potentialities would feed into a set of quasi utopian expectations. With the growing conviction that psychoanalysis offered a novel mechanism for grasping the inner processes that underlay outward behavior (and were, in turn shaped and constrained by social forces), a new horizon of possibility seemed to open up. In essay after essay, educators and therapists who drew from Freudian thought confidently proclaimed that their new theoretical understanding allowed them to dispense with antiquated methods for healing and molding the individual subject and to penetrate the object of their professional work with new finesse.<sup>54</sup> Rather than contenting themselves with what they saw as purely external modifications, psychoanalysts aimed to work from the inside out, or rather, to connect the alterations of the pedagogical environment and the therapeutic relationship with an understanding of their effects on the subject’s psyche. With their knowledge of the dynamic relation of forces within the mind, Freudians aimed to alter the inner foundations of the phenomena they confronted, to reshape subjects from within, and thus, society from the ground up.

---

<sup>53</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, undated (likely first half of March 1919), *Briefwechsel: Bd. II/2*, 232. Karl Fallend, *Sonderlinge, Träumer, Sensitive. Psychoanalyse auf dem Weg zur Institution und Profession* (Vienna, 1995), 108.

<sup>54</sup> The testament of the Swiss psychoanalytic educator, Hans Zulliger, can stand in for numerous similar statements: “Es handelt sich für mich darum, die inneren Grundlagen der Erscheinungen zu ändern, und darum bedurfte ich der Kenntnis der dynamischen Kräfteverhältnisse, die sie zuwege brachten.” Zulliger, *Gelöste Fesseln. Studien, Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen* (Dresden, 1927), 89.

Even as they framed their interventions as departures from the superficial methods of less sophisticated therapists and educators, however, Freudians were increasingly forced to take into account what lay outside of their established purview.<sup>55</sup> No longer the stable, taken-for-granted backdrop of their therapeutic work, social reality was unpredictable and threatening as never before. The movement from the outside inwards – from observable behavior to the inner psychical dynamics that determined it – was thus coupled with the opposite impulse from the inside outwards, that is, from the individual subject and the Oedipal family constellation towards a social reality that could no longer be held apart and contained.<sup>56</sup> The force of the upheaval would prompt the postwar development of a new body of Freudian thought, a psychoanalytic social theory that explored both the psychosexual forces at work in sustaining and dissolving social bonds and the libidinal attachments generated by particular social configurations beyond the Oedipal family matrix.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps more important, the practical and theoretical revision of psychoanalysis that Freud initiated in 1918 would have at its center the psychical agency of the ego, the anxious, vulnerable entity responsible for regulating the boundaries between within and without.

---

<sup>55</sup> A seminal text in this regard was Ernst Simmel, *Kriegsneurosen und 'psychisches Trauma'. Ihre gegenseitige Beziehung, dargestellt auf Grund psychoanalytischer, hypnotischer Studien* (Leipzig, 1918). Simmel, a German physician who turned to psychoanalysis during the war, insisted that adapting Freudian technique to the treatment of the war neuroses enabled him to dispense with crude and brutal methods common among military physicians and to develop a far more humane and effective form of psychotherapy (see chapter two).

<sup>56</sup> The war, Peter Homans argues, “[drove] Freud once again inward, into his inner world” while “turn[ing] his thoughts outward, towards the surrounding culture.” Glossing the reading Homans provides, Joel Whitebook notes aptly that “social reality could no longer be bracketed” in psychoanalytic thought. Homans, *The Ability to Mourn*, 195 and Whitebook, *Sigmund Freud*, 328

<sup>57</sup> Freud’s earlier cultural historical studies provided the rudiments of a social theory, but there was a major difference between these studies (e.g. “Totem and Taboo” from 1913 and “The Moses of Michelangelo” from 1914) and the social theory of the postwar years (above all, “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego” and “Civilization and its Discontents”). As Louis Rose suggests in an insightful reading of these texts, what distinguished the latter from the former was the quality of uncertainty that haunted the interwar studies. While the earlier studies staged dramas of recovery, in which ritual enacted the recuperation of culture from the threat of the primal horde, in the wake of the war, this pattern appeared to have been profoundly disrupted. “In the society in which he now found himself,” Rose writes, Freud “witnessed the contemporary rebirth of the horde as a concrete manifestation of a world which had lost the form and unity of drama.” Rose, *The Freudian Calling: Early Viennese Psychoanalysis and the Pursuit of Cultural Science* (Detroit, 1998), 167.

If the volatility of external reality and its intimate connection to the individual psyche seemed to open new possibilities for comprehensive social renovation through therapeutic and pedagogical intervention, the same labile quality was the source of profound apprehension. Optimism regarding the possibility of remaking the social was thus coupled to a fraught uncertainty about the kind of social order that would emerge from the present ferment. Compounding this anxiety, however, was a deepening sense of frustration. For many Freudians, the optimistic expectation that their insights would furnish a basis for new therapeutic and pedagogical practices of far-reaching (indeed, transformative) import foundered on the manifold difficulties they faced – in a sense, the more they were forced to confront external reality and the deeper into psychical reality they delved, the more they uncovered new obstacles and limits to their professional work. Psychoanalytic thought between the wars would increasingly turn around these very obstructions, furnishing less a technology for social transformation or an expert discourse for social control than a sustained reflection on the forces – both psychic and social – that seemed to inevitably impede their aspirations. Suspended between vaulting optimism and anxious uncertainty, Freudians would deflect the disillusionment generated by these experiences into a deepening vein of self-reflective critique.

The fluctuations that characterized interwar Freudianism, this project argues, reflected a series of splits in the identity of psychoanalysis, ones engendered (or at least exposed) by the rupture of war and revolution. How analytic therapy was to proceed, who it was intended for, and the basic theoretical assumptions that informed it were far less certain in the wake of four years of total war. The questions raised by the upheavals of the preceding years pushed Freud to undertake a far-reaching remodeling of psychoanalytic theory, a process that involved the postulation of the death instinct and repetition compulsion in 1920, the elaboration of the topographical model of the

psyche in 1923, and the reversal of his earlier theory of anxiety in 1926. While intended, in part, to suture the fissures opened up by these ruptures, Freud's postwar revision only confirmed and thus deepened the very split he sought to redress: in its wake, it became possible to legitimate theoretical departures on the grounds of a psychoanalytic theory whose foundations were now far less certain. Following Freud's own remodeling of his theory, what some condemned as potentially fatal departures from "the cause" (*die Sache*) of psychoanalysis would thus be championed by others as logical extensions of its fundamental tenets and essential insights – indeed as themselves attempts to preserve psychoanalysis against perceived deviations.<sup>58</sup>

A similar pattern unfolded within therapeutic practice over the interwar years. As a product of a *bildungsbürgerlich* milieu and one formed, to a large extent, around liberal political principles (i.e. contract theory, negative liberty, and individual autonomy), psychoanalysis would find itself in a paradoxical position in the wake of the war.<sup>59</sup> The confrontation with mass psychological disorders

---

<sup>58</sup> Insightful discussions of the significance of the Freudian revision for the psychoanalytic movement can be found in Makari, *Revolution in Mind*, especially 311-19 and Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, especially 163-71. Over the late 1920s and the 1930s, the most important modifiers of analytic theory and technique (Wilhelm Reich, Melanie Klein, and Anna Freud) would see themselves as preserving its essential insights against supposed deviants. See on this subject, Wilhelm Reich's autobiographical reflections in *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy* (New York, 1973 [1942]) and Phyllis Grosskurth, *Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work* (New York, 1986), 222.

<sup>59</sup> The indebtedness of the Freudian theory of the subject and classical psychoanalytic technique to the liberal, bourgeois – specifically *bildungsbürgerlich* – context in which it emerged has been widely recognized, yet the significance of this relationship has rarely been grasped in its fully complexity. While Helmut Dahmer's contention, for instance, that "Freud's Theorie gilt das moderne bürgerliche Individuum als Naturkategorie, nicht als sozial," contains more than a kernel of truth, what it neglects is the extent to which psychoanalysis itself was a product of a crisis of the modern bourgeois individual. If Freud tended at times to naturalize the ideal of the cultivated, autonomous, bourgeois subject, historical events – no less than the neurotics he treated – confronted him repeatedly with evidence that such a model was anything but natural and self-sustaining. It is certainly no coincidence that it was precisely those moments when the ideological nature of the category of the bourgeois individual was most brutally exposed (e.g. the mid-1890s and the close of the First World War) that Freud embarked on his most far-reaching investigations and revisions. Of course, it may also have been those moments of traumatic rupture that generated a countervailing desire to uphold liberal bourgeois ideals, at times, in a manifestly ideological fashion. See Helmut Dahmer's words. Dahmer, *Libido und Gesellschaft. Studien über Freud und die Freudsche Linke* (Frankfurt a. M., 1982), at 160. On the importance of Freud's *bildungsbürgerlich* inheritance to the practice and theory of psychoanalysis (or its theory of practice), see especially Sarah Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalysis* (Stanford, 1999) and José Brunner, *Freud and the Politics of Psychoanalysis* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2001). A one-sided, polemical interpretation of this relationship can be found in Erich Fromm, "Die gesellschaftliche Bedingtheit der psychoanalytischen Therapie," in *Erich Fromm Gesamtausgabe* in twelve volumes, ed. Rainer Funk, vol. 1 *Analytische Sozialpsychologie* (Stuttgart, 1999), 115-38.

and the general state of childlike vulnerability that the catastrophe produced appeared to require that psychoanalysts go beyond their former limits and develop therapeutic methods capable of addressing these phenomena. Yet if upholding the liberal principles central to classical (orthodox) psychoanalysis effectively relegated analysis to the private sphere, all but ensuring its impotence, the attempts to fashion more socially effective modes of analytic therapy seemed inevitably to contravene its constitutive principles and, in the process, to threaten its unique identity. The various experimental efforts to move beyond the limits of orthodox psychoanalysis that were elaborated over these years – from Freud’s own vision in 1918 of a mass application of a modified analysis to Sándor Ferenczi’s “active” technique, Wilhelm Reich’s “character analysis,” and not least, Anna Freud’s analytic education of the child – involved the construction of a new kind of psychoanalytic authority, one that was as educational as it was therapeutic (or that blurred the lines between the two) and that inevitably involved psychoanalysis in a kind of governing – in this case, of forming subjects for broader ends.<sup>60</sup> As transgressions of “classical” psychoanalysis, however, such experiments were inevitably fraught and contested, reflecting an ambivalence that the plight of liberalism in the postwar context profoundly amplified. In essence, never before had attempts to expand the social reach of psychoanalysis appeared as imperative as they did in the wake of the war, and yet, never had the liberal principles around which “classical” psychoanalysis was formed appeared so precious and so vulnerable.

In the post-liberal era that dawned at the close of the war, psychoanalysts were thus confronted with the countervailing imperatives of going beyond their former limits by constructing

---

<sup>60</sup> See especially, Sándor Ferenczi, “Weiterer Ausbau der ‘aktiven Technik,’” in in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band II. Praxis* (Bern 1984 [1921]), 62-86. Wilhelm Reich, *Charakteranalyse. Technik und Grundlagen für Studierende und praktizierende Analytiker* (Vienna, 1933). Anna Freud, *Einführung in der Technik der Kinderanalyse. Vier Vorträge am Lehrinstitut der Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung* (Vienna, 1927) and Anna Freud, *Einführung in die Psychoanalyse für Pädagogen. Vier Vorträge* (Stuttgart, 1930).

new forms of therapeutic and pedagogical authority and of preserving the liberal principles of analytic therapy. The double bind that psychoanalysts sought to mediate (or, in some cases, resolve completely) in their successive revisions of analytic technique reflected an underlying set of political tensions. Torn between the liberal, *bildungsbürgerlich* culture from which it emerged and the Social Democratic project that took shape in the war's aftermath, the divergent political – as well as social, cultural, and ethical – commitments of psychoanalysts gave concrete expression to the fissures at the heart of its identity.<sup>61</sup>

For Freud and a number of the older generation of psychoanalysts (those who entered the profession before the outbreak of the war) the collapse of liberalism in central Europe after 1918 left them stranded in a state of political homelessness. At a time of wide-spread and virulent anti-Semitism, Social Democracy would offer a surrogate abode for Jewish and progressive liberals over the interwar years, yet despite a number of overlapping commitments – e.g. to a politics of anti-clerical *Aufklärung*, to constitutional democracy, and to an expansion of social welfare provisions – liberals of Freud's ilk would remain skeptical of social democratic politics. In a statement that bespoke an abiding identification with the politics of his father's generation, Freud would famously assert, in a 1930 letter to Arnold Zweig, that he remained a "liberal of the old

---

<sup>61</sup> This split has tended to be papered-over in the historiography as the political tensions of interwar psychoanalysis have been either downplayed or projected onto a handful of radical dissidents (most notably, Wilhelm Reich). In part, this reflects the impact of expulsion, transplantation, and assimilation on the politics of psychoanalysis over the middle decades of the twentieth century and the specific revisionist thrust that this experience has exerted on the historical memory of psychoanalysts – themselves, of course, the first historians of the movement. In order to facilitate assimilation into the comparatively conservative political culture of the United States, psychoanalysts tended to jettison their progressive or radical politics – to dump them overboard during their trans-Atlantic passage, in Russell Jacoby's memorable phrase. The consequence, however, was less a wholesale repression of the radical past of psychoanalysis, as Jacoby tentatively argues, than a selective distortion, a kind of harmonizing transfiguration in which the ethicopolitical conflicts that beset interwar psychoanalysis were effaced through a conflation of different positions. Paradigmatic of this tendency – and unfortunately taken at face value by Elizabeth Ann Danto – is the contention of the Viennese analyst Grete Lehner-Bibring in 1973 – "what here [in the United States] is a liberal was a socialist, a Social Democrat in Vienna." Russell Jacoby, "The Lost Freudian Left," *The Nation* (October 15, 1983), 344. On this subject see also Dagmar Herzog, *Cold War Freud: Psychoanalysis in the Age of Catastrophes* (New York, 2017), 34 ff. and Russel Jacoby, *The Repression of Psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Freudians* (Chicago, 1986). Elizabeth Ann Danto, *Freud's Free Clinics*, 66.

school.”<sup>62</sup> While several members of this older generation of analysts identified deeply with social democratic politics, for Freud, the gulf between a liberal bourgeois habitus formed, in large part, in opposition to the masses, and a Social Democracy that spoke directly to and on behalf of the proletariat, remained a salient feature of his political identity.

Yet amid the widespread deprivations and the general insecurity of life produced by the war, the politics of class distinction on which Freud’s liberalism was based would come to appear in glaring need of revision. In response, Freud would undertake his own recasting of bourgeois psychoanalysis, one in which liberal principles – no longer to be taken for granted – had to be reconstructed on a new, largely social democratic, foundation.<sup>63</sup> Another challenge, however, to the liberal identity of psychoanalysis would come from within the expanding ranks of the movement itself: if identification with Social Democracy was something of a forced choice where liberals of Freud’s cast were concerned, the younger generation that streamed into psychoanalytic associations following the war had far fewer reservations. Born for the most part in the 1890s, the members of this generation would inject an ethos of radical sociocultural critique and a commitment to emancipation from bourgeois, patriarchal norms into the Freudian movement. From Siegfried Bernfeld’s postwar socialist-Zionist experiment in mass upbringing to Wilhelm Reich’s politics of sexual emancipation through mass *Aufklärung*, the projects pursued by the more

---

<sup>62</sup> Freud to Arnold Zweig, 26 November 1930, in *The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig*, ed. Ernst L. Freud, trans. Elaine and William-Robson Scott (New York, 1970), 21. More, however, was in play than simple filial piety or class bias. As John Boyer notes a deep skepticism regarding the efficacy of reformist initiatives also informed Freud’s politics. Boyer, “Freud, Marriage, and Late Viennese Liberalism: A Commentary from 1905,” *The Journal of Modern History* 50 (1978): 72-102, especially 95-99.

<sup>63</sup> A telling illustration of this shift can be found in Freud and Ferenczi’s correspondence in the chaotic aftermath of the Great War when both looked to Social Democracy as the only potential source of salvation in the face of an even more catastrophic collapse. See Freud to Ferenczi, 17 November 1918 and Ferenczi to Freud, 24 November 1918 in *Sigmund Freud-Sándor Ferenczi: Briefwechsel*, vol. 2, part 2, 1917-1919, ed. Eva Brabant et al (Vienna, 1996), 186-87 and 189.

radical members of this generation placed them on the extreme left of the Social Democratic synthesis or, in some cases, exploded its bounds entirely.<sup>64</sup>

Psychoanalytic politics thus lurched leftwards after the war. Yet what bound the movement to Social Democracy was as much the hostility it confronted as the convictions analysts embraced. Paradoxically, at a time when the psychoanalytic movement was expanding rapidly and Freudian ideas were being disseminated as never before, the enmity psychoanalysis faced in interwar Austria gave analysts the feeling of “working in a hostile camp,” as Richard Sterba, a member of the second generation, recalled.<sup>65</sup> Deprecated by academic authorities, who dismissed its scientific credentials, and denigrated and condemned by Catholic conservatives for its supposed sexual licentiousness, psychoanalysis in interwar Vienna was an embattled institution. Significantly, the “Black” Vienna of entrenched conservative elites and reactionary Catholics that threatened the social democratic project were deeply hostile to psychoanalysis as well. Incited by the prominent role of men and women of Jewish origin in the two movements, anti-Semitism played a particularly baleful role in the animus directed at Freudianism and Social Democracy. In the polarized and incendiary cultural context of interwar Austria, the exercise of critical reason championed by both Social Democracy and psychoanalysis and the materialist epistemologies they embraced were cast as products of a Semitic worldview to be marked out and extirpated.<sup>66</sup> Faced by a common set of enemies and bound by a number of shared commitments, psychoanalysts and Social Democrats

---

<sup>64</sup> See Siegfried Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten. Bericht über einen ernsthaften Versuch mit neuer Erziehung*, reprinted in *Sozialpädagogik*, ed. Daniel Barth and Ulrich Hermann, vol. 4 of *Siegfried Bernfeld: Werke*, ed. Ulrich Hermann (Giessen, 2012 [1921]), 9-155. Wilhelm Reich, *Geschlechtsreife, Enthaltensamkeit, Ehemoral. Eine Kritik der bürgerlichen Sexualreform* (Vienna, 1930).

<sup>65</sup> Richard F. Sterba, *Reminiscences of a Viennese Psychoanalyst* (Detroit, 1982), 93.

<sup>66</sup> See, on this subject, Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (New York, 2012), chapter one.

would see themselves as part of the same embattled project to uphold reason and defend democracy in the face of reactionary assaults and regressive mysticism.<sup>67</sup>

In the hostile political and cultural environment in which they worked, the social democratic *Gemeinde* thus offered analysts a modicum of security and acceptance. Yet the protective enclosure provided by the municipality was not always a welcoming embrace. In its emphasis on childhood sexuality, psychoanalysis posed a political liability for Social Democracy, and the pessimism regarding projects of psychosocial renovation that Freudians often articulated ran markedly counter to the optimistic ethos of the social democratic experiment. As part of a broader campaign to enlist the intellectual class of Vienna in support of the party, Social Democrats were eager for the prestige that the psychoanalytic movement (and above all, Freud himself) could bestow, but on matters pertaining to the direction of their project of municipal socialism they by and large kept their distance. By virtue of its pedagogical and therapeutic optimism and its explicitly collectivist orientation, Adlerian Individual Psychology was far more congenial to the city fathers, and the dominance of followers of Alfred Adler within the expanding municipal educational and welfare apparatus would serve to occlude the entry of Freudians eager to apply their knowledge in the institutions of Red Vienna. Positioned firmly on the Social Democratic wing of the polarized political climate that emerged between the wars, Viennese psychoanalysts thus found few inroads into the *Gemeinde* itself. Simultaneously within and without, they straddled a unique threshold and one that mirrored the tensions that marked psychoanalytic thought itself.

---

<sup>67</sup> Perhaps the high-water mark of this cultural political alliance was the publication of Freud's 1927 "Die Zukunft einer Illusions," which, in marked contrast to his "Das Unbehagen in der Kultur" two years later, was reviewed enthusiastically in Social Democratic periodicals (see chapter six).

For all the personal and professional bonds that united the dispersed centers of the movement, the intellectual culture of interwar Viennese psychoanalysis was markedly distinct from that of other psychoanalytic societies. Often contrasted to the flourishing psychoanalytic scene in Weimar Berlin, interwar Viennese psychoanalysis was seen by some contemporaries as staid and traditional in contrast to the vibrancy and dynamism of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society.<sup>68</sup> While for some outside observers the presence of the movement's founder effectively cowed Viennese Freudians into submissive conformity, for the most part, those within the *WPV* experienced their proximity to Sigmund Freud in a radically different way – “the absorption, discussion, and application of Freud's powerful ideas enabled us to carry on with unabating fervor,” Sterba reminisced.<sup>69</sup> In contrast to the Berlin society, which sought to “establish psychoanalysis as a special subject within medicine,” “in Vienna, in close proximity to Freud,” Siegfried Bernfeld wrote, analysts strove to “place the new possibilities of the movement in the service of the earnest study of psychoanalysis and its application to all areas of therapy and education.”<sup>70</sup> This eagerness to bring psychoanalysis to bear on the practical task of redesigning

---

<sup>68</sup> See for instance, the British analyst, Alix Strachey's, assessment of the two centers of the psychoanalytic movement in Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Times* (New York, 2006 [1988]), 461. While a number of authors have identified 1920s Berlin as “the nerve center of world psychoanalysis,” in Gay's words (*Freud*, 460), such assessments pertain primarily to the five years (1920-1925) between the founding of the pioneering Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute and the death of Karl Abraham, the president of the International Psychoanalytic Association as well as of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society. Following the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Berlin was “lost” to the movement, as Freud put it in a letter to Ernest Jones, yet the local society had been losing eminent psychoanalysts to emigration for years prior to the destruction of the Freudian movement in Germany. While Freud himself described Berlin as the “headquarters” of international psychoanalysis in a letter to Abraham from 1920, when the entire span of the interwar is taken into consideration, Vienna emerges as the preeminent center of the psychoanalytic movement. Freud to Abraham, 28 November 1920, *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, 1907-1925*, ed. and trans. Ernst Falzeder (London, 2002), 434. See also Freud's statement in a letter to Abraham from 31 October 1920, “We are all proud of the upswing in Berlin. Nothing similar is to be expected here” (433). On this subject see also George Makari, *Revolution in Mind*, chapter ten.

<sup>69</sup> Sterba, *Reminiscences*, 37. “This was a moment of great hope – a utopian moment; and the emphasis was on the intellect,” Erik Erikson would later recall. See also Anna Freud's recollections, “Back then in Vienna we were all so excited – full of energy: it was as if a new continent was being explored, and we were the explorers, and we now had a chance to change things – to come back from that continent, you could say, with what we had learned, and offer it to the world...” Both quotes from Robert Coles, *Anna Freud: The Dream of Psychoanalysis* (Reading, MA, 1992),

<sup>70</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, “On Psychoanalytic Training,” *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 31 (1962 [1952]): 453-82, at 466.

society was offset, however, by an ironic skepticism regarding projects of emancipatory social transformation, a circumspection that Marjorie Perloff has recently identified as a quintessential feature of interwar Austrian modernism.<sup>71</sup> Together these countervailing impulses gave rise to what would perhaps be the most distinctive aspect of the intellectual culture of interwar Viennese psychoanalytic pedagogy, a circumspect pragmatism that worked for the betterment of society while relentlessly stripping away the supposedly illusory hopes that attended such efforts. Divided between earnest engagement and ironic circumspection and traversed by deep-seated anxiety, Viennese psychoanalytic pedagogy was an internally conflicted and intensely self-reflective project.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Marjorie Perloff, *Edge of Irony: Modernism in the Shadow of the Habsburg Empire* (Chicago, 2016).

<sup>72</sup> Little known in the Anglo-American world, the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement has become the subject of a substantial German-language literature. While attuned to the historical emergence of the movement, most of this literature – being geared more towards *Bildungs-* than *Geschichtswissenschaft* – is generally detached from the historical context and thus from meaningful historical (and historiographical) problematics. Overviews of the early history of psychoanalytic pedagogy include (or can be found in), Willy Rehm, *Die psychoanalytische Erziehungslehre. Anfänge und Entwicklung* (Munich, 1968); Hans Füchtner, *Einführung in die Psychoanalytische Pädagogik* (Frankfurt a. M., 1979); Wilfred Datler, *Was leistet die Psychoanalyse für die Pädagogik. Ein systematischer Aufriss* (Vienna, 1983); Günther Bittner and Christoph Ertle, *Pädagogik und Psychoanalyse. Beiträge zur Geschichte, Theorie und Praxis* (Würzburg, 1985); Achim Perner, “Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik,” in *Die wiener Jahrhundertwende. Einflüsse, Umwelt, Wirkungen* (Vienna 1993), ed Jürgen Nautz and Richard Vahrenkamp, 360-73; Reinhard Fatke and Horst Scarbath, *Pioniere Psychoanalytischer Pädagogik* (Frankfurt a. M., 1995); Reinhard Fatke, “Psychoanalytische Pädagogik und Reformpädagogik: Geschwister, die sich nichts zu sagen haben?” in *Gesellschaftlicher Wandel und Pädagogik: Studien zur historischen Sozialpädagogik*, ed. Sabine Andresen and Daniel Tröhler (Zürich, 2002), 156-170; Diana Zagorac, *Wie die Psychoanalyse zur Pädagogik kam. Psychoanalytische Pädagogik damals und heute* (Marburg, 2008); Maria Fürstaller, Wilfred Datler, and Michael Wininger ed., *Psychoanalytische Pädagogik. Selbstverständnis und Geschichte*, (Opladen, 2015). Two studies translated from the French have further contributed to this burgeoning scholarship, namely, Catherine Millot, *Freud Anti-Pädagoge* trans. Monika Metzger (Berlin 1982); Mirielle Cifali and Francis Imbert, trans. Beat Marz *Freud und die Pädagogik. Mit Texten von Sigmund Freud, August Aichhorn und Hans Zulliger* (Frankfurt a. M. 2013). The only English language overviews of this history are Rudolf Ekstein and Rocco L. Motto, *From Learning to Love to Love of Learning: Essays on Psychoanalysis and Education* (New York, 1969) and Sol Cohen, “In the Name of the Prevention of Neurosis: The Search for a Psychoanalytic Pedagogy in Europe, 1905-1938” in *Regulated Children/Liberated Children: Education in Psychohistorical Perspective*, ed. Barbara Finkelstein (New York, 1979), 184-219. A number of valuable studies of specific individuals within the movement or of experiments undertaken by psychoanalytic educators will be drawn in over the following chapters. It should also be noted that while little English language history of this movement exists, Anglo-American scholars (e.g. Deborah Britzman, K. D. Cho, and Mark Bracher among others) have produced sensitive and insightful work on the implications of psychoanalytic theory for education.

The liminal status of psychoanalysis in the Social Democratic metropolis, this project argues, was closely bound up with a unique critical perspective on the problems that beset it.<sup>73</sup> Yet for a number of commentators – contemporaries as well as historians – the emergence of this intellectual culture marked the moment when psychoanalysis went astray, when it lost touch with its proper object, the unconscious, to focus on the social determinants of psychic suffering and the means of facilitating the individual’s adaptation to social demands – when, that is, psychoanalysis was reduced to education.<sup>74</sup> Setting aside the internal ambivalence of Viennese analysts towards the applications and modifications they undertook, such a perspective deprives their work of its internal logic and its critical purchase by divorcing it from its proper context. Situated within the postwar conjuncture, it takes on a more complex, polyvalent significance. By destroying an established order, the war created the conditions for redesigning society anew, and the emphasis of Viennese psychoanalysts on adaptation as an aim for analytic therapy was inseparable from their efforts to reconstruct and renovate the social order.

---

<sup>73</sup> This interpretation is informed by Scott Spector’s cultural history of the Prague Circle for whom a similar liminality – i.e. an experience of being situated in “the uniquely charged spaces *between* identities” – was “linked to the critical power of their diverse texts.” Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka’s Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley, 2000), 5.

<sup>74</sup> Criticisms to this effect were raised as early as the mid-1920s by the child analyst Melanie Klein and her British followers. See, for instance, the papers delivered at the 1927 Symposium on Child Analysis that were subsequently published together in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. These papers set out to refute the model of child analysis developed by Anna Freud in her *Einführung in der Technik der Kinderanalyse*, and they contain perhaps the bluntest criticism to the effect that Viennese psychoanalysis had lost touch with its proper object: “Psycho-analysis,” Klein’s colleague, Joan Riviere famously contended, “is Freud’s discovery of what goes on in the imagination of a child—and it still provokes great opposition from us all; this ‘childishness’, these unconscious phantasies, are abhorred and dreaded—and unwittingly longed for—by us even yet, and this is why even analysts still hesitate to probe these depths. But analysis has no concern with anything else: it is not concerned with the real world, nor with the child’s or the adult’s adaptation to the real world, nor with sickness or health, nor virtue or vice. It is concerned simply and solely with the imaginings of the childish mind, the phantasied pleasures and the dreaded retributions. *These* have to be taken at their full value and credited with their true importance; for morality is nothing but frustration under another guise—if we can teach our patients to tolerate the latter the former follows as a matter of course.” Joan Riviere, “Symposium of Child Analysis: II” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 8 (1927): 370-77, at 376-77.

Remarking on this context in 1925, Siegfried Bernfeld would contend that “few principles meet with such general agreement” as the belief that “the countless disturbances of the present and the destiny of the future can only be altered through education” (*Erziehung*). Limning a scenario characterized by pervasive uncertainty in the domestic sphere, Bernfeld wrote,

Everywhere the educational function of the family has been placed in question. The pedagogical home remedies (*Hausmittel*), with which the grandparents found their way no longer seem to function, at the very least have forfeited their authority and validity; the uncertainty in all questions of value and society (*Wert- und Gesellschaftsfragen*) has robbed parents of the confidence to heedlessly enforce their will (*rücksichtslos durchzusetzen*); and feelings of guilt and hostility towards children and the family, together with economic hardship and the mental constriction it gives rise to, have generated the wish...to apply a proven educational theory.<sup>75</sup>

The development of psychoanalytic theory after the war exemplified the turn to education generated by the prevailing disorientation. As they reflected on the crisis unfolding around them, psychoanalysts would attempt to connect the disorder in the family sphere – the original scene of education – to the broader social stage, in the process, rethinking the most basic principles of social cohesion. And as they rethought the means by which social bonds emerge between subjects (along with the forces that break them apart), psychoanalysts were effectively reconceptualizing subjectivity for a new era. At the heart of their thought over the two decades between the wars was the new figure – almost the antithesis of the autonomous, cultivated bourgeois individual – of a childlike creature of the masses.

### Psychoanalysis, Education, and Politics in Interwar Vienna

Divided into seven chapters, “Experimental Futures and Impossible Professions” explores the politics of interwar psychoanalysis across a wide range of applications, problems, and

---

<sup>75</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, *Sisyphos, oder die Grenzen der Erziehung in Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung/Pädagogik und Psychoanalyse* ed. Ulrich Herrmann et al., vol. 5 of *Siegfried Bernfeld. Werkausgabe* (Gießen, 2013 [1925]), 11-130, at 16.

controversies. The first chapter, however, functions more as a theoretical foundation for what follows than as a grounded historical investigation of Freudian thought and practice. In particular, it explores the place of educational questions in the development of psychoanalysis between 1896 and 1914 and the emergence of a distinctively psychoanalytic theory of education (*Erziehung*, upbringing, enculturation) over these years. How children become social subjects, how they learned to relinquish primary modes of sexual gratification and to identify with the world of cultural values into which they were born, were questions that shadowed the emergence of Freudian thought. Convinced that their insights were of fundamental importance to understanding the process of enculturation, Freudians returned repeatedly to educational questions. Yet the uncertainty that enveloped Freudian sexual theory would be carried over into the emerging psychoanalytic discourse surrounding education. Psychoanalytic thought regarding upbringing and enculturation would be haunted by the same irresolvable questions that plagued sexual development, and the unsettling impact of these questions would prevent Freudians from transforming their fragmented and open-ended theory into a basis for practical educational activity.

What was clear throughout all of this theorizing, however, was that education was a dangerous undertaking, one fraught with manifold risks for the developing subject. Consistent with the dangers they ascribed to *Erziehung*, psychoanalysts tended to adopt relatively liberal positions on educational subjects. Yet reflecting the uncertainty that haunted the most basic questions of upbringing and socialization, Freudians were generally hesitant to bridge the gulf separating *Psychoanalyse* from *Erziehung*, whether by formulating pedagogical precepts on the basis of their insights or by framing their therapy as a form of education. In the wake of total war, however, the cautious liberalism of prewar Freudian thought regarding education appeared in need of dramatic revision. As the remaining chapters of the dissertation demonstrate, educational

questions were cast in a very different light by the war's destructiveness: if previously, the fraught process of initiation into culture was understood as a source of neurotic suffering, in the aftermath of the conflict, it was the suffering of those left *outside* of culture – in immediate exposure to the violence and brutality of a harsh environment – that forced itself on the attention of psychoanalysts. Primarily a source of psychic suffering in prewar Freudian thought, culture itself appeared endangered in the wake of the war, and as the process by which individuals are drawn into the social and cultural order, education assumed a new significance in Freudian thought as an essential field of practical activity in the broader work of social recovery and renovation. Over the interwar decades, the combination of circumspect reserve and critical distance that marked prewar psychoanalytic thought regarding *Erziehung* would be challenged by new ethical and political obligations and, in particular, by the entwined imperatives of psychic and social reconstruction.

The ramifications of this shift would extend into a wide range of practical and theoretical activities within the interwar psychoanalytic movement, yet its implications were first evident in the field of therapeutic technique. The second and third chapters of the project explore how the internally fraught and contested process of revising analytic technique was bound up with the conjuncture of crisis and opportunity that emerged at the close of the war and reflected a fundamental rethinking of the politics of psychoanalysis. As the second chapter demonstrates, the treatment of the war neuroses by a number of Freud's followers appeared to invert the liberal principles around which the procedure of psychoanalysis was developed by placing the analyst in a disciplinary relationship vis-à-vis the patient. What lent this specific challenge to the identity of "classical" psychoanalysis its disruptive force, however, was the broader impact of the war, which profoundly undermined a liberal world order and dramatically eroded the material security and social prestige of the educated middle class (*Bildungsbürgertum*) to which Freud belonged. As

the cultivated bourgeois individual seemed to vanish into the proletarian masses, the social politics of classical analytic therapy – a procedure Freud had explicitly designed for the members of his own class – appeared to lose their purchase. In response to these challenges, Freud undertook a far-reaching renegotiation of the politics of analytic therapy in his address, titled “The Paths of Psychoanalytic Therapy,” to the Fifth International Psychoanalytic Congress in the last months of the war.<sup>76</sup> His attempt to mediate the tensions exposed by the war gave rise to a vision of a postclassical psychoanalysis for a mass democratic age.

At the crux of Freud’s intervention was the question of what sort of authority the analyst was entitled to exercise: for all his eagerness to preserve the liberal identity of psychoanalysis, Freud’s address articulated a new conception of analytic therapy as a practice that did not simply deepen the patient’s self-awareness and clear the way for her autonomous resolution of previously unconscious conflicts, but that analyzed her resistances in an effort to reconstruct her ego – that is, an analysis that was active, disciplinary, and pedagogical in its operation. The new form of analytic authority that Freud’s address authorized would be taken up and radicalized by a number of his followers over the coming years. Chapter three explores two of the most prominent attempts to refashion analytic therapy over the half decade following the war – Sándor Ferenczi’s pedagogical “active” therapy and Wilhelm Reich’s characterological treatment of lower-class “impulsive characters.”<sup>77</sup> Ferenczi and Reich sought to render analytic therapy capable of reaching far greater numbers of mental sufferers by improving its efficiency and standardizing its procedures. By emphasizing the patient’s observable behaviors and addressing themselves to his or her character, however, they constructed educational (*erzieherisch*) therapies that pushed well beyond the constitutive limits of “classical” analysis. In the process, they were effectively assimilating

---

<sup>76</sup> Freud, “Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie.”

<sup>77</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter. Eine psychoanalytische Studie zur Pathologie des Ich* (Leipzig, 1925).

psychoanalysis to the post-liberal political climate that emerged in the wake of the war and drawing analytic therapy into an equally bracing and unsettling proximity to the Social Democratic reformist consensus that took shape over these years. If Freud's seminal address, by acknowledging that analytic therapy had to "proceed differently" in the new context, identified a gap that divided the norms that guided analytic therapy from their implementation in real, concrete settings, the interventions of Ferenczi and Reich would widen this fissure into a chasm, laying bare a crisis of authority in analytic practice.<sup>78</sup>

What underpinned the postwar refashioning of psychoanalysis was a new perception of the forms of mental suffering and the kinds of subjects psychoanalysis treated – more specifically, it reflected the challenge of rendering psychoanalysis suitable for application to mass disorders at a moment when the patients analysts addressed appeared dependent and vulnerable to an unprecedented degree. If the child had become the main subject of psychoanalysis as Freud put it in 1925, it was in large part because all of the subjects psychoanalysts confronted resembled children, ones orphaned by the recent upheavals and exposed to intrusive, potentially overwhelming violence. In a famous essay from 1919, the psychoanalyst Paul Federn described how the dismantling of patriarchal structures in both the domestic and the political arenas opened onto a "fatherless society," one whose quintessential subjects were the volatile masses at the heart of the revolutionary ferment.<sup>79</sup> As chapter four explores, the supposedly childlike masses represented both the promise and danger of the postwar moment – active agents in the dissolution of the old order and ones available for new political identifications, the masses figured as a source of chronic social upheaval and thus an obstacle to a return to stability. Two experiments in collective education that emerged in the tumultuous landscape of postwar Vienna – Siegfried

---

<sup>78</sup> Freud, "Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie," 191.

<sup>79</sup> Federn, *Zur Psychologie der Revolution*.

Bernfeld's socialist-Zionist children's home and August Aichhorn's welfare-education institutes – would have enormous significance for the intellectual culture and practical politics of interwar Viennese psychoanalysis. Both sought to manage one of the most distressing consequences of the war – namely the massive upsurge of youth delinquency – by constructing new, post-patriarchal forms of educational authority. In a democratic era when the masses were themselves the primary locus of sovereignty, the need for non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian modes of education, in which the masses and youth figured as the agents of their own socialization appeared indispensable. Through their experiments and their subsequent writings, Bernfeld and Aichhorn fashioned what might be called practical mass psychologies that – like the nascent field of psychoanalytic social theory – rethought the bond that united subject and social, individual and mass, and the dynamic process by which each constituted the other.<sup>80</sup>

Both experiments proved to be short-lived, but the years following their closure were ones of enormous educational optimism, in particular, in the emerging socialist political culture of Red Vienna. While Austrian Social Democrats identified education as a central site of class struggle, a social activity that was inseparable from the economic organization of society, they simultaneously saw it as a vehicle for revolutionary social and political transformation. Following the war, it appeared to many that the conditions had been created for a comprehensive reorganization of the national economy and thus for the for the imminent triumph of socialism. Yet the more these aspirations were curtailed, the more education beckoned as way out of the political impasse confronting Social Democratic politics. For Siegfried Bernfeld, as chapter five explores, the fact that the impotence of Social Democracy in the face of intractable socioeconomic realities only deepened the party's commitment to education, represented both a critical intellectual

---

<sup>80</sup> See August Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend. Die Psychoanalyse in der Fürsorgeerziehung* (Leipzig, 1925) and Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*.

failure and a political danger. In his *Sisyphos, or the Limits of Education* from 1925, Bernfeld drew from Austro-Marxist thought in subjecting the pedagogical idealism of the party's experiment in municipal socialism to sustained critique.<sup>81</sup> A pioneering work of Freudo-Marxism, Bernfeld's study not only rethought the psychosocial dynamics of education but fashioned a mode of critical engagement with Social Democracy that would have a formative influence on the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement in interwar Vienna. A reflection of what Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg has termed "impious fidelity," Bernfeld's *Sisyphos* sought to deepen and strengthen Social Democracy by critically transgressing its fundamental principles.<sup>82</sup>

As much as they pushed beyond the precepts and principles of progressive education in Red Vienna, Freudians shared a number of common commitments with Austrian Social Democracy – most notably to a politics of enlightenment understood, in Kantian terms, as the overcoming of self-incurred immaturity. For both psychoanalysts and Social Democrats, the subjects they addressed were defined by a combination of vulnerability, dependence, and credulity that distinguished them from the autonomous, rational, and self-regulating subjects that had undergone *Bildung* and *Aufklärung*. As chapter six explores, in the deeply polarized political landscape of interwar Austria, the politics of enlightenment were integral to a cultural battle that revolved around the role of religion in society. Over its most decisive years of expansion and proliferation, the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement was closely allied to the enlightening cultural politics of Red Vienna. Through ambitious attempts to educate the educators, Freudians sought to extend the reach of their science – to permeate the social with psychoanalytic knowledge – as part of process of enlightenment that would emancipate developing subjects from the fetters

---

<sup>81</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, *Sisyphos, oder die Grenzen der Erziehung in Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung/Pädagogik und Psychoanalyse* ed. Ulrich Herrmann et. al., vol. 5 of *Siegfried Bernfeld. Werkausgabe* (Gießen, 2013 [1925]), 11-130.

<sup>82</sup> Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity: Anna Freud, Psychoanalysis, Politics* (Ithaca, 2012).

of religious superstition and prepare the ground for a rational-scientific, anti-metaphysical worldview to flourish in the masses.

Yet psychoanalysts also developed a distinctive perspective on the challenges of enlightenment, one that situated sexuality at the center of this broader, emancipatory project. Since the process of learning about sexuality in childhood was understood by Freudians to be paradigmatic for how subjects came to think in adulthood, analysts saw the sexual education of the child as the critical site for the work of enlightenment. By exploring the valences of enlightenment in Red Vienna, this chapter looks at how Freudians fashioned a novel mode of reflecting on the challenges of progressive cultural politics, a “dark enlightenment” that explored the disavowed underside of the Social Democratic project.<sup>83</sup> In uncovering and exploring the indestructibility of psychical infantilism, the fragility of reason, and the insistent force of aggression in psychic life, Freudians exposed and analyzed the forces of unconscious resistance to the rationalist pedagogical project unfolding around them.

For Freud, the overcoming of self-incurred immaturity was part of what he termed an “education to reality,” a process of shedding metaphysical illusions that reflected and preserved the individual’s dependence on authority. Yet reality itself appeared in an increasingly harsh and brutal light over these years. For all the dissatisfactions that it generated, civilization was a necessary safeguard against the untamed, elemental forces that Freud saw looming up beyond and outside of culture. For his daughter, as chapter seven explores, the exposure of immature and defenseless egos to the pathogenic forces in their environment required a reorientation of psychoanalytic thought and practice. At the heart of her work, which aimed to chart a new path

---

<sup>83</sup> This understanding of Freud as a “dark enlightener” follows the recent work of Élizabéth Roudinesco and Joel Whitebook. See Roudinesco, *Freud: In His Time and Ours* trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA, 2016) and Whitebook, *Sigmund Freud: An Intellectual Biography*.

for psychoanalysis following the years of postwar revision and controversy, was the vulnerable ego of the developing subject, an ego in need of guidance and support. Coinciding with the destruction of Red Vienna and the rise of fascism, Anna Freud's work fashioned a new politics of psychoanalysis by situating the post-classical theories and practices of previous years on a more modest and circumspect foundation. While it represented, in many respects, a disillusioning coda to the years of experimentation that preceded it, Anna Freud's work nonetheless provided a vision of a reconstructed liberal psychoanalysis that preserved much of the spirit of earlier revisions in the wake of the social democratic experiment in which Viennese psychoanalysis had flourished.

Between Seduction and Sublimation: The Emergence of a Psychoanalytic Theory of Education,  
1896-1914

How do children become social subjects? How do they come to recognize the forms of social life and identify with the world of cultural values into which they are born? Is this process best understood as an unfolding of an innate endowment or as a forcible expulsion from an earlier condition, one only reluctantly and ever incompletely relinquished? Or is it, in fact, a combination of both, the consequence of a dialectical interplay between external intervention and endogenous unfolding in which each provokes and, in turn, responds to the other?

Questions pertaining to upbringing and enculturation of children shadowed the emergence of psychoanalysis at the turn of the twentieth century. Given Sigmund Freud's insistence on the fundamental importance of early childhood experiences for the psychological constitution of the adult, a preoccupation with the problems of education – in the broadest sense of *Erziehung* – was all but inevitable. Yet the discourse that emerged was marked by a number of peculiar features. While Freudians returned again and again to educational questions and insisted that their thought was of essential significance to understanding the work of *Erziehung*, they came to see the entire field of education as fraught with irreducible uncertainty. Education, for Freudians, was a dangerous activity, one that seemed inevitably to overshoot its mark and thus to lead the child astray in the very process of drawing it into the world of cultural values it would come to recognize as its own.

What lent *Erziehung* this quality of risk and uncertainty for Freudians was the object at its heart – the child, with its equally precocious and perverse, sexuality. The discovery of infantile sexuality posed new challenges and dangers for enculturation, and it was in the process of thinking

these problems that psychoanalysts fashioned a theory of education over the prewar years. Despite its portrayal as a heroic breakthrough, a decisive casting-off of prejudices that opened onto a disabused perception of a hitherto overlooked reality, Freud's discovery of childhood sexuality would remain beset by uncertainty.<sup>1</sup> That children sought pleasure through their own bodies and, increasingly, those of others was clear, but when and how certain forms of pleasure-seeking emerged in the course of development and what their ultimate consequences were for the developing subject remained controversial and divisive questions in Freudian thought. As the problem of infantile sexuality insinuated itself into every dimension of *Erziehung*, generating perplexity and forcing Freud and his followers to rethink the process of enculturation, the confusion that surrounded the sexual life of the child came to mirror and reinforce the confusion that enveloped education in psychoanalytic theory. Reconstructing the entwined development of psychoanalytic thought regarding childhood sexuality and education requires returning to the origins of psychoanalysis at the fin-de-siècle, the moment when the problems that gave rise to this discourse first emerged.

### Unstable Foundations

In 1896 Sigmund Freud believed he had discovered the etiological basis for what he termed the neuro-psychoses of defense, a diagnostic category that encompassed the neurotic afflictions of

---

<sup>1</sup> The first historian of psychoanalysis to develop such a reading of the discovery of infantile sexuality was, of course, Freud himself, most notably, in his 1914 essay "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement." The narrative he offered in this text – an account that was already implicit in the theory of infantile sexuality itself – was one of triumphant discovery in which a stubbornly overlooked reality emerged into view as a result of the surmounting deep internal resistances. If the traces of such a narrative are evident in the more nuanced histories of recent years, the deeper patterning influence of Freud's account is evident in the often taken-for-granted assumption that there was such a thing as a singular *theory* of sexuality (and of infantile sexuality in particular) that furnished a more-or-less stable foundation on which the edifice of psychoanalysis was erected. By contrast, what one finds in Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* is a series of bold propositions that cast sexual development in a radically new light but that are themselves enveloped by uncertainty and open to divergent interpretations. Sigmund Freud, "Zur Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung," *GW X* (1914): 44-113, at 55-7.

“hysteria, obsessions, and certain cases of acute hallucinatory confusion.” In two earlier contributions to the study of these disorders, Freud had accounted for the emergence of neurotic symptoms as the consequence of a pathogenic process of unconscious defense against ideas that had come into “distressing opposition to the patient’s ego.” His observations over the intervening years, however, had furnished him, he believed, with a “clinical foundation” for this psychological theory. Somewhat to his own surprise, he had stumbled upon a “few simple, though narrowly circumscribed, solutions to the problem of the neuroses.” If his earlier work on hysteria with Josef Breuer had convinced him that hysterical symptoms were comprehensible only once they had been traced back to traumatically effective experiences drawn from the patient’s sexual life, what he now added to this theory had to do with the “*nature*” of those sexual experiences and the “period of life” in which they transpired.<sup>2</sup> The “‘specific’ etiology of hysteria” that he advanced in a series of three papers, all published in 1896, held that the experiential fundament of adult hysteria lay in “*a precocious experience of sexual relations with actual excitement of the genitals, resulting from sexual abuse committed by another person.*” “The *period of life* at which this fatal event takes place,” he continued, “is *earliest youth* – the years up to the age of eight to ten, before the child has reached sexual maturity.”<sup>3</sup>

As Freud recalled, the search for a uniform traumatic event that could account for the hysterical symptoms exhibited by his patients had led him ever deeper into their pasts. Traveling backwards into their personal history, he believed he had finally come upon a primal trauma, “the source of the Nile,” in the form of a “passive sexual experience” before the onset of puberty.<sup>4</sup> If

---

<sup>2</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Weitere Bemerkungen über die Abwehr-Neuropsychosen,” *GW I* (1896): 379-80. The earlier contributions to which Freud refers in the opening paragraph of his 1896 essay are “Die Abwehr-Neuropsychosen. Versuch einer psychologischen Theorie der akquirierten Hysterie, vieler Phobien und Zwangsvorstellungen und gewisser halluzinatorischer Psychosen,” *GW I* (1894): 57-74, and “Studien über Hysterie,” *GW I* (1895): 75-342.

<sup>3</sup> Sigmund Freud, “L’Hérédité et L’Étiologie des Névroses,” *GW I* (1896): 417. The last of the three essays that developed this theory was “Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie,” *GW I* (1896): 423-460.

<sup>4</sup> Freud, “Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie,” 439, 444-5.

the three papers in which he developed this hypothesis – his “seduction theory” – had scandalously attributed the neurotic suffering of the younger generation to “the secret sexual perversions” of their elders, as John Toews has written, in his private correspondences Freud went even further, specifying that the ultimate guilty party appeared invariably to be the father.<sup>5</sup> Convinced that children were presexual subjects yet forced to account for the childhood origins and the manifest sexual content of the neurotic disorders he confronted, Freud increasingly identified the father as the original seducer whose perversities accounted for the neurotic suffering of the younger generation.

Less than a year after his voicing his conviction that the “essential point” in hysteria was paternal seduction, however, Freud confessed to Fliess that he no longer believed in his theory, an admission that it would take almost a decade for him to publicly acknowledge.<sup>6</sup> As he recalled in 1914, a period of complete perplexity and helplessness (*Ratlosigkeit*) followed the collapse of his theory: “Analysis had led back to these infantile sexual traumas by the right path (*auf korrektem Wege*),” Freud insisted, and yet they had proven to be untrue. The disorientation he felt in 1897 stemmed from more than simply the collapse – “under the weight of its own improbability and its contradiction in definitely ascertainable circumstances” – of his specific etiology of the neuroses.<sup>7</sup> Rather it reflected the disintegration of the entire framework of assumptions, the “code of logical and empirical procedures,” within which it had been “constructed and articulated,” as Toews has written.<sup>8</sup> Having pursued his patient’s recollections to what he believed represented the ultimate

---

<sup>5</sup> See John E. Toews, “Historicizing Psychoanalysis: Freud in His Time and for Our Time,” *The Journal of Modern History* 63 (1991): 504-545, here 509.

<sup>6</sup> Freud to Fliess, 6 December 1896 and Freud to Fliess, 21 September 1897, in *Briefe*, 223 and 283. This later acknowledgement can be found in Sigmund Freud, “Meine Ansichten über die Rolle der Sexualität in der Ätiologie der Neurosen,” *GW V* (1905): 149-159.

<sup>7</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Zur Geschichte,” 54.

<sup>8</sup> Prior to his disillusionment, Toews writes, “explanation of the phenomena (the symptoms) that confronted the observer/investigator was assumed to lie in a causally connected sequence of objective processes or events that were

foundation of their suffering in *real* experiences, Freud realized that he had lost the ability to determine the veracity of his patients' reminiscences. As he admitted to Fliess in the same letter in which he repudiated his theory, "there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between truth and fiction that has been cathected with affect."<sup>9</sup> Unable to determine with any certainty where fantasy began and memory ended, Freud recalled feeling that "the firm ground of reality had been lost" ("*Mann hatte also den Boden der Realität verloren*").<sup>10</sup> The attempt to identify an experiential basis for the psychoneuroses thus merely exposed the absence of a stable epistemological ground on which Freud could construct the edifice of psychoanalytic theory.

The oft-rehearsed and interminably debated story of Freud's abandonment of his seduction hypothesis is the essential starting point for a history of the development of psychoanalytic thought regarding education, since it was from out of this disorientating experience that the fundamental questions this discourse addressed would emerge.<sup>11</sup> The experience of losing his foundation in empirical reality and being plunged into his patients' unconscious fantasies not only pushed Freud to "recognize psychological reality alongside practical reality," and thus, to accord fantasy a far greater degree of independence from its material conditions, but also confronted him with the challenge of reestablishing the severed connection to the socially shared and objectively verifiable ground

---

ultimately set in motion by a first cause – the originating sexual trauma." Toews, "Historicizing Psychoanalysis," 509 and 512.

<sup>9</sup> Freud to Fliess, 21 September 1897, in *Briefe*, 284.

<sup>10</sup> Freud, "Zur Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung," 54 (translation modified).

<sup>11</sup> Any contribution to the subject of the development and abandonment of Freud's seduction hypothesis has to chart a course through a thicket of conflicting interpretations, all of which revolve around the question of how one should read the elements of continuity and rupture across this decisive period in the development of psychoanalysis. Four sources, in particular, have proven helpful in navigating this hermeneutic tangle and in fashioning the interpretation that follows: Toews, "Historicizing Psychoanalysis;" Jean G. Schimek, "Fact and Fantasy in the Seduction Theory: A Historical Review," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 35 (1987): 937-965; John Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*, (New York: Fordham UP, 2013), 59-87; and John Forrester, "Rape, Seduction, Psychoanalysis," in *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan and Derrida* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990), 62-89.

of practical reality.<sup>12</sup> In the face of “the evolving function of fantasy,” Freud’s thought over the coming years was marked by a search for a way out, a return to the stability of objectivity, as John Fletcher has noted.<sup>13</sup> This desire to recover the lost ground of material reality pushed Freud to reframe the problem he confronted: in place of a search for ultimate, objective causes, what would come to take priority in his thought was an attempt to understand how subjects are induced to recognize objective reality in the first place.

At the crux of this reorientation was a radical defamiliarization of the child. If previously, the supposedly passive, presexual child had furnished Freud’s investigations with a stable foundation, the collapse of his seduction hypothesis brought to light the active, desiring dimension of early childhood that his patients “fantasies” of sexual seduction served, it now appeared, to conceal and disguise. What emerged from behind these “fantasies,” he wrote in 1914, was the sexual life of the child itself “in its full breadth.”<sup>14</sup> Read as products of the subject’s own unconscious desires, the confusing mixtures of memory and fantasy that Freud uncovered testified as well to the incestuous nature of the subject’s earliest libidinal attachments. The Oedipal drama that Freud glimpsed in the aftermath of the collapse of his theory, a drama that he unhesitatingly interpreted as “a *universal* event of early childhood,” would displace the paternal etiology of the seduction hypothesis while preserving the central role of the parents, albeit no longer as desiring subjects but rather *as the objects* of the child’s libidinal strivings and aggressive urges.<sup>15</sup> Yet “along with a changed explanation,” came “a change in the *object* of explanation,” Fletcher notes.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Quote from Freud, “Zur Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung,” 55. On the importance of Freud’s abandonment of the seduction hypothesis for the emergence of a post-positivist conception of the human subject, one in which fantasy was liberated from its material determinants, see Anthony Elliot, “Psychoanalysis and the Theory of the Subject,” in *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and its Epistemological Others* (Durham: Duke UP, 2005), 427-450

<sup>13</sup> Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*, 97, 104.

<sup>14</sup> Freud, “Zur Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung,” 55.

<sup>15</sup> Freud to Fliess, 15 October 1897, in *Briefe*, 293 (translation modified).

<sup>16</sup> Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*, 99.

As a “universal event,” the Oedipal scenario furnished Freud not only with a means of accounting for particular pathological phenomena but also with a general model for the psychosexual development of the subject.

If the question that had motivated Freud’s search for an original traumatic experience was how the premature intrusion of sexuality into the child’s psychical organization yielded pathology, the question that confronted him in the wake of his abandonment of the seduction hypothesis was the inverse, namely, how did the child learn to surmount its primary modes of sexual gratification and relinquish its original love objects in order to adapt to social reality. As the “infantilism of sexuality” replaced “infantile sexual traumas” in Freud’s thought, the child’s traumatic initiation into sexuality was largely displaced by another initiation, one that involved a perilous passage from pleasure to culture and that figured as a source of neurotic suffering and even pathogenic trauma.<sup>17</sup> Yet the ramifications of this transition reached even further still: closely bound up with the question of how the child became an encultured subject, one capable of substituting responsible satisfactions and satisfying responsibilities for primitive modes of gratification and the uninhibited pursuit of pleasure, was the question of how the child developed a sense of reality (a reality principle) in the first place.<sup>18</sup> Recovering the “reality reference” (Toews) that seemed to vanish beneath his feet in 1897 was thus a task that involved the genealogical reconstruction of the process by which the child was drawn into social existence.

### *Verführung* and its Vicissitudes

The etiology that Freud developed in his three 1896 papers was by no means as simple as the

---

<sup>17</sup> Quote from Freud, “Meine Ansichten,” 153.

<sup>18</sup> See Sigmund Freud, “Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens,” *GW* VIII (1911): 230-39.

specific hypothesis that lay at its center – as reductive as his assertions regarding the origins of a disposition to hysteria were, the process by which the latter became pathogenic was, in fact, far from straightforward. The experience of seduction in childhood only became traumatic, Freud argued, with the onset of sexual maturity in puberty when the “fatal event” assumed an entirely new meaning and intensity for the developing subject – “due to puberty,” Freud argued, “the memory will display a power which was completely lacking from the event itself.”<sup>19</sup> Through a process he termed – untranslatably – *Nachträglichkeit*, the memory of the original seduction was reactivated by later experiences, in the process undergoing repression and lending its traumatic force to the subsequent, auxiliary moment.<sup>20</sup> By interpolating the original trauma, what initially appeared to be excessive, abnormal reactions on the part of psychoneurotics were thus recognized as entirely proportional to the “exciting stimulus” (*erregende Reiz*), which derived not from the precipitating experience but from the unconscious memory. If Freud at times described the child’s seduction as having immediately deleterious consequences, he nonetheless insisted that psychically it remained initially ineffective (*wirkungslos*) – at most, the child responded to the perverse actions of its assailant with fright or irritation. The model of traumatic pathogenesis that Freud elaborated around the “‘specific’ etiology” of the neuro-psychoses of defense thus turned around a paradox, namely that none of the later experiences, “in which the symptoms arise, are the effective ones; and the experiences which *are* effective have at first no result.”<sup>21</sup>

Sexual maturity was not the only factor that had to intervene in order for the seduction to become pathogenic, however. As Freud made clear in his final and most substantive paper on the

---

<sup>19</sup> Freud, “L’Hérédité et L’Étiologie des Névroses,” 417-18.

<sup>20</sup> While “deferred action” is the translation for *Nachträglichkeit* given in the *Standard Edition*, the alternative of “afterwardsness” has been put forward by Jean Laplanche in “Notes on Afterwardsness,” in *Essays on Otherness*, ed. John Fletcher (London, 1999), 260-65.

<sup>21</sup> Freud, “Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie,” 454, 448-49.

seduction hypothesis, *Erziehung* and the sexual morality it inculcated was an equally necessary precondition. After posing the question of why hysteria is not more common among the lower classes – this despite his conviction that “everything indicates (*alles dafür spricht*) that the injunction for the sexual safeguarding of childhood is far more frequently transgressed in the case of the children of the proletariat” – Freud pointed to the dependence of the “defensive strivings of the ego” on the “entire moral and intellectual education” of the individual.<sup>22</sup> Repression, which was necessary in order for the memory of seduction to become pathogenic, itself presupposed a process of ethical development from which the lower orders were apparently excluded.

As the traces that drew Freud deeper into his patients’ histories were engulfed by fantasy, however, vanishing into the indeterminacy of the unconscious, the idea of the presexual child that furnished the foundation of his earlier theory appeared suddenly open to question. The initial effects of this estrangement were evident in a rhetorical shift that occurred over the following years. In 1896 Freud asserted that the foundation of the neurosis is always laid in childhood by the intervention of a perverse adult. Two years later, by contrast, in an essay titled “Sexuality in the Etiology of the Neuroses,” he chastised adults for holding themselves aloof from the young and refusing to enter into their most intimate problems. “Much would have to be changed,” he wrote, in order for a state of affairs to emerge that would “promise relief” for neurotic suffering. The critique of the manifold shortcomings – i.e. the ignorance, pride, and prudery – of the existing generation of adults was bound up with a challenge to view the child in a different light: “We do wrong to ignore the sexual life of children entirely,” he wrote, “in my experience, children are capable of every psychical sexual activity, and many somatic sexual ones as well.” While he insisted that “human sexual life does not begin with puberty,” a certain ambivalence is nonetheless

---

<sup>22</sup> Freud, “Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie,” 443, 448 (translation modified).

evident in his contention that the “seeds of later illness were acquired” through the sexual experiences of childhood, experiences that he believed were invariably pathogenic.<sup>23</sup> Left unresolved amid this wavering was the question of whether the sexual life of the child represented merely a capacity that required exogenous intervention in order to come into existence or if it emerged spontaneously of its own accord over the first years of life.

With the publication of the “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality” in 1905, the question Freud left unresolved in 1898 received a decisive answer. Against the pervasive neglect and denial of the existence of a naturally occurring sexual drive in childhood – a phenomenon he linked to conventional considerations inculcated by education and to the widespread amnesia that afflicted memories from the first years of life – Freud argued that children did indeed possess their own independently occurring sexual lives and ones that revealed a repressed truth of “normal” adult sexuality. In the first of the three essays, on the subject of the sexual perversions, Freud contended that sexuality was a complex construction: rather than an instinct with a preformed object, it was assembled from various component drives, which themselves were always threatening to break away from their overarching organization.<sup>24</sup> The substrate of the perversions from which “normal” sexuality was constructed pointed to the existence of an innate sexual constitution present in everyone and containing the seeds of all the later perversions. Such a disposition would only be demonstrable in children, Freud contended, even though in them it is only with modest degrees of intensity that any of the drives can emerge. Turning his attention to this innate constitution in the following essay, titled “Infantile Sexuality,” Freud argued that sexuality was originally autoerotic, finding its primary sexual object in the subject’s own body. Where the “normal” sexuality of the

---

<sup>23</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Die Sexualität in der Ätiologie der Neurosen,” *GW I* (1898): 507-8, 510.

<sup>24</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie,” *GW V* (1905): 61. On this subject see Arnold Davidson, “How to Do the History of Psychoanalysis: A Reading of Freud’s ‘Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,’” *Critical Inquiry* 13 (1987): 252-277 and Leo Bersani, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York 1986): 29-50.

adult was unified, if precariously, under the hegemony of heterosexual genitality, infantile sexuality knew no such synthesis, but rather remained disaggregated and chaotic, dispersed across the child's body and concentrated in a number of sensitive regions that Freud termed erogenous zones.<sup>25</sup>

In marked contest to his seduction hypothesis, the new model of sexual development that Freud elaborated effectively made the infant “the subject of its own developmental progression,” John Fletcher has written. Despite the scattering of sexuality across the body and its fragmentation into a range of pleasure seeking activities, the new theory thus recentered the narrative on the child itself.<sup>26</sup> The logic of an “endogenously unfolding psycho-biological reality” that Freud offered in his essay would become even more conspicuous in the third edition of the *Three Essays*, published a decade after the original, in which he first theorized that the child's developing sexuality unfolded through a series of stages, passing successively through an oral, anal, and a genital organization.<sup>27</sup> The same concept of an innate teleological progression was implicit, however, in the original edition, in particular when Freud turned his attention to the years of “total or merely partial latency” that followed the flowering of sexuality in infancy and early childhood. During these years, the child developed the “mental forces” that later worked to “impede the course of the sexual instinct and, like dams, restrict its flow – disgust, feelings of shame and the claims of aesthetic and moral ideals.” While in 1896 this process of ethical development had appeared to be entirely contingent on contextual factors – namely, on membership in the middle classes and on the educative influences this entailed – in 1905, Freud cautioned against viewing it, exclusively or even primarily, as an achievement of bourgeois culture:

---

<sup>25</sup> Freud, “Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie,” 70-1,

<sup>26</sup> Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*, 135.

<sup>27</sup> The phrase “endogenously unfolding psycho-biological reality” is from Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*, 135.

One gets the impression from civilized children that the construction of these dams is a product of education (*Erziehung*), and no doubt education has much to do with it. But in reality this development is organically determined and fixed by heredity, and it can occasionally occur without any help at all from education.

From this conception of an innate developmental teleology, Freud drew a strictly negative precept for education, relegated now to a merely auxiliary role. “Education,” he argued, “will not be trespassing beyond its appropriate domain if it limits itself to following the lines which have already been laid down organically and to impressing them somewhat more clearly and deeply.”<sup>28</sup> Far from needing to impose its own prescriptions, education could simply follow the developmental trajectory inscribed in the child.

Yet even as Freud’s essay on infantile sexuality exuded assurance in the child’s intrinsic capacity to attain sexual maturity and encultured subjecthood, it simultaneously undercut the confidence it evinced. While the previous essay (on the “perversions”) had accentuated the tenuousness of the achievement of heterosexual genitality, in his essay on infantile sexuality, Freud emphasized the omnipresent dangers posed by the interventions of others, whether educational or seductive in intent. Far from being foreclosed by the teleological unfolding of sexuality, the agency of the other underwent a proliferation and dispersal that directly paralleled the loosening of sexuality from its logical moorings in a hypostatized reproductive instinct and its distribution throughout a network of erogenous zones. As sexuality was fragmented, so too were the points at which it could be diverted from the aim to which Freud believed it should be subordinated. Having been displaced from the central position it occupied in the seduction hypothesis, exogenous intervention came to envelop the main drama of endogenous unfolding. The agency of the other may have been relegated to a secondary moment within the child’s psychosexual development,

---

<sup>28</sup> Freud, “Drei Abhandlungen,” 78. On the teleological conception of sexuality in Freud’s *Three Essays*, see Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 31-32.

but it now haunted that developmental narrative from the margins, threatening at times to engulf it entirely.

Freud's belief that the essential lines of the child's development to "normal" sexuality and civilized subjecthood were "organically determined and fixed by heredity" necessarily cast exogenous intervention as a source of danger. *Erziehung* may have contributed much to the child's socialization but it inevitably appeared always at risk of overstepping its bounds and attempting to do too much, too soon. Instead of assisting in the endogenous construction of the dams that would serve to divert the child's sexuality from its original ("perverse") aims and channel it towards cultural achievement – a process Freud termed sublimation – *Erziehung* more often undercut its own professed aims and prevented the child from achieving full psychosexual maturity. "Hitherto education has only set itself the task of controlling, or, it would often be more proper to say, of suppressing, the instincts," he wrote in a 1909 case study of a five-year-old suffering from phobic inhibitions, the "results have been by no means gratifying."<sup>29</sup> Educators may resolutely deny the existence of childhood sexuality – a consequence of their own repression of their earliest years – but they nonetheless invariably intuited the sexual content underlying the child's "bad" behaviors, Freud argued. Rather than recognizing the valuable contributions made by the perversions to the child's cultural capacities, educators "persecuted" all manifestations of premature sexual activity "without," however, "being able to do much against them."<sup>30</sup>

As impotent as they were in their attempts to eliminate the manifestations of childhood sexuality, the repressive interventions of educators had far-reaching consequences for the developing subject. Paradoxically, traditional educational methods were largely self-undermining: in attempting, in clumsy and brutal fashion, to suppress the child's bad-habits and compel it to

---

<sup>29</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Analyse der Phobie eines fünfjährigen Knabens," *GW* VII (1909): 376.

<sup>30</sup> Freud, "Drei Abhandlungen," 79 (translation modified).

overcome an innate disposition to perversion, *erzieherisch* interventions often yielded the opposite, namely a pathogenic repression in which infantile modes of sexual gratification were preserved in the unconscious. Just as the symptoms of neurotics were disguised forms of sexual activity, the neuroses themselves, Freud explained, could be understood as “the negative of perversions.”<sup>31</sup> The anxious desire to combat and suppress the manifestations of a simultaneously disavowed infantile sexuality thus seemed only to inhibit and divert the subject’s supposedly innate developmental trajectory to heterosexual genitality.

Overzealous and puritanical upbringing was not the only mode of exogenous intervention that troubled the child’s natural development, however, and it was far from the most deleterious. While *Erziehung* threatened to prevent the child’s achievement of sexual normalcy and to drive it to neurosis through a too eager suppression of its peculiar sexuality, *Verführung* posed similar dangers albeit through very different means, namely the active cultivation of the child’s disposition to perversion. Turning his attention to the various external provocations that could potentially disrupt or derail the child’s development, Freud foregrounded the effects of sexual seduction, which took the autoerotic child prematurely as a sexual object and taught it, “in highly emotional circumstances, how to obtain sexual satisfaction from its genital zones, a satisfaction which it is then usually obliged to repeat again and again by masturbation.” At the same time as it both intruded into, and drew the child *out of*, its comparatively insular, self-enclosed sexuality, seduction threatened to inhibit the formation of the dams intended to channel the sexual drives into socially acceptable channels. Through seduction, Freud wrote, the child can become “polymorphously perverse,” capable, that is, of all possible transgressions.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Freud, “Drei Abhandlungen,” 65.

<sup>32</sup> “In this respect,” Freud elaborated, “children behave in the same kind of way as an average uncultivated woman in whom the same polymorphously perverse disposition persists.” Even when she has remained “sexually normal,” the proletarian woman, like the child, can easily be drawn, under the influence of seduction, back towards the infantile

If the possibility of such a wayward development indicated that such an aptitude was “innately present” in the child (*daß es die Eignung dazu in seiner Anlage mitbringt*), what is more surprising is the return of a logic of awakening that the discovery of infantile sexuality had presumably rendered obsolete: in a statement that appeared to undercut the fundamental thrust of his intervention in the *Three Essays*, Freud wrote, “it goes without saying (*ist selbstverständlich*) that seduction is not required in order to arouse a child’s sexual life; that can also come about spontaneously from internal causes.” Seduction, in these passages, plays a role that appears at odds with the emphasis elsewhere on the spontaneous emergence and flourishing of infantile sexuality. Why, after all, would a subject who is “above all shameless” and constitutionally disposed to polymorphous perversity require the intervention of a seducer in order to develop an appetite for all perversions? Beyond the evidence it offered of the sexual disposition of the child, the influence of seduction did little to reveal the “initial circumstances (*anfängliche Verhältnisse*) of the sexual drive,” Freud argued, rather it “confuses our insight” into the latter.<sup>33</sup> The confusion to which Freud attests was one that inhered in the relationship between the two models of endogenous unfolding and exogenous awakening. An irreducible uncertainty haunts Freud’s essay, one that emerges in the gap between two images of the child: that of the autoerotic infant engaged in deriving pleasure from its erogenous zones and that of the seduced child who through exogenous stimulation developed an appetite for all perversions.

Far more troubling than the indeterminacy that governed the relationship between disposition and experience, however, was the instability between *Erziehung* and *Verführung*,

---

precursors of mature sexuality, becoming little different from the prostitute, who exploits this disposition to polymorphous perversity in the practice of her profession. For the male bourgeois theorist, at least, the presumed psychosexual infantilism of the proletarian woman-prostitute pointed to the danger that a combination of traumatic seduction and pedagogical neglect could inhibit the child’s entry into the community of culture. Freud, “Drei Abhandlungen,” 91-2.

<sup>33</sup> Freud, “Drei Abhandlungen,” 92 (translations modified).

which at times appeared strictly antagonistic and yet at others seemed to slide inexorably into one another. Like the overweening educational methods Freud cautioned against, sexual seduction represented a form of premature intervention into the child's psychosexual development. Yet while the former sought to accelerate the construction of the "mental dams against sexual excesses," the latter overrode the same (still incipient) restrictions as it drew the child prematurely out of its erotic self-absorption into a world of sexual relationships. As the intimacy of neurosis and perversion suggests, however, the barriers between *Erziehung* and *Verführung* were far from stable, and just as Freud had argued in 1896 that the combination of the two was necessary for the pathogenic repression that caused hysteria, they now appeared to complement one another in the awakening of the child's erogenous zones. Considering the process by which the genitals come (from inauspicious beginnings) to attain their paramount position among the child's erogenous zones, Freud pointed to a range of "contrivances" – the bathing of the genitals in secretions, their washing and rubbing during cleaning, and above all, infantile masturbation – that laid the foundation for their later hegemony. Paradoxically, he insisted that the measures for keeping the child's genitals clean are "bound to operate in much the same way" as the experience of "making a mess" (*Verunreinigung*) – both the pleasure of excretion and the discipline of cleaning-up encouraged the child to find satisfaction in the stimulation of its genitals, and by initiating the sexual activity of this zone, they marked the beginnings of what is later to become "normal" sexual life.<sup>34</sup> Yet by linking the measures for cleaning the child to the awakening of masturbation and thus to later sexual normalcy, Freud's description brought apparently nonsexual parental ministrations (among the earliest forms of *Erziehung*) into an disconcerting proximity to *Verführung*, which, like the former, served to activate the genital zone and provoke the child's

---

<sup>34</sup> Freud, "Drei Abhandlungen," 92, 89.

masturbation. A fine line appears to separate the two modes of intervention, at times, threatening to disappear into a grey zone where *Erziehung* and *Verführung* were indistinguishable.

The barrier between upbringing and seduction that Freud's essay on infantile sexuality simultaneously upheld and eroded would all but vanish in the last of the *Three Essays*, on the sexual changes of puberty. If the ministrations of parental care were presented in the earlier essay as purely mechanical, devoid of any deeper, unconscious significance for the administering adult, the final essay offered a more unsettling picture by introducing the adult's own sexual desires into the developmental narrative:

A child's intercourse with anyone responsible for his care affords him an unending source of sexual excitation and satisfaction from his erotogenic zones. This is especially so since the person in charge of him, who, after all, is as a rule his mother, herself regards him with feelings that are derived from her own sexual life: she strokes him, kisses him, rocks him and quite clearly treats him as a substitute for a complete sexual object.

The mother, who views her actions as expressions of an “‘asexual,’ pure love,” would likely be appalled, Freud recognized, if she were made aware that her caresses were awakening the child's sexual drive. Noting that the child's caretakers were normally diligent in avoiding exciting the child's genitals beyond what was unavoidable in nursery care, he nonetheless insisted that the affection shown to the child will “unfailingly show its effects one day on the genital zones as well” (after all, “the sexual instinct is not aroused only by direct excitation of the genitals”). As disturbing as these statements were, Freud argued that they were merely a consequence of the central role of the drives in mental life as a whole. If the mother understood the essential function her ministrations served for the child's libidinal development, “she would spare herself any reproaches,” he argued, since “she is only fulfilling her task of teaching the child to love.”<sup>35</sup>

Roughly three decades later, Freud would state unequivocally that the mother is the child's

---

<sup>35</sup> Freud, “Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie,” 123-4.

“first seducer.”<sup>36</sup> If he resisted employing this terminology to classify the sexual relationship he described in 1905, he did so not because of a formal discrepancy between his conception of the mother’s ministrations of care and nurturing and the dynamics of seduction – both of which entailed an inter-subjective dialectic of desire that awakens the child’s sexuality – but rather out of a desire to differentiate between the normal and the pathological forms of adult-child sexual relationships. Yet the new model of “normal” seduction that Freud elaborated in tandem with his theory of infantile sexuality was one that contained an almost unlimited potential for excess and thus always threatened to overstep its bounds. While in 1905, Freud only gestured to the possibility that excessive affection could yield precocious sexual maturity, the recognition that the parental gestures of care were administered to the “sensation saturated body” of a desiring subject and were furthermore laden with the unconscious affects and desires of the adult caretaker opened onto to a danger that he found impossible to delimit.<sup>37</sup>

Five years after the publication of the *Three Essays*, Freud drew out the dimension of excess he saw as haunting the relationship between mother and child in his psychobiographical study of Leonardo da Vinci. Attempting to account for the sexual and characterological peculiarities of the Renaissance artist and scientist, Freud pointed to the specific family constellation in which Leonardo was reared and, above all, to his sexually charged relationship with his mother: “his mother’s tenderness was fateful for him,” Freud argued, “it determined his destiny and the privations that were in store for him.” Abandoned by her husband, Leonardo’s mother gave free rein to her unsatisfied desires in displays of affection of an overwhelming, intrusive, even violent character. “Like all unsatisfied mothers, she took her little son in place of

---

<sup>36</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Abriss der Psychoanalyse,” *GW XVII* (1938): 115.

<sup>37</sup> The description “sensation saturated body” comes from Dianne F. Sadoff, *Sciences of the Flesh: Representing Body and Subject in Psychoanalysis* (Stanford, 1998), 172.

her husband, and by the too early maturing of his erotism robbed him of a part of his masculinity,” Freud contended. Opening from the specific determinants of Leonardo’s sexuality – i.e. his experience of being kissed into a precocious sexual maturity (*zur sexuellen Frühreife emporgeküßt*) – onto the mother-child relationship in general, Freud wrote,

A mother’s love for the infant she suckles and cares for is something far more profound than her later affection for the growing child. It is in the nature of a completely satisfying love-relation, which not only fulfills every mental wish but also every physical need; and if it represents one of the forms of attainable human happiness, that is in no little measure due to the possibility it offers of satisfying, without reproach, wishful impulses which have long been repressed and which must be called perverse.<sup>38</sup>

Where Freud had earlier sexualized the relationship between the child and its caretakers, he now went even further building, in Fletcher’s words, “an inescapably seductive and perverse dimension into the maternal relation in general.”<sup>39</sup>

This new perspective nonetheless remained underdeveloped and marginal relative to the endogenous dynamics he outlined in his essay on infantile sexuality. For Jean Laplanche and Fletcher, Freud’s failure to unify his insights into a “general theory of primal seduction,” one focused on the ordinary relations of care and nurturing between adult and child, marked a fateful turn for psychoanalysis away from the role of the other in the subject’s psychosexual development.<sup>40</sup> Yet Freud’s unwillingness to develop a universal model of seduction within his theory of infantile sexuality seems less a product of a “going-astray” of Freudian thought, as Laplanche contends, than a consequence of the vicissitudes of seduction itself – the problem was one that inhered in the very object of analysis itself, which proved impossible to circumscribe and

---

<sup>38</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci,” *GW* VIII (1910): 186-7, 204, 188.

<sup>39</sup> Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*, 177,

<sup>40</sup> Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*, 125. See also Jean Laplanche, *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis* (London 1989 [1987]), trans. David Macey, 89-151 and Laplanche, “From the Restricted to the General Theory of Seduction,” in *Seduction, Suggestion, Psychoanalysis* (Leuven 2001 [1986]), ed. Philippe Van Haute and Jozef Corveleyn, trans. Jeffrey Bloechl.

contain.<sup>41</sup> What militated against the construction of a general theory was thus the instability that beset the concept of *Verführung*, which at one moment took the form of a violent transgression of the child's bodily boundaries only to reappear at another in the form of a banal gesture of care.<sup>42</sup>

Between the two extremes of the paternal abuse of a defenseless child and maternal ministrations to a desiring child, instances of *Verführung* proliferated – the “naughty” games of children, the observation of parental intercourse, and the transmission of sexual “enlightenment” all figured as actual or potential sources of traumatic seduction, in Freud's thought. The recognition that the child was always already a desiring subject engaged in actively pursuing its own erotic gratification lent the concept of seduction an irreducible indeterminacy. Lending his support to a thesis put forward by the Berlin psychoanalyst Karl Abraham, Freud argued in 1907 that children often sought out traumatic experiences from which they derived erotic gratification.<sup>43</sup> In Abraham's two essays on the subject, both from 1907, the child itself became the seducer, unconsciously willing its own traumatization and provoking the adult into abusive actions. Not the traumatic experience itself explained the neurosis (at most this determined the form of the subsequent illness, he argued), but rather the child's perverse masochistic disposition, the

---

<sup>41</sup> See the essays by Laplanche collected in the volume *Essays on Otherness*, especially “The Unfinished Copernican Revolution,” 52-83, and “Seduction, Persecution, Revelation,” 166-96. For an overview, see John Fletcher's excellent introduction to the same volume, 1-51.

<sup>42</sup> If the overarching trajectory of Freud's thought appeared to move from the exceptional to the general, involving a flattening of seduction and its dispersal throughout a range of ordinary, seemingly innocuous interactions, an unwillingness to collapse *Verführung* entirely into the normal and ordinary libidinal exchanges between adults and children is evident in Freud's abiding concern to recover *real* memories of trauma in his case histories, a concern that in 1914 appeared to open onto a return of the “old trauma theory of the neuroses.” Experiences of sexual abuse retained a specific etiological function within Freudian thought even if the contours of such pathogenic experiences seemed to shade off indefinitely into the quotidian. See Sigmund Freud, “Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose,” *GW* XII (1918): 128. This case, which ran from February 1910 to July 1914 and was written-up over October and November of 1914, was withheld from publication for four years, appearing in print only in 1918.

<sup>43</sup> Freud, 18 December 1907, *Protokolle der Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung: Bd. I, 1906-1908* (Frankfurt a. M. 1962), ed. Herman Nunberg and Ernst Federn, 256. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are from *Minutes of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society*, trans. Margarete Nunberg (New York 1962).

“traumatophilic diathesis,” that led it to actively pursue its own traumatization.<sup>44</sup> Crude though they were, Abraham’s essays testified to the confusion that the theory of infantile sexuality produced within the psychoanalytic theory of the neuroses and the fundamental uncertainty that marked the relationship between experience and disposition. The question of when the normal and necessary awakening of the child’s sexuality by its caretaker became excessive and pathogenic was all but impossible to determine once the child’s desire appeared capable of outstripping the adult’s intention and thus of initiating its own traumatic seduction.

Strange though it was, Freud’s contention in 1905 that he did not believe he had been guilty of overestimating the “frequency and importance” of experiences of seduction in his earlier work on hysteria gains a degree of plausibility from way that *Verführung* insinuates itself into *Erziehung* over the course of the *Three Essays*.<sup>45</sup> The process by which children are brought-up and integrated into social existence appeared now to be inseparable from the exogenous awakening of their sexuality through the dynamics of seduction. While *Erziehung* strove in large part to repress the manifestations of the child’s sexuality and thus figured, on one level, as the antithesis of *Verführung*, the child’s sexual endowment undercut the barrier between the two terms. As his case studies over the following years made abundantly clear, the attempts of educators to stymie the burgeoning expressions of childhood sexuality through physical punishments (e.g. spanking) and

---

<sup>44</sup> See Karl Abraham, “Über die Bedeutung sexueller Jugendtraumen für die Symptomatologie der Dementia praecox” and “Das Erleiden sexueller Traumen als Form infantiler Sexualbetätigung,” in *Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. I* (Frankfurt a. M., 1982 [1907]), 125-131 and 165-179. In 1914, Freud would declare that Abraham’s investigations represented the “last word on the subject,” a fairly transparent case of wishful thinking. Freud, “Zur Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung,” 56. Paradoxically, the same year witnessed a partial rehabilitation of the “old trauma theory” in Freud’s attempts to trace the symptoms of the “Wolf Man” back to a basis in real experiences, namely the observation of parental intercourse and infantile sexual abuse.

<sup>45</sup> Freud, “Drei Abhandlungen,” 91. The passage is worth quoting at length: “ich kann nicht zugestehen, daß ich in meiner Abhandlung 1896 “Über die Ätiologie der Hysterie” die Häufigkeit oder die Bedeutung derselben überschätzt habe, wengleich ich damals noch nicht wußte, daß normal gebliebene Individuen in ihren Kinderjahren die nämlichen Erlebnisse gehabt haben können, und darum die Verführung höher wertete als die in der sexuellen Konstitution und Entwicklung gegebenen Faktoren.”

threats (e.g. castration) only further awakened the child's perverse sexuality, effectively folding *Erziehung* back into *Verführung*. The fact that the child's educability was intimately bound up with its seducibility meant that the initiation of the child into *Kultur*, its leading towards (*educare*), always threatened to go astray, to become a leading away (*seducere*) – literally a *Ver-führung*.<sup>46</sup> As it became increasingly clear to Freud over the coming years that *Erziehung* had to do more than merely reinforce a process of endogenous unfolding, the challenges that it confronted would become all the more apparent.

### *Erziehung zur Realität*

As Freud elaborated this new conception of *Erziehung* and the difficulties that beset it, he was joined by a growing number of colleagues and followers both within Vienna and beyond. The psychoanalytic theory of education whose contours Freud outlined was thus elaborated in the context of a broader movement that began to take shape in the decade following the 1899 publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. At Freud's invitation in 1902 a handful of physicians began to meet on a weekly basis in his home to discuss questions of psychology and neuropathology. As the so-called *Wednesday Psychological Society* expanded from its original five members to seventeen in 1906, the professional (and eventually, gender) make-up of the group diversified. Despite the contentious character of its adherents and the fractious spirit of its meetings, the local society coalesced into a more formalized organizational structure with a shared commitment to an overarching theory of psychosexuality, in the process, changing its name to the *Viennese Psychoanalytic Society (WPV)* in 1908.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> On this point see Forrester, "Rape, Seduction, Psychoanalysis," 80.

<sup>47</sup> See the excellent discussion in George Makari, *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 2008), 129-178.

Over the coming years, psychoanalysis would likewise develop into an international movement. New centers, in the form of psychoanalytic associations, would spring up in Zurich, Budapest, Berlin, and London, and an inaugural international psychoanalytic congress (called the First International Congress for Freudian Psychology) would be held in Salzburg in 1908. As more voices were drawn into the discussion of infantile sexuality and the challenges of enculturation, Freud's thought itself underwent refinement and modification. Though his theories furnished the ever-shifting foundation for this intellectual venture, they were by no means uncontested. His followers – several of whom would later break with the psychoanalytic movement – extended, elaborated, and at times, criticized Freud's theoretical assumptions and practical conclusions, in the process, fashioning a multivocal discourse around the theory of infantile sexuality.

While pedagogical themes had surfaced over the preceding years in the discussions of the *Wednesday Psychological Society* and, of course, in Freud's own writings, the first systematic attempt to rethink education in light of Freud's theory of infantile sexuality was a paper presented by the Hungarian-Jewish analyst Sándor Ferenczi at the 1908 Salzburg congress. Ferenczi's paper, titled "Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik," attempted to "reflect on whether and how one ought to prevent the prevalence of erogenous zones, partial drives, and inclinations to inversion and to ward off excessive reaction formations."<sup>48</sup> An even more immediate influence than Freud's *Three Essays* in this venture was the latter's "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness" published only four weeks before the congress. In this short piece, Freud developed a thesis that had been implicit in much of his earlier work, namely, that the cultural suppression of sexuality was at the heart of the neurotic misery of contemporary civilization. "Our culture is, generally

---

<sup>48</sup> Ferenczi, "Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik," in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band III: Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1908-1933* (Bern, 1939 [1908]), 15.

speaking, built up on the suppression of instincts” and the “renunciation has been a progressive one in the course of the evolution of civilization,” Freud argued. Experience, however, indicated that “for most people there is a limit beyond which their constitution cannot comply with the demands of civilization. All who wish to be nobler than their constitution allows fall victim to neurosis.”<sup>49</sup>

Ferenczi echoed and amplified the culturally critical strain of Freud’s essay – intensive study of Freud’s work, he contended, indicated that “the contemporary education of children breeds neuroses in diverse abundance (*förmlich hochzüchtet*).” The “defective principles” on which it is based disturb the natural development of the individual, so that if we nevertheless have remained healthy, we owe this to our “more robust and resistant psychical organization.” While Ferenczi rejected the notion that the entire psychical development of the child was “organically preformed” and recognized the “efficacy of the educational moment” as a determining factor in that development, the activity of *Erziehung* appeared only in a negative light, as a potential diversion from the natural unfolding of the subject’s psychosexual life. “The provisional aim of pedagogical reform ought to be to spare the child’s psyche from the strain of unnecessary repression,” Ferenczi contended. While the task of education, in Ferenczi’s view, was to adapt children to a necessarily repressive civilization, it generally exceeded its mandate, burdening the soul with more compulsion than external circumstances demanded. At the same time, the danger of neurosis from libidinal congestion required a reform of social arrangements in order to make possible the “free discharge of the portion of wish impulses not available for sublimation.”<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Die ‘kulturelle’ Sexualmoral und die moderne Nervosität,” *GW* VII (1908): 143-167, here 148, 149, 153 (translations modified).

<sup>50</sup> Ferenczi, “Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik,” 9-10, 13. While Ferenczi acknowledged that his demand for a less sexually repressive education would leave him open to the accusation of *Kulturfeindlichkeit*, he insisted that culture should not be understood as “an end in itself,” but rather as a “practical means of compromise” between the individual’s drives and the demands of the social order (13).

The ignorance of parents regarding their own childhood explained for Ferenczi why pedagogy had made “no notable progress since time immemorial” – “at present,” he wrote, “it is a vicious circle,” one propelled by unconscious forces that prevented adults from perceiving the significance of their actions. While he insisted that one must intervene somewhere in this circle, he nonetheless cautioned against beginning with a radical reform of *Kindererziehung*. Far more promising, Ferenczi insisted, was the possibility of counteracting infantile amnesia through the psychoanalytic enlightenment of adults: “this mass enlightenment would be a remedy for the excessive repressions under which humanity suffers, a form of inner revolution that incidentally every individual among us who has made Freud’s teachings his own has had to undergo.”<sup>51</sup> The dissemination of this mass enlightenment would thus serve to remove education from the vicious circle within which it traditionally revolved by depriving the unconscious of its disruptive force.

The challenges confronting Ferenczi’s politics of psychoanalytic enlightenment were compounded by the fact that the danger of exaggerated and unskillful repression was mirrored by the risk of excessive and untimely stimulation. In the earliest stages of life, *Erziehung* consisted essentially in the “proper apportioning of the external stimuli that operate on the child,” Ferenczi argued. While the child required the stimulation of its erogenous zones for its full sexual development, a “rational child care” would seek to limit these potentially harmful excitations. Surveying the manifold dangers that haunted the later stages of development (e.g. the “fixation of autoerotic mechanisms, incestuous fantasies, and the unfortunately so prevalent seduction by adults”), Ferenczi was forced to admit that how such phenomena could be averted was, for the moment, beyond him. Retreating to more certain terrain, however, he pointed to the belated harmful effects of “pampering” and of “showering [the child] with indications of love:” if parents

---

<sup>51</sup> Ferenczi, “Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik,” 12.

were aware of their consequences, he argued, they would undoubtedly refrain from such exaggerated expressions of affection.<sup>52</sup>

Despite his contention that the exogenous stimulation of the child's erogenous zones was essential for its "full sexual development," Ferenczi followed Freud's example in the *Three Essays* by relegating external factors to a position of secondary importance in the child's normal course to psychosexual maturity.<sup>53</sup> Yet the model of the child's development that Freud elaborated and Ferenczi adopted, with its logical foundation in biology, would be subject to a subtle yet significant revision over the coming years. Where formerly the intersubjective and contextualist dimension of enculturation appeared marginal in relation to the endogenous unfolding of the child's innate endowment, Freud's 1911 essay "Two Principles of Mental Functioning" redressed the imbalance of his earlier contribution: without the influence of the environment and the intervention of education it now appeared that little in the way of psychosexual development was possible. In place of an endogenous, teleological model of enculturation, Freud offered a social and dialectical one.<sup>54</sup>

In "Two Principles of Mental Functioning" Freud articulated this conception of the role and responsibilities of education in the course of elaborating a new perspective on the process by which the developing subject is drawn into social existence. Departing from the insight that neurotics turn away from reality because they find it unbearable, Freud set himself the task of

---

<sup>52</sup> Ferenczi, "Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik," 14-16.

<sup>53</sup> Ferenczi, "Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik," 15.

<sup>54</sup> A similar development could be traced in the revisions Freud made to the subsequent editions of the *Three Essays*. In part responding to the criticism he received in a 1912 meeting of the *WPIV*, Freud would emend passages of the second essay so that references to natural design ("Nature's purpose") and the assumed biological imperative underlying the "normal" progression to heterosexual genitality were either qualified ("if such a teleological form of statement is permissible") or excised entirely. For these emendations made to the third edition of the *Three Essays* see the footnoted discussions in the English *Standard Edition* VII (1905/15): 156 and 188. An additional qualification of the teleological mode of thought furnished by a biological perspective on sexuality was made to the 1920 edition. For this, see the footnoted discussion on page 184 of the same text.

grasping the “psychological significance of the real external world.” Unconscious mental processes, he argued, represented older, more primary psychical operations, the remains of a developmental phase in which they were the sole type of mental function. The regulatory principle that governed such processes found its most elementary and transparent expression in the attempts of the mental apparatus to withdraw from sources of “unpleasure” through the repression of disturbing ideas and to satisfy internally arising needs through the hallucination of the desired satisfaction. “Only the non-occurrence (*erst das Ausbleiben*) of the expected satisfaction, the disappointment experienced,” Freud argued, induced the developing subject to abandon this primitive mode of gratification and to “form a conception of the real circumstances of the external world.”<sup>55</sup>

With the turn to the external world, a new principle was introduced into subject’s mental activity, one in which “what was presented in the mind (*vorgestellt*) was no longer what was agreeable but what was real, even if it happened to be disagreeable.” The establishment of the reality principle necessitated a succession of adaptations in the psychical apparatus: the increased importance of the sensory perception of the external world led, for instance, to the development of the faculties of attention and memory while thinking emerged as a means of restraining and directing physical activity. In place of the automatic repression of unpleasant ideas, the impartial passing of judgment now acquired prominence, and where previously, under the hegemony of the pleasure principle, motor discharge (action) had served to unburden the mental apparatus of accretions of stimuli, now it was employed in the appropriate (*zweckmässig*) alteration of reality. With the establishment of this new principle of mental functioning, one which Freud identified with the operations of the ego against those of the unconscious, the now split-off activity of fantasy

---

<sup>55</sup> Freud, “Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens,” 231.

became the preserve of the original pleasure principle.<sup>56</sup>

Sexuality, however, underwent a development largely independent of the influence of reality, remaining “far longer under the dominance of the pleasure principle, from which in many people it is never able to withdraw.”<sup>57</sup> “The instincts of love are difficult to educate,” Freud had written the previous year: in their stubborn resistance to the reality principle they retarded the subject’s development and posed dangers for her later psychic health.<sup>58</sup> Where in earlier texts Freud had identified repression with psychosexual development, whether endogenous or exogenous, in 1911 the pathogenic exclusion of ideas from consciousness appeared to be the product of a developmental inhibition and the continued predominance of the pleasure principle. Since repression – “the weak spot in our psychical organization” – remained “all-powerful” in the realm of fantasy, the domain of the pleasure principle, sexual activities that prevented the individual’s psychosexual maturation and encouraged the retention of primitive modes of gratification represented sources of danger for the developing subject. The continuation of autoerotism in later stages of sexual development, Freud argued, allowed the individual to retain “the easier momentary and imaginary satisfaction in relation to the sexual object in place of real satisfaction, which calls for effort and postponement.” Inverting his earlier thesis, in which too rapid cultural development was held to account for neurotic conflict, Freud contended that “an essential part of the psychical disposition to neurosis thus lies in the delay in educating the sexual instincts to pay regard to reality.”<sup>59</sup>

As irreconcilable as they initially appeared, the relationship between the two principles of

---

<sup>56</sup> Freud, “Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens,” 232-4.

<sup>57</sup> Freud, “Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens,” 235.

<sup>58</sup> Quote continues, “education of them achieves now too much, now too little.” Sigmund Freud, “Beiträge zur Psychologie des Liebeslebens, II: Über die allgemeinste Erniedrigung des Liebeslebens,” *GW* VIII (1910): 90.

<sup>59</sup> Freud, “Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens,” 235.

mental functioning was in fact far more complex than the superficial opposition of ego and sexuality, reality and pleasure implied. The *Real-Ich* that emerged with the ascendancy of the reality principle superimposed the calculus of attaining the useful and avoiding the harmful over the blind striving of the *Lust-Ich*, but far from deposing the original impulses of the mind, the establishment of the new regulatory principle served in fact to “safeguard” the pleasure principle – “a momentary pleasure, uncertain in its results, is given up, but only,” Freud explained, “in order to gain along the new path an assured pleasure at a later time.” The establishment of the reality principle thus marked not the replacement, as Freud himself at times maintained, but rather the modification of the pleasure principle. Especially telling, in this regard, was the fact that the process by which reality gained a hold on the subject’s psyche was, in fact, governed by the dynamics of the libido:

*Education* can be described without more ado as an incitement to the conquest of the pleasure principle, and to its replacement by the reality principle; it seeks, that is, to lend its help to the developmental process which affects the ego. To this end it makes use of an offer of love as a reward from the educators; and it therefore fails if a spoiled child thinks that it possesses that love in any case and cannot lose it whatever happens.<sup>60</sup>

In *Erziehung*, the love of the child for its caretakers thus served to supplement and reinforce the developmental impetus furnished by the disappointments of an unaccommodating reality. As Freud’s description made clear, the exchange of one regime of pleasure for another that marked the child’s entry into culture hinged on “an offer of love” – put differently, it unfolded through a process fundamentally akin to a seduction, albeit one whose intentions were almost the opposite of the deliberate seductions that furnished the foundation of Freud’s etiology of the neuroses 1896.

The conception of education that Freud offered in his 1911 essay restated ideas he had articulated two years earlier in response to a presentation by Carl Furtmüller titled “Education or

---

<sup>60</sup> Freud, “Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens,” 235-6.

Fatalism?” From the perspective of psychoanalysis, “the goal of education can be described... as the overcoming of forepleasure,” Freud contended. “By referring to a great ultimate pleasure, one has to induce the child to renounce the momentary forepleasure” offered by infantile sexual activities, in the process allowing “the promised ultimate pleasure” to move out “ever more widely until it is dissolved into the well-being of humanity.” Like the formula he offered in “Two Principles of Mental Functioning,” the progressive vision of infantile auto-erotism giving way to a desire grounded in a desexualized, universal altruism was linked to a conception of *Erziehung* as a libidinal dialectic between adult and child. Echoing Furtmüller, who praised their Viennese colleague Alfred Adler for offering “remarkable suggestions as to how the child’s need for affection can be turned to pedagogical advantage,” Freud lent his support to Adler’s conception of an education by means of love. For all three analysts, education was explicitly a struggle between adult and child, an attempt, in Freud’s words, “to wrest from [the child], in return for love, a part of his temperament.”<sup>61</sup>

In the essay to which Freud and Furtmüller referred, Adler had argued that the child’s “need for affection,” *Zärtlichkeitsbedürfnis*, should be understood as the “lever of education.” Through the gradual weaning of the child from immediate satisfactions, Adler contended, education should aim to elevate its original “drive complex” to a new level, transforming its primitive *Zärtlichkeitsbedürfnis* into social feelings. If the child is spared what he termed the “detour via culture,” obtaining “only satisfactions of a primitive kind and these without hesitation, than its wishes will always remain directed towards immediate, sensual pleasure.” While the residual ungratified drive complex yielded an “eternal, immanent impetus to [the child’s] progressive

---

<sup>61</sup> While Furtmüller, for instance, demanded the renunciation of educational methods that relied on direct, brutal forms of coercion, he again echoed Adler in advocating their replacement by “indirect coercion, which makes the winning of pleasure dependent on [the child’s submission].” See Freud and Furtmüller, 15 December 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 322.

cultivation [*zu seiner fortschreitenden Kultur*],” some form of partial satisfaction of the child’s drive life was nonetheless essential for its development. Closed off from civilized modes of satisfying its need for tenderness and left alone with its desire, the child would fail to develop social feelings and would succumb to self-love and feelings of hostility towards its environment, since “every unsatisfied drive,” Adler argued, “directs the organism in such a way that it surrenders to aggression towards its environment.” On either side of middle-ground of restrained, civilized gratification – itself marked significantly as a detour – loomed the dangers of deviance and neurosis.<sup>62</sup>

While in 1908, Adler, who would become one of the most prominent dissidents within the prewar movement, built his essay explicitly on a Freudian fundament, his replacement of the terminology of infantile sexuality with the more neutral “need for affection” nonetheless signaled a growing distance from Freudian libido theory. If his argument was broadly consistent with the incipient theory of development and the corresponding critique of education emerging at that time in Freud’s own writings, the overlap concealed divergences that extended well beyond Adler’s reticence concerning infantile sexuality. In marked contrast to the developmental models elaborated in the *Three Essays* and in “Two Principles of Mental Functioning,” Adler’s theory was premised on the existence of a unified ego and of an erotic life organized under the hegemony of a desire for tenderness. Adler thus assumed precisely what Freud set out to explain, namely the existence of a perceptual distinction between self and other and the channeling of originally disaggregated, auto-erotic drives towards a sexual object in the form of a unified object. Far from being present at the outset of psychic life, “the ego has to be developed,” Freud would argue in

---

<sup>62</sup> Alfred Adler, “Das Zärtlichkeitsbedürfnis des Kindes,” in *Studienausgabe Bd. 1: Persönlichkeit und neurotische Entwicklung. Frühe Schriften (1904-1912)*, ed. Almuth Bruder-Bezzel (Göttingen, 2007 [1908]), 77-80.

1914.<sup>63</sup> Where Adler hypostatized the ego as always already unified and situated it at the foundation of his rudimentary theory of psychosocial development, Freudian theory deconstructed it by investigating its genesis from out of the dynamics of the libido.<sup>64</sup>

Not coincidentally, the year of Adler's expulsion from the *WPV*, 1911, also witnessed the expansion and deepening of the role of libido in the Freudian theory psychosexual development – as if to underline the differences between their theories, Freud made libido integral to the constitution of the ego in “Two Principles of Mental Functioning.”<sup>65</sup> The passage from pleasure principle to reality principle that he outlined was one that involved far more than simply the child's entry into culture, rather the outwardly observable process was inseparable from and, in fact, contingent upon the psychic construction of a sense of reality. In his 1913 “Entwicklungsstufen des Wirklichkeitssinnes,” Ferenczi drew out the implications of “Two Principles of Mental Functioning” by exploring the progressive displacement of an original infantile megalomania, one grounded in an inability to distinguish between thinking (i.e. wishing) and acting, by the recognition of the power of natural forces and objective circumstances. For Ferenczi, the overcoming of the pleasure principle and the formation of a sense of reality unfolded through a protracted process in which the child was jarred out of an original sense of omnipotence and compelled by an intractable and impinging reality to recognize the conditions imposed upon it. In relational terms, the end of the dominance of the pleasure principle was signaled by “psychical detachment from the parents,” Ferenczi argued:

This exceedingly variable point of time is also the moment when the sense of omnipotence

---

<sup>63</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Zur Einführung des Narzismus,” *GW X* (1914), 142. Along with his “History of the Psychoanalytic Movement” (written earlier that same year), “On Narcissism” represented an extended critical engagement with Adler's now independent psychological theory.

<sup>64</sup> See Samuel Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000), 50-2.

<sup>65</sup> See Joel Whitebook, *Perversion and Utopia. A Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 99-106. The libidinal dynamics involved in the child's enculturation – specifically through the construction of the psychical representatives of social authority (the ego, ego-ideal, and superego) – would be central to Freudian thought after the war, a subject taken up in later chapters.

gives way to the complete appreciation of the power of circumstances. The highpoint of this sense of reality is attained in science, wherein the illusion of omnipotence experiences its greatest abasement.

The development of a sense of reality was thus for Ferenczi a product of a progressive disillusionment, one whose apex – achieved in the sense of reality furnished by (psychoanalytic) science – simultaneously marked the nadir of the subject’s original megalomania.<sup>66</sup>

Yet while Ferenczi’s essay offered an insightful elaboration of one strand of the developmental theory Freud formulated in 1911, it missed entirely the other dimension that unsettled the schematic opposition of reality and pleasure. The “sense of reality” whose genesis Ferenczi sought to trace was not merely a product of the frustrations imposed by the external world, for Freud, but also of the child’s libidinal investment of the objects in its environment, most significantly its parents – if the resistance of external world was an essential part of the development of a sense of reality, so too were the erotic attachments that formed between the child and its significant others. Where Ferenczi’s essay (anticipating Freud’s own 1914 study of narcissism) emphasized the child’s gradual weaning from a primitive sense of identity with the external world, Freud’s 1911 essay described the subject’s enculturation less in terms of a detachment from its environment than as a process of growing-into reality. What on one level appeared to be a process of progressive differentiation, of breaking apart, from external reality, thus simultaneously involved being drawn into – “enseamed within” – the fabric of social life.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Sandor Ferenczi, “Entwicklungsstufen des Wirklichkeitssinnes,” In *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse: Band I. Theorie* (Leipzig, 1927 [1913]), 62-83, here 78.

<sup>67</sup> The description of the Freudian theory of development as an attempt to understand how individuals get “enseamed within the social fabric” is from Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer* (New York, 1959), 221. See also Eric Santner: “Libido theory is...from the start a special kind of social theory. In a certain sense, then, the problem for psychoanalysis has really never been how to generalize from the level of the individual to that of the collective... but rather to show how individuals get initiated, drawn into, ‘seduced’ by, the ways in which historical forms of life have – always precariously and provisionally – come to terms with the fundamental impasses plaguing human flourishing more generally.” Santner, *The Royal Remains: The People’s Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty* (Chicago, 2011), 73.

The process by which the subject became “*libidinally implicated*” in the social, in Eric Santner’s words,<sup>68</sup> now appeared inseparable from the psychic development of a sense of reality, and thus, to the recovery of the very “reality reference” (Toews) that Freud had lost in 1896. As the breadth of the psychosexual development involved in the subject’s enculturation was widened and deepened, so too was the scope of the dynamics of seduction that Freud had earlier restricted to the awakening of the child’s sexuality. Freud’s 1911 essay thus extended and radicalized the implications of his earlier discussions of the parent-child relationship by identifying the erotic attachment between the child and its caretakers as fundamental to the development of the most basic functions of the ego. The “replacement” of the pleasure principle by the reality principle was ultimately a passage between regimes of pleasure that unfolded through a medium of incestuous love. In the various contributions of Freudians to questions of education and in the discussions of the *WPV*, *Verführung* figured as the intimate other, the underside of education, haunting and unsettling the attempts to think through the challenges that beset the child’s entry into culture. Without an ultimate ground outside of or beyond the pleasure principle, the discussion would return again and again to the apparently irresolvable problem of how education could avoid its seemingly inevitable perversion into seduction.

The confusion that resulted took the form of a number of insoluble questions. With the recognition that education was a libidinal dialectic, Freudians were confronted by the question of how the erotic attachment of the child to its caretakers ought to be regulated – how much love, when, and of what kind should the child receive to ensure that *Erziehung* avoid the twin outcomes of neurosis and perversion.<sup>69</sup> If the dangers of an education by love disturbed psychoanalytic

---

<sup>68</sup> Santner, *The Royal Remains*, 74.

<sup>69</sup> Where, for example, Freud contended that the principle of education by love could only fail if the child perceived that it possessed the parent’s love regardless of its behavior, Adler argued that it did not appear “to be a disadvantage for the child to perceive that, no matter what happens, he is loved.” 15 December 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 325-6.

thought, so too did the confusion surrounding the cause of the pathogenic repressions that produced neuroses.<sup>70</sup> Was it the excessive demands of civilization for libidinal renunciation that precipitated repression or was it the failure of subjects to overcome earlier stages of libidinal gratification and the primitive mental processes these entailed? Simply put, was neurosis a matter of too much cultural development or not enough? Or was it perhaps, in some still obscure way, a consequence of the relationship between the two possibilities of over- and underdevelopment – the outcome of a narrative pushed too far and yet left incomplete.<sup>71</sup> As the subsequent section will argue, the insolubility of these questions stymied psychoanalytic efforts to apply their insights to pedagogical questions, turning their forays into the field of education back towards the aporia around which psychoanalytic thought circled.

#### The Possibilities for Prophylaxis and the Elusiveness of Sublimation

Alfred Adler's 1908 paper was not his first venture into the field of education. Prior to "Das Zärtlichkeitsbedürfnis des Kindes," Adler had devoted two brief essays – "Der Arzt als Erzieher" from 1904 and "Das sexuelle Problem in der Erziehung" from the following year – to applying psychoanalytic insights to the practical problems of child rearing. Unlike Ferenczi's 1908 paper, which represented the first attempt to critically rethink education from the perspective of psychoanalysis, Adler's essays focused more narrowly on extrapolating pragmatic guidelines for educational practice on the basis of Freudian insights. As his biographer Bernhard Handlbauer notes, from Freud's discovery of infantile sexuality Adler derived the pedagogical demand that the

---

<sup>70</sup> See Wilhelm Stekel's remarks from the same meeting, "Thus education by love can become severely damaging," 15 December 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 330.

<sup>71</sup> As Leo Bersani notes, with the theory of sexuality presented in the *Three Essays* "the perversions of adults... become intelligible as the sickness of *uncompleted narratives*." *The Freudian Body*, 32.

educator do everything in order to avoid awakening the child's sensuality.<sup>72</sup> Love may have appeared as the essential mechanism and medium of education to Adler, but its centrality only heightened the need for its suppression and sublimation under the pressure of culture. The aim of education, Adler argued, consisted in the deflection of the child's sexuality towards ethically valuable strivings, a process that was jeopardized by excessive displays of love and affection which only served to artificially increase the child's sensual excitability. For Adler, it was the avoidance of "sexual precocity" – behind which could usually be discovered "a deliberate or unintentional seduction" – that was the key to the prevention of neuroses.<sup>73</sup>

If Adler's earliest contributions rested firmly on Freud's discovery of infantile sexuality, they drew a very different set of conclusions from this empirical fundament than those that Freud and Ferenczi would formulate. While all three authors emphasized the dangers of premature or excessive erotic stimulation, the essential role of the child's primary caretakers in the normal awakening of its sexual drives was elided in Adler's interventions. So too, however, was the cultural criticism that marked Freud and Ferenczi's contributions. By contrast, for Adler, the problem appeared to lie exclusively in the inability of certain individuals to master their sensual desires. In subordinating the libidinal demands of the individual to the dictates of society and in lending his support to what he termed the "normal suppression of sexuality," Adler inverted the main thrust of Freud's critique of contemporary culture.<sup>74</sup> While Freud insisted that "civilized standards make life too difficult" for the majority of individuals, "encourage the retreat from reality and the generating of neuroses," and fail to yield "any surplus of cultural gain" from their excessive

---

<sup>72</sup> Bernhard Handlbauer, *Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Individualpsychologie Alfred Adlers* (Vienna 1984), 234.

<sup>73</sup> In his 1905 essay Adler would describe this process in untranslatable terms as the "Übertragung der Leistungsfähigkeit von dem sinnlichen Führer auf die kulturfähige Tragkraft der Zellkomplexe." "Das sexuelle Probleme in der Erziehung," in *Studienausgabe Bd. 1: Persönlichkeit und neurotische Entwicklung. Frühe Schriften (1904-1912)*, ed. Almuth Bruder-Bezzel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007 [1905]), 37-8.

<sup>74</sup> Adler, "Das sexuelle Probleme in der Erziehung," 39.

repression of sexuality, Adler's pedagogical writings pointed in a different direction entirely and placed psychoanalysis in the service of a repressive sexual morality.<sup>75</sup> Against Freud and Ferenczi's attempts to mediate between culture and libido and, indeed, to enrich the former by loosening its demands on the latter, Adler one-sidedly urged the overcoming of sexuality in the service of culture.

Adler's divergent conclusions in his pedagogical writings stemmed not only from his idiosyncratic interpretation of the findings of psychoanalysis, but also from a theoretical orientation towards psychic development and neurotic conflict that grew increasingly independent over these years. The publication in 1907 of Adler's *Studie über Minderwertigkeit von Organen*, a work that contended that "all neurotic and psychoneurotic manifestations" had their foundation in objective organ inferiorities, marked a significant departure from his earlier, distinctively Freudian, contributions. While it retained a conceptual language of drives and energy, the biological perspective on neurotic conflict that Adler adopted in his 1907 study displaced the central role of sexuality in his earlier essays on educational hygiene with the functional, somatic view of clinical medicine.

Despite the distance between their theoretical and clinical perspectives, however, Freud interpreted Adler's 1907 study as a valuable contribution to the psychoanalytic theory of the neuroses, an attempt to furnish the latter with an organic foundation. Over the following years, however, his estimation of Adler's work would undergo a dramatic change as Adler subjected his theory to a far-reaching revision – from a supplement to the psychosexual understanding of the neuroses, Adler's work was increasingly viewed as offering a potential alternative to Freudian psychosexual theory. In a series of contributions between 1909 and his expulsion in 1911, Adler

---

<sup>75</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Über Psychoanalyse," *GW VIII* (1910), 58-9. See Hannah S. Decker, *Freud in Germany: Revolution and Reaction in Science, 1893-1907* (New York 1977), 302.

shifted the weight of causation from the inadequacy of a particular organ to the “feelings of inferiority” (*Minderwertigkeitsgefühle*) that he believed accompanied physical deficiencies and lent them their pathogenic force.<sup>76</sup> If in 1907 Adler had argued that neurosis emerged through the attempts of the biological apparatus to overcome (compensate for) the objective inadequacy of a given organ system, the emphasis in his subsequent essays on the decisive role of a *subjective* sense of inferiority opened up a broader domain for effective therapeutic and pedagogical intervention.<sup>77</sup>

Adler’s revision not only renewed the sense of pedagogical mission that animated his earlier essays, but also shifted his theory onto new terrain. From a work of clinical medicine that explored the psychological repercussions of organic disturbances, Adler’s revised theory, by offering a fully psychological account of neurosis grounded in the egoistic impulse to escape a felt sense of inferiority, came to occupy and contest the same ground as psychoanalysis itself.<sup>78</sup> Where Freudian theory privileged the libidinal conflict between drive and repression, in Adler’s developing thought, sexuality represented merely a manifest expression of the neurosis and was thus a “disingenuous etiology” covering over the reality of what he termed “masculine protest,” that is, the individual’s attempt to escape a felt sense of inferiority equated (within the cultural coordinates of the existing society) with femininity. As the fundamental contradiction between Adler’s “surface ego psychology,” in Freud’s pejorative description, and the psychosexual theory of the neuroses became apparent, Adler’s position within the society became increasingly

---

<sup>76</sup> See Gerald Mackenthun, “Adler verließ den biologischen Standpunkt als er entdeckte, dass zwischen einer Organminderwertigkeit und der Neurose ein Minderwertigkeitsgefühl liegt.” Mackenthun, *Gemeinschaftsgefühl. Wertpsychologie und Lebensphilosophie seit Alfred Adler* (Giessen 2012), 44.

<sup>77</sup> Handlbauer notes, for instance, the marked contrast between the emphasis on inheritance, on an inborn disposition to illness, in Adler’s 1908 essay “Über die Vererbung von Krankheiten” and the pedagogical optimism of his later work. See *Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Individualpsychologie*, 216. Mackenthun makes a similar point in describing the period following Adler’s turn to *Minderwertigkeitsgefühle* as a “Rückbesinnung auf erzieherische Aspekte und damit eine bewusste Hinwendung zur Pädagogik.” *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, 43.

<sup>78</sup> Paul Stepansky, *In Freud’s Shadow: Adler in Context* (London, 1983), 95, 98, 105.

untenable. Though he conceded that Adler's work represented a significant advance on the level of ego psychology and characterology, Freud nevertheless contended that it represented a danger to the development of psychoanalysis in that it neglected – in fact, disavowed – the “more interesting” unconscious determinates that stemmed from repression and were alien to the ego.<sup>79</sup>

In the wake of this condemnation, undermining as it did his personal standing within the society, Adler would set about fashioning a new movement on the basis of this theory, which received its definitive elaboration in his 1912 study *Über den Nervösen Charakter*. Originally given the polemical name *The Society for Free Psychoanalytic Research* and later rechristened *Individual Psychology*, the movement that Adler founded together with a handful of fellow apostates (Furtmüller being the most prominent) would develop in much closer proximity to pedagogical currents than would Freudian psychoanalysis.<sup>80</sup> In contrast to Adler's long-standing eagerness to draw practical consequences for education from his findings, Freud adopted a much more cautious approach towards the application of analysis to education: in the same 1909 meeting in which Furtmüller put forward his proposal for educational reform – suggestions, Freud contended, whose “liberal and promising” content belied their “psychoanalytic veneer” – Freud asserted that he had “always, as far as possible, avoided drawing conclusions – least of all, issuing prescriptions – for education on the basis of our findings.”<sup>81</sup> The properly psychoanalytic attitude that Freud upheld thus paradoxically took the form of a circumspect refusal to translate analytic insight into educational precept.

Yet Freud was not always as cautious and skeptical as these comments implied. Arguing that education was to be understood as a prophylaxis intended to prevent the two outcomes of

---

<sup>79</sup> Freud, 1 February 1911, *Protokolle: Bd. III*, 145-46.

<sup>80</sup> The new orientation was signaled as early as 1914 by the title – *Heilen und Bilden ein Buch der Erziehungskunst für Ärzte und Pädagogen* – of a collection of essays that Adler edited together with Furtmüller.

<sup>81</sup> Freud, 15 December 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 324-25.

neurosis and of perversion, Freud positioned analytic knowledge as a central part of the educator's responsibilities in a 1913 preface to a book (*Die psychoanalytische Method*) by the Swiss pastor and educator, Oskar Pfister. By deepening the educator's knowledge of "the general human dispositions of childhood" and enabling him to detect the first indications of an undesirable development in the child, analysis could allow education to fulfill its prophylactic mission: "One cannot but think that a psycho-analytic activity such as this on the part of the educator – and of the similarly placed pastoral worker in protestant countries – would inevitably be of inestimable value and might often make the intervention of a doctor unnecessary." Through permeating the educational profession, it appeared to Freud that analysis could safeguard the work of enculturation, ironically rendering the expertise of physicians like himself superfluous.<sup>82</sup>

The optimism of Freud's statements in his 1913 preface ran very much against the grain of his prewar thought, however, and testifies, at least in part, to the hopes for the professional expansion of analysis that occasionally overran his customary skepticism.<sup>83</sup> In a 1907 discussion on the subject of the sexual education of children and the possibility that their enlightenment on sexual matters could serve as a "protective inoculation against trauma," Freud remained more circumspect in his prognosis. Though he admitted that enlightenment could likely countermand the effects of childhood traumata, he rejected the view that such traumatic experiences were of great importance in the etiology of the neuroses, since, on the whole, they "were found to be similar for all individuals." While it could undoubtedly accomplish something, enlightenment was no panacea, Freud insisted – "[i]n spite of all precautions...one will succeed only in limiting the

---

<sup>82</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Geleitwort zu *Die psychoanalytische Method*," *GW X* (1913): 448-50.

<sup>83</sup> "On the other hand, I am attracted by the prospect of gaining a new and not yet opened-up circle of readers in the field of education...Our capacity for expansion in the medical profession is unfortunately very limited, and it is important to secure a footing elsewhere where we can." Freud to Pfister, 2 May 1912, *Psycho-Analysis and Faith*, 55.

severity of neurosis, not in avoiding it altogether.”<sup>84</sup> When the subject of sexual enlightenment was once again the topic of conversation in the *WPV* in 1909, Freud pointed to his case study of the same year as grounds for making an even more pessimistic assessment: “Mankind must go through neurosis and then arrive at a tolerable position,” he argued, adding that “the conviction that neuroses are unavoidable will also influence our opinion about the possibilities of prophylaxis”<sup>85</sup>

If neurosis appeared an unavoidable concomitant of enculturation, then there was little to be done in the way of effective prevention. Yet given the widespread psychic misery generated by the cultural suppression of sexuality (and the obvious room for improvement in traditional child-rearing), doing nothing appeared even less tenable than the idea of a uniformly effective means of prophylaxis. Where psychoanalysts identified the greatest possibility for successful reform was in the field Ferenczi had highlighted in his 1908 essay, namely, the education of the educators. The inadequacy of the majority of parents and teachers “shifts the entire problem back by one generation,” the Viennese analyst Eduard Hitschmann insisted in 1909.<sup>86</sup> The dissemination of psychoanalytic knowledge, it was hoped, would serve to reduce the excessive curtailments imposed by culture by enabling parents and educators to recognize the libidinal conflicts in children that they had previously disavowed and blindly suppressed.

The reform that such an intervention would yield in the domain of education and child rearing was part of a broader transition to what Freud described in his 1910 address “The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic Therapy” as a “more truthful and creditable attitude on the part of

---

<sup>84</sup> Freud, 18 December 1907, *Protokolle: Bd I*, 257.

<sup>85</sup> Freud, 12 May 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 212. In the case study he referenced, that of “Little Hans” Freud wrote of “the unavoidable difficulties by which a child is confronted...in the course of his cultural training.” Freud, “Analyse der Phobie eines fünfjährigen Knabens,” 374.

<sup>86</sup> Hitschmann, 15 December 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 328.

society” towards sexuality. In his remarks, Freud envisioned a process through which the “indiscrete” disclosures into sexuality furnished by psychoanalysis would bar the path by which individuals regularly flee from real life into neurosis, all but compelling them to acknowledge the facts of sexual life without the hypocrisy and distortion with which these subjects were customarily treated – “They will have to be honest, confess to the instincts that are at work in them, face the conflict, fight for what they want, or go without it,” Freud argued. Turning his attention to the other side of the problem, he continued, “the tolerance of society, which will inevitably follow (*unabwendbar einstellt*) in the wake of psychoanalytic enlightenment, will come to their aid.”<sup>87</sup> In marked contrast to his statements on the sexual enlightenment of children, it appeared that Freud was convinced that, on a broader scale, the insights offered by psychoanalysis would yield transformative results.

The fluctuation between enthusiasm and skepticism that emerges so strikingly in Freud’s statements on the possibilities for a reform of *Erziehung* was characteristic of the broader psychoanalytic discourse within which they were formulated. As in Freud’s thought, however, the scale was weighted decisively in favor of circumspection – throughout the discussions within the *WPV*, analysts took turns admonishing each other for their naiveté.<sup>88</sup> The notion that “matters are probably more complicated than we now suspect them to be,” in Isidor Sadger’s words, was one that seemed to hold particular relevance to questions of education.<sup>89</sup> As early as 1910, the British analyst Ernest Jones could state in an article titled “Psycho-Analysis and Education” that the

---

<sup>87</sup> In typical fashion, however, Freud followed this passage with an admonition to his colleagues that they were not to take the attitude towards life “of a fanatic for hygiene or therapy”: “We must admit that the ideal prevention of neurotic illnesses which we have in mind would not be of advantage to every individual.” “Die Zukünftigen Chance der psychoanalytischen Therapie,” *GW VIII* (1910): 104-15, here 114-15 (translations modified)

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, Wilhelm Stekel, “Things are not so simple as all that,” 15 December 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 329, and Josef Friedjung, “Things are never as simple as they might seem to be, on the basis of such reports,” 20 April 1910, *Protokolle: Bd II*, 457.

<sup>89</sup> Sadger, 12 May 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 211.

expectation that Freudian science would yield “conclusions of great import regarding the subject of education” had not been fulfilled. Such an outcome was unsurprising, Jones noted, since training to become an analyst involved essentially an education in “scepticism and caution.” From the circumspect vantage of Freudian thought, it was clear to Jones that “the psychological problems of education are fraught with more complex difficulties than many writers on the subject suspect.”<sup>90</sup>

Where psychoanalysis *had* proven capable of formulating conclusions regarding education these have lain, Jones noted, predominately on “the negative side of the subject,” that is, concerning the pedagogical practices and environmental influences to be avoided.<sup>91</sup> Here Jones was adhering to a logic that Freud had articulated the previous year in his case study of Little Hans: noting that it was “extremely probable” that a “child’s upbringing can exercise a powerful influence for good or for evil” upon its disposition, Freud proceeded to acknowledge that “what that upbringing is to aim at and at what point it is to be brought to bear seem at present to be very doubtful questions.” The admission of ignorance Freud offered on behalf of the educator led him to place his faith in the child’s innate endowment – after noting that education has traditionally aimed at the suppression of the instincts, a priority that had yielded baleful consequences, Freud indicated another possible procedure:

Supposing now that we substitute another task for this one, and aim instead at making the individual capable of becoming a civilized and useful member of society (*kulturfähig und sozial verwertbar*) with the least possible sacrifice of his own activity; in that case the information gained by psychoanalysis, upon the origin of pathogenic complexes and upon the nucleus of every nervous affection, can claim with justice that it deserves to be regarded by educators as an invaluable guide in their conduct towards children.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Ernest Jones, “Psycho-Analysis and Education,” in *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* (London, 1913 [1910]), (393-415), 393.

<sup>91</sup> Jones, “Psycho-Analysis and Education,” 413.

<sup>92</sup> Freud, “Analyse der Phobie eines fünfjährigen Knabens,” 376-7.

Perhaps, at some point in the future, Jones wrote, analysis would be able to instruct educators in “how to train and refine the impulses that are so important for both the individual and for the race,” but “at present we should concentrate our efforts on not injuring them.”<sup>93</sup>

However much they decried the deleterious effects of culture on the developing subject, the majority of analysts nonetheless eschewed the Rousseauian ideal of a negative education, one limited to organizing the environmental influences that operate on the child and to providing an example worthy of emulation. Above all, the “inescapable task” of detaching from the parents – the child’s original love objects – exposed the limits of a negative pedagogical ideal and the logic of endogenous unfolding that informed it. Along with the necessary selection of perverse drives for repression, the loosening of the child’s libidinal ties to its parents, Freud wrote, presented the work of education with “unavoidable difficulties,” ones that “at present are not always dealt with in an insightful and unobjectionable fashion.”<sup>94</sup> If, as Jones insisted, upbringing should consist in a “drawing out...of [the child’s] special potentialities” (an “e-ducation”) and “success is best achieved by gradually weaning the child to social interests” rather than through forcible suppression or prohibition, the necessary repression of primitive drives and the imposition of the incest taboo were challenges that revealed a very different side of education.<sup>95</sup> From this perspective, the upbringing of children appeared to be less a linear unfolding of an innate endowment or a gradual growing-into *Kultur* than a fundamental and violent reversal of the its

---

<sup>93</sup> Jones, “Psycho-Analysis and Education,” 413. Likewise, in the final section (titled “Pädagogik und Charakterologie”) of the 1913 study by Otto Rank and Hans Sachs, the authors (both psychoanalysts) contended that “as far as possible one should leave the child to itself, shielding it as best one can from directly harmful influences and restricting it as little as possible in its natural development.” Otto Rank and Hans Sachs, *Die Bedeutung der Psychoanalyse für die Geisteswissenschaften* (Wiesbaden, 1913), 106. Similar sentiments are evident in comments dispersed throughout the minutes of the *WPV* meetings, for instance, where Fritz Wittels declared unequivocally that “one should leave a child alone and fuss about him as little as possible.” Wittels, 18 December 1907, 256. See also Sadger’s defense of Wittels in the discussion of 15 December 1909, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 328.

<sup>94</sup> Freud, “Analyse der Phobie eines fünfjährigen Knabens,” 374 and Freud, “Über Psychoanalyse,” 51 (translation modified).

<sup>95</sup> Jones, “Psycho-Analysis and Education,” 402.

most basic impulses. *Erziehung*, Freud argued some years later, “must inhibit, forbid and suppress” and the interdictions it imposed were invariably directed against the primary manifestations of the child’s sexual life.<sup>96</sup>

If the task for the educator thus involved charting a course between the twin dangers of permissiveness and suppression, the middle way between these extremes seemed to lead inevitably into a whirlpool of confusion.<sup>97</sup> Perhaps nothing illustrates this better than the interminable discussions within the *WPV* on the subject of masturbation. Throughout the running debate, the harmfulness that for most analysts attached itself to autoerotism was repeatedly displaced: was masturbation deleterious because it offered inadequate gratification (leading to a dangerous build-up of undischarged libido), because it could lead to libidinal fixation on primitive forms of gratification and the earliest love-objects (thus short-circuiting the development of the reality principle), or because of the psychic battle that masturbators must carry on in the face of the ethical, religious, and aesthetic inhibitions that surrounded it? Far from inhering in any single factor, the danger was always elsewhere, in the multifaceted and ever-shifting relations between the social, psychological, and biological dimensions of the “problem” – “masturbation,” as Freud put it, “is merely the phenomenon behind which other forces are concealed”<sup>98</sup> While the conversation had been initiated with the intention of publishing the results, after the first two discussions, Freud was forced to concede that the collective contributions did not warrant publication. Seven discussions later, after gesturing – rather cryptically – to a consensus he believed had formed around the essentials, Freud summed up the results of the preceding conversations with the admission that

---

<sup>96</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse,” *GW XV* (1933): 160.

<sup>97</sup> See Freud’s description of the tasks of education in his “New Introductory Lectures.” “Die Erziehung hat also ihren Weg zu suchen zwischen der Scylla des Gewährenlassens und der Charybdis des Versagens.” “Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse,” 148.

<sup>98</sup> Freud, 1 June 1910, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 520.

“the question of when masturbation is harmful and when it is not cannot be answered in general terms.”<sup>99</sup>

In conceding this inability, Freud effectively left psychoanalysis hamstrung when it came to the issue of formulating pedagogical guidelines for the manifestations of infantile sexuality. In this respect, however, it was emblematic of the entire prewar psychoanalytic discourse on education and enculturation, which was continually unsettled by the dangers it traced. Even when certain childish behaviors were adjudged deleterious, the question inevitably followed of whether corrective measures would yield more harm than good. Once they had “become familiar with the findings of psychoanalysis,” Freud wrote, educators will prefer to “refrain from any attempt at forcibly suppressing” “socially unserviceable or perverse instinctual impulses.” Not only did such efforts “often produce no less undesirable results than the alternative,” but the “forcible suppression of strong instincts by external means never has the effect” of eliminating such instincts or enabling the child to bring them under control – rather “it leads to repression, which establishes a predisposition to later nervous illness.”<sup>100</sup>

The elusive middle ground between the two extremes of permissiveness and suppression was also the foundation upon which sexuality could be converted – in a non-repressive fashion – into culture. If compulsion and repression foreclosed the possibility of diverting the un-useable partial drives to higher culture aims, seduction and excessive permissiveness undercut the fundament upon which sexuality could be elevated and transformed into cultural achievement by channeling the perverse drives towards immediate satisfactions and thus depriving the developing

---

<sup>99</sup> Freud, 24 April 1912, *Protokolle: Bd. IV*, 87.

<sup>100</sup> Freud, “Das Interesse an der Psychoanalyse,” *GW VIII* (1913): 419-20. See also Freud, 4 May 1910, *Protokolle: Bd. II*, 477: “If in the interest of prophylaxis, the rule is given: one must not stimulate sexuality too much,” Freud contended, “the better aid to an effective prophylaxis lies in not exerting too much pressure on such children [of the sort that will lead] to repression,” though “the best thing is, of course, to do both.”

subject of the dynamic impulse to transform his or her sexuality in line with cultural ideals. In the context of the psychoanalytic discussion of enculturation, the process of sublimation represented a vital escape valve for the pressures that might otherwise be turned against the individual or bring him or her into conflict with the ethical and aesthetic values of society. As if to redress an oversight in his first essay on psychoanalysis and education, Jones pointed in a paper the following year to “sublimating processes” as the field in which the “*positive* aspects of the relation between psychoanalysis and education” could be fleshed out. Yet beyond the general contention that education needed to take the child’s primary interests and tendencies as its point of departure and “work with the current of psychic evolution” rather than against it, Jones could offer little in the way of concrete suggestions. The extraordinary importance of such an application of psychoanalysis was clear enough, since “civilization has reached, or is on the point of reaching, the limit beyond which unguided sublimation can no longer be successfully maintained,” but how education could best “supplement the instinctive forces making for sublimation” did not – at least, *not yet* – appear to admit of a positive answer.<sup>101</sup>

Sublimation thus represented a refuge from the cycle of seduction and repression that constituted the neurotic character of contemporary civilization. Yet for all its appeal as a solution to the difficulties of enculturation, sublimation was an elusive aim. Not only was the middle ground that furnished its condition of possibility both narrow and unstable, but there was (or seemed to be) something irreducibly enigmatic about the process and mechanism of sublimation itself – for all their attempts to account for literary and artistic production (one of the main preoccupations of the prewar *WPV* meetings), the boundary between sublimation and neurosis remained unstable and indistinct. The origins of sublimated cultural achievement in sexuality

---

<sup>101</sup> Ernest Jones, “The Value of Sublimating Processes for Education and Re-Education,” in *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* (London 1913 [1911]), 416, 423, 432.

meant that it was always vulnerable of being drawn back towards its origins and engulfed by the whirlpool of drive and repression that it had previously transcended.<sup>102</sup>

### Psychoanalysis and the New Education

If psychoanalysts struggled to formulate viable guidelines for the rearing of children, they nonetheless succeeded in developing a new mode of thinking about *Erziehung* and its challenges over these years – the modesty of their proposals went hand-in-hand with far-reaching reconceptualization of education, one marked by a new critical self-reflexivity. Yet the perspective on traditional pedagogical methods they developed brought analysts into close proximity to the reform pedagogy movement that emerged in central Europe in the decades before the war. As broad and variegated as this movement was, the vast majority of its representatives and adherents ascribed to some form of the principle that education should take the child's innate endowment as its point of departure. At the outset of the movement, Wolfgang Scheibe has argued, was a collective turn to the child that was unprecedented in its intensity – “The child was, as it were, discovered anew.”<sup>103</sup> The slogan *Erziehung vom Kinde aus* that permeated this movement conveyed the sense that education should properly unfold from out of the child and in conformity with its developmental needs rather than being imposed upon it by the representatives of adult society. In the writings of many reform pedagogues an ethos of relative permissiveness – evident

---

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, Freud's discussion in his essay on Leonardo of the uncertainty that governed the fate of the child's desire for knowledge concerning sexual matters. At the close of the period of infantile sexual researches, the child's drive for knowledge could experience one of three fates (or potentially a combination of all three): it could fall victim to the same fate as sexuality itself and be repressed (*Denkhemmung*), it could itself be sexualized and take on an obsessive character (*Denkzwang*), or it could experience sublimation, the “rarest and most perfect” outcome. “Eine Kindheits Erinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci,” *GW VIII* (1910): 128-211, here 146-48. As Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis point out, the theory of sublimation, despite its essential function within Freudian theory, would remain underdeveloped in Freud's own thought and has persisted as a lacunae in psychoanalysis. See Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1973), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, 431-33.

<sup>103</sup> Wolfgang Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung, 1900-1932. Eine einführende Darstellung* (Weinheim, 1969), 51.

in the semantic repetition of *lassen* (“to let/allow”) – was bound up with a belief that a new education, one grounded in the child’s own impulses, would bring about cultural renewal, even social transformation.<sup>104</sup> The task of education was thus “the development and nurturing of the living creative powers” of the child, a conviction that identified the imposition of constraint as a deleterious interference in a natural process of unfolding.<sup>105</sup>

The ideal of a *kindgemässe Erziehung* (an education adapted to the child) placed a premium on a nuanced understanding of the basic needs and capacities of the developing subject. Where traditional educators, or so reformers accused, looked down on their pupils from the height of adulthood, reforming pedagogues strove to draw closer to the child and to take it seriously on its own terms.<sup>106</sup> Arguing that the existing school system was ignorant of the child, reformers turned to the emerging field of child psychology for a better understanding of its supposed natural development. At the turn of the century, both pedagogy and psychology sought to attain a degree of professional and academic independence from the overarching discipline of philosophy, an ambition that resulted in a new disciplinary alliance. In the words of the progressive pedagogue Ernst Weber, “psychology has taken the work of education out of dilettantism and has given it the character of a science as well as an art.”<sup>107</sup> Conversely, for Berthold Otto, the coiner of the phrase “*Erziehung vom Kinde aus*,” psychology was to serve as the foundation of all practical education:

---

<sup>104</sup> See Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung*, 64. As both Scheibe and Jürgen Oelkers note, the analogy between children and plants (captured by the term *Kinderpflanze*) indicated a pedagogical technique premised on non-interference: “...gleicht das Kind der sich entwickelnden Pflanze, dann kommt fuer den Erzieher nur eine Handlungsweise in Frage, naemlich der Entwicklungsrichtung zu folgen, die mit der Anlage des Kindes gegeben ist.” Oelkers, *Reformpädagogik. Eine kritische Dogmengeschichte* (Munich 1989), 91.

<sup>105</sup> “Entwicklung und Pflege der lebendigen schöpferischen Kräfte” is Scheibe’s description of how the Bremen *Volksschullehrer* Fritz Gansberg and Heinrich Scharrelmann conceived of the “*eigentliche Aufgabe der Schule*.” Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung*, 54. See also Oelkers, *Reformpädagogik*, 73-98. As Marjorie Lamberti points out, however, many reforming educators were much more pragmatic in their orientation and much less enamored of the romantic mythos of the self-sufficient child that underpinned the Rousseauian ideal of negative education. See Lamberti, *The Politics of Education: Teachers and School Reform in Weimar Germany* (New York 2004), 135, 140.

<sup>106</sup> Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung*, 53.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Lamberti, *The Politics of Education*, 33.

“pedagogy,” he contended, “must become applied psychology.”<sup>108</sup>

Freudians (*and* Adlerians too for that matter) were thus far from alone in believing that the insights of psychology into the original dispositions of the child would offer a valuable vantage point from which to rethink educational practices. If the liberalizing critique of *Erziehung* developed by psychoanalysts over these years must be understood as part of a wider movement to reform education in a more *kindgemässe* direction, Freudians nevertheless maintained a critical distance from the ambitions of reformers and resisted being drawn into the broader current. Against the prevailing optimism of the reform pedagogy movement, psychoanalysts approached the common undertaking with a deeply ingrained skepticism regarding the possibilities of effective reform. For many progressive educators, the child was to be understood as a piece of nature, one that given the proper conditions and shielded from negative influences was capable of developing into a civilized subject through a process of autonomous self-unfolding.<sup>109</sup> Not only did Freud increasingly move away from a biogenetic conception of enculturation as endogenous unfolding, however, but he also insisted that education inevitably entailed the violent curtailment of the child’s original desires and impulses. Far from a linear *Hineinwachsen* (growing-into) on the model of a maturing and ripening plant, enculturation involved a multitude of conflicting trajectories whose diverging vectors (e.g. repression, sublimation, reaction-formation, fixation) could not be assimilated to a unidirectional teleology.

Against the idealized image of the child as both presexual and essentially good that animated the reform pedagogy movement, psychoanalysis placed perverse drives at the origin of cultural achievement – the most valuable qualities of adults, they argued, were often reactions

---

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung*, 86. Notably, the same statement would be repeated almost verbatim by the psychologist Ernst Meumann. See Peter Dudek, *Jugend als Objekt der Wissenschaft*,

<sup>109</sup> See Scheibe, 61 and 59. “Ein Prozess der Selbstbildung vollzieht sich und kann sich vollziehen, weil im Kinde alles schon angelegt ist und von selbst hervordraengt.”

against the least sociable impulses of the child.<sup>110</sup> For more traditional reformist pedagogues, the theory of infantile sexuality and the ambitions (however fraught, attenuated, and qualified) of analysts to bring their insights to bear on the upbringing of children were anathema.<sup>111</sup> Yet even adherents and supporters of psychoanalysis like Pfister and his fellow Swiss, Paul Häberlin, were reluctant to fully embrace Freudian theory and technique, at times even echoing the critiques of detractors about the dangers of a “tactless and pedagogically heedless” psychoanalytic intervention into the child’s psyche.<sup>112</sup>

The skepticism of analysts regarding education reform was thus mirrored by the attitude, ranging from circumspection to outright hostility, of reformist pedagogues towards analysis. If reformers occasionally described pedagogy as applied psychology, Freudians tended to be far more reticent – for Freud, himself, there was, or appeared to be, no means of formulating educational precepts on the basis of analytic knowledge. “The work of education,” he would note in 1925, “is *sui generis*: it is not to be confused with psychoanalytic influence and cannot be replaced by it” – both professions, that is, possessed distinct tasks that were not to be conflated or collapsed into one another.<sup>113</sup> Far from being identical, as Freud specified in his foreword to Pfister’s 1913 work,

---

<sup>110</sup> See Freud, “Das Interesse an der Psychoanalyse,” 419-20. “Sie [die Psychoanalyse] kann aber auch lehren, welche wertvolle Beiträge zur Charakterbildung diese asozialen und perversen Triebe des Kindes ergeben, wenn sie nicht der Verdrängung unterliegen, sondern durch den Prozeß der sogenannten Sublimierung von ihren ursprünglichen Zielen weg zu wertvolleren gelenkt werden. Unsere besten Tugenden sind als Reaktionsbildungen und Sublimierungen auf dem Boden der bösesten Anlagen erwachsen. Die Erziehung sollte sich vorsorglich hüten, diese kostbaren Kraftquellen zu verschütten und sich darauf beschränken, die Prozesse zu befördern, durch welche diese Energien auf gute Wege geleitet werden.” On the idealization of the child in the reform pedagogy movement see Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung*, 59 and Oelkers, *Reformpädagogik*, 91.

<sup>111</sup> In some cases, the work of psychoanalysts in this direction called forth bitter protests. “Wie bedauernd,” wrote Wilhelm Stern, “sind die jungen Geschöpfe, an denen Eltern oder Lehrer oder Ärzte psychoanalytisch herumexperimentieren und herum-‘erziehen’! Welch unheilbarer Schaden kann da angerichtet werden, wenn der Erzieher mit Gewalt eine sexualpsychische Hypertrophie in der Seele der Kleinen erzeugt!” Stern, “Die Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf Kindheit und Jugend. Ein Protest,” *Zeitschrift für angewandte Psychologie* 8 (1913): 71-101 (here 90). See also, F. W. Foerster, “Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik,” *Österreichische Rundschau* 35 (1913).

<sup>112</sup> Paul Häberlin, “Psychoanalyse und Erziehung,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 2 (1914): 213-222, here 219. Pfister’s hesitancy led Abraham to write to Freud that he took “a completely opposite view from yours about Pfister,” whom he found “completely unreliable.” See Abraham to Freud, 16 July 1914, *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, 1907-1925*, ed. Ernst Falzeder (London, 2002), 258.

<sup>113</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Geleitwort zu *Verwahrloste Jugend*,” *GW XIV* (1925): 566.

education and analytic therapy stand in an “assignable relationship” to one another with the latter coming into action only once the former had yielded the “unwished-for result of pathological symptoms.”<sup>114</sup> Even if he believed analysis could help guide educational practice, he strenuously resisted any conflation of their aims and methods.

If this attitude reflected an appreciation of the unique challenges of *Erziehung*, it also pointed to an awareness that analytic therapy had to maintain a critical distance from a process that was seen as lying at the root of so much neurotic suffering. As the following chapter will explore in more detail, analysis figured predominately as an undoing of education in Freud’s prewar thought: though he described the procedure of analytic therapy in 1909 as a “continuation of education (*forgesetzte Erziehung*) for the purpose of overcoming the residues of childhood,” on the whole, Freud opted for the negative characterization of analysis as an “after-education (*Nacherziehung*) in overcoming internal resistances.”<sup>115</sup> Yet the temptation to place analysis in the service of education remained a constant thorn in the side of young movement. Significantly, both of the major deviant movements of the prewar period, namely Adlerian Individual Psychology and the Zürich school around Carl Jung, differed markedly from psychoanalysis on this score. While Adler would describe Individual Psychology as an *erzieherische* treatment, one that took the patient’s character as opposed to his or her (more or less delimited) sexual conflicts as its object (see chapter 3), Jungian therapy sought to elevate the patient ethically and aesthetically by offering the physician as an ideal for emulation.<sup>116</sup> The temptation to assist the patient in

---

<sup>114</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort zu *Die psychanalytische Method*,” *GW X* (1913): 449.

<sup>115</sup> Freud, “Über Psychoanalyse,” 51 and Sigmund Freud, “Über Psychotherapie,” *GW V* (1904): 25. Tellingly, when they quoted this passage in which Freud speaks of analysis as a *forgesetzte Erziehung*, Rank and Sachs replaced *Erziehung* with *Nacherziehung*. Rank and Sachs, *Die Bedeutung der Psychoanalyse für die Geisteswissenschaften*, 106.

<sup>116</sup> The Adlerian alternative remained the greater threat for psychoanalysis, however, and above all for the emerging field of psychoanalytic pedagogy: writing to Pfister in 1927, Freud recalled his own surprise at the time of the publication of the first edition of *Die Psychanalytische Method* that its author had “put up so much better resistance to the confusion of Jung than [he] did to the absurdity of Adler.” Freud to Pfister, 11 April 1927, in *Psycho-Analysis*

synthesizing his personality and sublimating his instincts, for instance, was one that Freud repeatedly cautioned “the much prized and much rebuked” Pfister against: after noting that the “permanent success,” such as it was, of analysis was generally consequent not on “moral elevation” but rather on the patient’s renewed ability to “[obtain] satisfaction by the release of tension” through sexual activity, he noted modestly that “our patients have to find in humanity what we are unable to promise them from above and unable to supply them with ourselves.”<sup>117</sup>

The psychoanalytic theory of development elaborated over these years thus informed a model of analytic therapy marked more by abstention than by enthusiasm or ambition. Having warned his fellow practitioners against the temptation to bring their own personality into play as a means of achieving radical cures by “carry[ing] the patient along with them and lift[ing] him over the barriers of his own narrow personality,” Freud noted that “educative ambition is as of little use as therapeutic ambition:” “As a doctor, one must above all be tolerant to the weakness of a patient,” Freud wrote, “and must be content if one has won back some degree of capacity for work and enjoyment (*Leistungs- und Genussfähigkeit*) for a person even of only moderate worth.” Considering that many people fall ill precisely from the attempt to sublimate their drives beyond the degree allowed by their psychosexual “organization,” Freud urged modesty – after all, where further sublimation was possible it would likely take place entirely of itself as soon as the patient’s inhibitions have been overcome by analysis.”<sup>118</sup>

What ultimately shifted the relationship between psychoanalysis and education that this

---

*and Faith: The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Oskar Pfister*, ed. Heinrich Meng and Ernst L. Freud, trans. Eric Mosbacher (London, 1963), 103.

<sup>117</sup> Freud to Pfister, 9 February 1909 and 20 May 1921, in *Briefe*, 12-13 and 86. As Abraham noted in a letter to Freud from 1914, whatever real possibilities for sublimation existed for the patient were dependent for their realization on the restraint of the analyst. The essential difference between Freudian and Jungian therapy lay in the fact that psychoanalysis eschewed responsibility for determining what Jung termed the “life task” of the patient and thus left the patient free to make decisions regarding his future. Abraham to Freud, 2 April 1914, in *Sigmund Freud-Karl Abraham. Briefe, 1907-1926* (Frankfurt a. M. 1965), ed. Hilda C. Abraham and Ernst L. Freud, 165.

<sup>118</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Ratschläge für den Ärzten bei der psychoanalytischen Behandlung,” *GW VIII* (1912): 384-5.

chapter has traced was the devastation of World War One. In the wake of the catastrophe, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, it would be far more difficult for Freudians to maintain the critical distance from education that their prewar work had preserved. The profound disruption of the normal agents of socialization (i.e. the family and the school) in the midst of total war and the political turmoil generated by the conflict appeared to demand a pedagogical response from authorities and experts. In the process of contributing to this response, psychoanalysts were drawn into a new proximity to politics and the challenges of governing. While the circumspect attitude that marked their earlier theories of enculturation would be preserved in their postwar work, Freudians would simultaneously seek to contribute to the work of reconstruction through ambitious therapeutic and pedagogical undertakings.

If prewar psychoanalytic thought regarding *Erziehung* had been haunted by the dangers that inhered in the libidinal dynamics of education, postwar psychoanalysis would add to this an awareness of dangers that loomed beyond the horizons of enculturation. Faced with this new reality, psychoanalysts were paradoxically returned to a number of concerns that marked Freud's thought before his abandonment of seduction hypothesis. The universality of the Oedipal drama that Freud discovered in 1897 provided a containing framework, a generic sociocultural matrix within which psychoanalytic thinking on upbringing and enculturation would unfold. While the intimate context of the bourgeois family figured as an erotically charged hothouse and a seedbed of neurotic conflicts, it simultaneously served to shield the child from the kind of intrusive, overwhelming experiences that had dominated the etiology Freud elaborated in 1896. Shorn of the perverse, sexually abusive fathers who represented the primary culprit in the seduction theory, the Oedipal family became what might be termed the "good enough" family – even when it veered too far in the direction of seduction (now a product less of the adult's desire than of the child's) or

of suppression, the family arrangement that furnished the locus of the child's primary socialization was, in the wake of Freud's postulation of the Oedipal complex, invariably represented as adequate to its fundamental task, a fact indicated – ironically – by the high cultural and ethical value Freud ascribed to the neurotics analysis treated.<sup>119</sup>

By profoundly unsettling the sociocultural matrix in which this discourse emerged, the war forced psychoanalysts to confront the forms of suffering that it occluded. At the heart of psychoanalytic thought between the wars were new subjects, ones who had been deprived of the sheltering framework of the Oedipal family and who were exposed to the immediate violence of overwhelming social and political forces. In the process of confronting these new types, psychoanalysts would relativize the dialectic of seduction and suppression that dominated and continually destabilized their prewar thought on education. In postwar psychoanalysis, *Erziehung* would appear in a very different light – no longer merely the source of neurotic suffering, it represented the essential condition for the recovery of social stability and the reinforcement of vulnerable psyches in the face of the endemic violence unleashed by the war. The ramifications of this shift within psychoanalytic thought is the subject of the chapters that follow.

---

<sup>119</sup> Illustrations of this valuation can be multiplied many times over, but perhaps the clearest statement to this effect is offered in the brief essay “Über Psychotherapie” from 1904 where he writes “erfreulich ist es, daß man gerade den wertvollsten und sonst höchstentwickelten Personen auf solche Weise am ehesten Hilfe bringen kann,” *GW* V (1904): 13-26, at 22.

Recasting Bourgeois Psychoanalysis: Education, Authority, and the Politics of Analytic Therapy  
in the Freudian Revision of 1918

In mid-November 1918, in the wake of the First World War and the collapse of the Habsburg, Hohenzollern, and Romanov monarchies, Sigmund Freud surveyed the catastrophic conditions that prevailed across Central Europe in a letter to his friend and follower Sándor Ferenczi. Amid the chaos of demobilizing armies, chronic food shortages, and the devastating effects of the inflation, Freud gave vent to the bitterness that had accumulated over the preceding years of privation and anxiety. “The Habsburgs,” he announced bluntly, “have left behind nothing but a pile of crap.” Yet as much as the old order filled him with disgust, the revolutionary masses inspired little more than contempt. Turning his gaze on the violence in Ferenczi’s native Hungary he declared himself incapable of feeling “very much sympathy” for Ferenczi’s compatriots – “I can’t get away from the savagery and immaturity of this entirely uneducated people (*ganz unerzogenen Volkes*).”<sup>1</sup>

Ten days earlier, Ferenczi had offered a similarly grim prognosis in a letter to Freud, writing that the latter’s “prophecy about our imminent proletarianization has come true” and that “an epoch of brutalization and infantilization” awaited if Bolshevism were to prevail in Germany.<sup>2</sup> The anxiety and resentment that coursed through this correspondence in late 1918 were the culmination of four years of mounting hardships, and Freud’s attempt to preserve a spectatorial distance from the surrounding turmoil by adopting a deeply cynical gaze was an effort borne very

---

<sup>1</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 17 November 1918, in *Briefwechsel. Band II/2, 1917-1919* (Vienna, 1996), 186-7. Unless otherwise noted, translations of correspondences are from Ernst L. Freud ed., *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, trans. Tania and James Stern (New York, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Ferenczi to Freud, 7 November 1918, *Briefwechsel II/2*, 183.

much of desperation. The safe heights of an elevated social status had been profoundly undermined over the course of the conflict. For members of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, or the educated middle class to which Freud belonged, the disintegration of Viennese society in the crucible of total war had overwhelmed the social barriers and undermined the forms of cultural distinction that its members had relied upon to preserve their distance from the masses.<sup>3</sup> In the eyes of many *Bildungsbürger*, life appeared to have been reduced to its lowest common denominator as the most basic concerns of survival dominated daily life.

For many members of Freud's class, the sudden intrusion of the masses onto the stage of history together with the brutality of the war and the political upheavals it engendered signaled a catastrophic collective regression.<sup>4</sup> Yet the collapse that ensued also opened up the possibility of envisioning new social and political arrangements. The very destructiveness of the conflict seemed to necessitate such imaginative work. While part of the urgency stemmed from a perceived need to quell the volatility of the masses and restore social stability, the last years of the war and the first years of the postwar era also teemed with visions of new social orders to be constructed on the ruins of the old. Along with the existential necessities posed by the catastrophe, the leveling impact of total war – the emergence of a collective community of suffering from a hierarchically stratified society – catalyzed attempts to envision and articulate more equitable forms of social life. Reassembling the “pile of crap” the Habsburgs left in their wake into a stable, democratic postwar order was a project that required thinking beyond the limits of prewar political orthodoxies.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago, 1995), 425. On the collapse of Viennese society see Maureen Healy's *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (New York, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> On the anxieties awakened in the bourgeoisie by the rise of the masses see Stefan Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York, 2013), especially 12, 23, 51-4.

<sup>5</sup> See Peter Fritzsche, “Did Weimar Fail?” *The Journal of Modern History* 68/3 (1996): 629-53, at 637 and 653.

In late September of 1918, at the Fifth International Psychoanalytic Congress in Budapest, Freud would make his own contribution to this burgeoning current of thought. His address to the congress, published the following year under the title “The Paths of Psychoanalytic Therapy” (“Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie”) reflected the fundamental concerns of reconstructing the social fabric after the devastating effects of the war and of fashioning a more equitable postwar social order.<sup>6</sup> For all the world-weary cynicism that ran through his wartime correspondences, Freud’s speech to the congress breathed a remarkably progressive spirit. Yet the occasion of his address was a fraught one: if little of the contempt for the uneducated masses that surfaced in his correspondences is apparent in his address, an anxious uncertainty nonetheless loomed over and pervaded it. “Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie” represented a deeply ambivalent coming-to-terms with the rise of the masses and the corresponding erosion of social distinctions in the context of the war. At the time of the Budapest congress, this process of massification seemed to be both impinging on and intruding into psychoanalysis in ways that threatened its unique identity. Even as Freud boldly turned his gaze outwards in September of 1918 to envision psychoanalytic therapy contributing productively to the reconstruction of the social, he anxiously directed his attention to a perceived crisis at the borders of psychoanalysis, one that was intimately bound up with one of most disturbing mass phenomena of the war – namely, the war neuroses.

The First World War was accompanied by a veritable epidemic of neurotic disorders that threatened to undermine the fighting capacities of the mass conscript armies of the belligerent states. Unlike a number of his closest followers who served as military physicians, Freud was never directly engaged in the treatment of what he termed “the traumatic neuroses of war.”

---

<sup>6</sup> Freud, “Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie,” 181-194. Originally translated in 1924 as “Turnings in the Ways of Psycho-Analytic Therapy,” Freud’s address was given the title “Lines of Advance in Psycho-Analytic Therapy” in the *Standard Edition* of Freud’s works.

Nevertheless, his thought would increasingly come to circle around the problems these disorders posed for psychoanalysis. Over decades of work as a private clinician for nervous disorders practicing almost exclusively within a bourgeois milieu, Freud had conceived of analytic therapy as a liberal procedure, one that placed strict limits on the exercise of the analyst's authority and was premised on a basic respect for the patient's individuality. The war, however, confronted Freudians with masses of neurotic soldiers at the very moment it transformed the analysts who treated them from experts in private employ to servants of the wartime state. How analysis could uphold the liberal commitments at the foundation of its identity – its politics of autonomy – while continuing to treat neurotic suffering in this context would be the crux of the problem Freud sought to confront in his address.

Scholars of psychoanalysis who have studied this moment have generally concentrated on extrapolating an essential political content from the decisive texts and on situating psychoanalysis at a fixed point along a spectrum of ethicopolitical commitments. In the final instance, they ask, who or what did psychoanalysts represent in this scenario – the military authorities or the war-damaged neurotics, its liberal bourgeois inheritance or the progressive ethos of the new mass era?<sup>7</sup> Far from occupying a determinate position along these axes, however, psychoanalysis was suspended anxiously and uncertainly between divergent commitments – inwardly torn and vacillating, its unique identity was suddenly open to question. Freud's address, this chapter argues, represented an attempt to secure the identity of psychoanalysis in this new context through a new

---

<sup>7</sup> Compare, for instance, Elizabeth Ann Danto, *Freud's Free Clinics: Psychoanalysis and Social Justice, 1918-1938* (New York, 2005), 13-33; Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 2004), 124-30; Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930* (Ithaca, 2003), 163-89; Hans-Georg Hofer, *Nervenschwäche und Krieg: Modernitätskritik und Krisenbewältigung in der österreichischen Psychiatrie (1880-1920)* (Vienna, 2004), 189-93, 361-66; Johannes Reichmayr, *Spurensuche in der Geschichte der Psychoanalyse* (Frankfurt a. M., 1990), 48-59; José Brunner, *Freud and the Politics of Psychoanalysis*, second edition (New Brunswick, 2001), 106-22; Sarah Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalytic Knowledge* (Stanford, 1999), 144-47; and Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (New York, 1979), 163-92.

resolution of tensions at its heart. The task of demarcating the “paths” (*Wege*) of analytic therapy at the close of the war thus entailed a complex renegotiation of the politics around which psychoanalysis had been constructed.

In much the way that it would in September of 1918, catastrophe loomed over psychoanalysis at the moment Freud embarked on his seminal self-analysis in 1896. Amid the emergence of a stridently illiberal “politics in a new key,” to follow Carl Schorske’s famous argument, “[a]nxiety, impotence, [and] a heightened awareness of the brutality of social existence” defined the experience of the Viennese *Bildungsbürgertum*.<sup>8</sup> Yet while the fin-de-siècle witnessed merely the dismantling of political liberalism in Freud’s Vienna, the war undermined an entire European liberal bourgeois civilization. Though the sense of vulnerability generated by the turmoil would culminate in the apocalyptic weeks at war’s end, when Freud wrote ominously of a “frightful dawning” in Germany and Ferenczi of the possible “collapse of the entire civilization of the world,” it was powerful enough, already in September of 1918, to impel Freud to revisit long resolved questions and to undertake an intensely personal, but highly public, rethinking of the means and ends of analytic therapy.<sup>9</sup> The collapse of bourgeois society in the crucible of the war and the rise of the “uneducated” (*unerzogene*) masses was met in his address not only with a new conception of the social role of analytic therapy but also with a fundamental reconsideration of the kind of therapeutic authority the analyst was entitled to exercise.

The experience of total war and the confrontation with the war neuroses would famously prompt a far-reaching revision of Freud’s theory of the mind in the wake of the war. In place of a mental apparatus governed by the striving for pleasure and the avoidance of its opposite, Freud

---

<sup>8</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1980), 6. See also William J. McGrath’s *Freud’s Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria* (Ithaca, 1986) and John E. Toews, “Historicizing Psychoanalysis: Freud in His Time and for Our Time,” in *The Journal of Modern History* 63/3 (1991), 504-45.

<sup>9</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 9 November 1918, and Ferenczi to Freud, 7 November 1918, in *Briefwechsel II/2*, 185 and 183.

was led to consider what lay beyond, and indeed before, “the pleasure principle,” namely the attempts of the psychical apparatus to bind and regulate the invasive quantities of stimuli that threatened to overwhelm it.<sup>10</sup> In September of 1918 this perspective had yet to crystallize, yet a deepening concern for the vulnerability of the individual psyche in the face of external violence was evident already in Freud’s rethinking of analytic therapy. From his attempt to renegotiate the politics of psychoanalysis emerged a new understanding of analytic therapy as an active, formative, pedagogical procedure geared towards the reinforcement of the fragile ego and its realignment to social norms. If classical psychoanalysis had framed its operations in accordance with the ideal of *Bildung* – of education as a form of inward *self*-cultivation that distinguished its bearers from the merely brought-up (*erzogen*) – Freud’s address articulated a conception of psychoanalysis as a process of *Erziehung* – of education in the sense of upbringing and character formation. Amid the rise of the masses and the disintegration of bourgeois society, Freud’s attempt to recast the politics of psychoanalysis would thus open onto a new model of analytic authority for a new era.

#### Out of the Wilderness, Into the Wasteland

Questions of authority, like those at the core of Freud’s Budapest address, had been similarly central to his 1914 essay “On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement.” Written in the wake of a disastrous series of splits among his Swiss and Viennese followers, Freud’s essay was intended to reconsolidate his control over the movement and to shore-up the threatened identity of his science. In part a triumphal narrative of psychoanalysis emerging from isolation to become an international movement and an object of “ever-increasing interest” in the public sphere, Freud’s

---

<sup>10</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Jenseits des Lustprinzips,” *GW* XIII (1920): 3-69.

essay made clear that the “extraordinary surge forward” of analysis in recent years only multiplied and magnified the threats it encountered.<sup>11</sup> As Samuel Weber has noted, the dangers that preoccupied Freud in 1914 consisted less of “attacks from without” than of “attempts to blur the very distinction between without and within.”<sup>12</sup> What was needed in the face of such threats, Freud contended, was a central authority that could declare with categorical certainty what was psychoanalysis and what was merely “nonsense.”<sup>13</sup> If previously Freud had sought to delegate the executive responsibility involved to Carl Jung, in the wake of the recent history of dissension and fragmentation, that authority could be none other than Freud himself.

Yet the outbreak of the war shortly after the publication of Freud’s polemical history put an abrupt end to the process of fraught expansion he outlined in that text. A “continual crumbling” beset the psychoanalytic movement as international networks were severed, colleagues were conscripted, and streams of patients dried up.<sup>14</sup> The process he described in “On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement” appeared to have reversed course, returning him to the relative isolation of the years immediately preceding and following the 1899 publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* – “I often feel as alone as during the first ten years, when I was surrounded by a desert,” he confessed in 1915.<sup>15</sup> Yet if the initial period of intellectual breakthrough in relative professional seclusion was one that he recalled as his period of “splendid isolation,”<sup>16</sup> the experience of living and working in his “own private trench,” cut off from almost all of his followers, was all but unbearable.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Freud, “Zur Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung,” *GW X* (1914): 65, 69.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Weber, *The Legend of Freud*, Second Edition (Stanford, 2000), 36.

<sup>13</sup> Freud, “Zur Geschichte,” 84-5.

<sup>14</sup> Freud to Karl Abraham, 11 December 1914, in *Sigmund Freud – Karl Abraham. Briefe, 1907-1926*, ed. Hilda C. Abraham and Ernst L. Freud (Frankfurt am Main, 1965), 197.

<sup>15</sup> Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 30 July 1915, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Ernst Pfeiffer (Frankfurt a.M., 1966), 35.

<sup>16</sup> Freud, “Zur Geschichte,” 60.

<sup>17</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 15 December 1914, in *Briefwechsel II/1*, 94.

The last months of the conflict, however, witnessed an intensified professional reception of psychoanalysis that went some way to renewing the process of expansion Freud described in his 1914 history. In their search for therapeutic techniques capable of managing the war neuroses, a number of German and Austrian psychiatrists and neurologists had turned to psychoanalysis over the preceding years, and the congress would aim to broaden and deepen this process of reception. The circumstances in which it occurred, however, made it a peculiar event in the history of the young movement. Not only was attendance limited to residents of the belligerent states of the Central Powers – with the exception of two analysts from the neutral Netherlands – but the presence of official representatives of the civil and military authorities, their interest piqued by reports of successful treatments by psychoanalytic procedures, lent the conference an unfamiliar air of respectability<sup>18</sup> – as one attendee recalled, “everyone was in uniform, except Freud.”<sup>19</sup> In this unprecedented configuration of circumstances, psychoanalysts found themselves in the unfamiliar situation of addressing a social and political problem of massive proportions and urgent importance from a position of recognized therapeutic – if not yet scientific or diagnostic – expertise. For a science that previously had restricted its therapeutic work to an economically privileged and well-educated segment of the population and had grown accustomed to its status as an outsider, this was, in every respect, a strange scenario.

The broadened professional engagement with psychoanalysis in the context of the war had generated a new challenge to Freudian thought, however, one that anticipated the direction of Freud’s postwar revision. Even as a number of military physicians turned to his writings for therapeutic guidance, many others saw in the war neuroses a decisive refutation of Freudian libido

---

<sup>18</sup> See, on this subject, Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 4 October 1918, *Briefwechsel*, 93.

<sup>19</sup> Sándor Radó, “Psychoanalytic Movement,” *Columbia University. Oral History Research Office, Oral History Collection* (1979), Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

theory and, in particular, of the sexual etiology of the neuroses – for the great majority of German psychiatrists and neurologists, Paul Lerner has written, “the sources of the war neuroses simply had nothing to do with sexuality.”<sup>20</sup> In the congress presentations of Freud’s two most important followers, Ferenczi and Karl Abraham, the challenge posed by the more intensive and markedly ambivalent engagement of the broader scientific community with psychoanalysis was met with a defiant insistence that the etiology of the war neuroses – no less than the neuroses of peacetime – was bound up with the developmental history of the libido.<sup>21</sup> In Ferenczi’s keynote address to the congress the attempt to rehabilitate sexuality took the form of an insistence that the symptom’s defensive functions represented merely secondary gains against the primary gain of libidinal gratification – it was the “pleasure itself” involved in the regression to a narcissistic stage of childlike helplessness that ultimately explained the symptoms of war neurotics.<sup>22</sup> Claiming his experiences “accorded perfectly” with Ferenczi’s, Abraham went even further in his report, pointing to a pathological disposition to falling ill from traumatic experiences behind the (merely) “manifest” expressions of the self-preservative drive at work in the neurosis. Only the assumption of a narcissistic disposition (*Anlage*) could account, Abraham contended, for why some individuals submit passively to neurosis amid the experiences of the war while others withstand its “most severe physical and mental effects” while remaining “essentially healthy.”<sup>23</sup>

The third report on the war neuroses, delivered by the German psychiatrist Ernst Simmel, presented a radically different perspective, however. A newcomer to the psychoanalytic movement, Simmel had introduced himself to Freud earlier that year with a monograph, *War*

---

<sup>20</sup> Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930* (Ithaca, 2003), 178.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the most forceful statement of this theory of the neuroses is provided in Freud’s “Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie,” *GW V* (1905): 64.

<sup>22</sup> Sándor Ferenczi, “Die Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen,” in *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen* (Leipzig, 1919), 28.

<sup>23</sup> Karl Abraham, “Erstes Korreferat,” in *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen*, 31-3.

*Neuroses and 'psychical Trauma'*, which built off of his experiences treating war neurotics at a field hospital.<sup>24</sup> His report at the congress, like his earlier study, teemed with examples of neurotics suffering from repressed memories of recent traumatic events. In marked contrast to Ferenczi and Abraham, who allowed the logic of libidinal gratification to displace the force of traumatic experience, for Simmel, the convulsive attacks of his patients were transparent testimonies to the violence of their environment. Against the tendency of Freud's closest followers to fold traumatic experience into a perverse disposition, Simmel kept the focus squarely on the context that generated the soldier's suffering.<sup>25</sup>

The reports thus posed a stark choice between pathological disposition and traumatic experience as the fundamental cause of the neurotic suffering of the war. While the orthodox psychoanalytic theory of the neuroses aimed to integrate both factors as "reciprocal values" within an "etiological series," Ferenczi's address to the congress, which explicitly invoked this idea, demonstrated the difficulty of maintaining the critical balance between the two – the logic of primary and secondary "gains from illness," of manifest expressions and latent causes, invariably tilted the series in favor of one term against the other.<sup>26</sup> If the insistence on disposition (*Anlage*) effectively supplanted experience in the reports of his two followers, Freud's thought had begun to move in the opposite direction over the preceding years, towards a greater emphasis on the

---

<sup>24</sup> Ernst Simmel, *Kriegsneurosen und 'psychisches Trauma'. Ihre gegenseitige Beziehung, dargestellt auf Grund psychoanalytischer, hypnotischer Studien* (Leipzig, 1918).

<sup>25</sup> The environment confronting the soldier was a seething landscape of undischarged affect and thus a breeding ground for neuroses in Simmel's writings. As he wrote in one of the most powerful (indeed overwhelming) passages of his report, "One must have experienced the war occurrences for one's self or their recapitulation in analytic-cathartic hypnosis in order to understand what onslaughts the mental life of a man is exposed to, who after receiving multiple wounds must return to the field, is separated from his own during important family events for an unforeseeable time, finds himself exposed irremediably to that murderous monster, the tank or to an enemy gas attack rolling towards him, who after being buried and wounded through a direct hit by a grenade, must lay often for hours or days at a time under the gory, mutilated bodies of his friends, and not least, who, his self-respect badly injured by unjust and cruel superiors themselves dominated by complexes, nonetheless must remain silent and allow himself to be overwhelmed by the fact that as an individual he counts for nothing and is only an inconsequential component of the mass." Ernst Simmel, "Zweites Korreferat," in *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen*, 42-60, at 45.

<sup>26</sup> Ferenczi, "Die Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen," 20.

pathogenic force of traumatic experiences.<sup>27</sup> Though he avoided intervening into the discussion of the war neuroses in September of 1918, the new emphasis Freud placed in his wartime writings on the vulnerability of the ego and the real, contemporary dangers confronting it signaled the beginning of a departure from the orthodox position defended by his closest followers, one that would culminate two years later in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.<sup>28</sup>

Yet if Simmel's etiology appeared the more compelling, his report nonetheless posed a number of problems. Even as he enthusiastically recommended Simmel's earlier monograph to Ferenczi and Abraham in February 1918, Freud noted that the newcomer had "not gone the whole way with [psychoanalysis]."<sup>29</sup> Like other military doctors who adopted psychoanalytic methods during the war, Simmel turned primarily to Freud's early writings with Josef Breuer on hysteria from which he developed a mixed method combining hypnosis with orthodox procedure and directed towards the retrieval of suppressed memories and their cathartic reliving in the treatment. As he explained, the conditions of the war – above all the quantity of neurotics and the urgency of their rapid recovery – did not allow for a patient working-through of unconscious material, but rather demanded an abridged treatment focused narrowly on the restoration of the patient's productive capacity.<sup>30</sup> Given the circumstances, such alterations were understandable, Freud thought, yet they were nonetheless "bound to conceal [psychic] resistance and sexual drives from him."<sup>31</sup> While in Freud's estimation Simmel had placed himself "unreservedly on analytic ground," the therapeutic modifications he introduced could only appear to be regressions from the

---

<sup>27</sup> On this subject see, Ilse Grubrich-Simitis, "Trauma or Drive – Drive and Trauma: A Reading of Freud's Phylogenetic Fantasy of 1915," *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 43 (1988): 3-32.

<sup>28</sup> See Freud, "Vorlesungen zur Einführung in der Psychoanalyse," *GW* XI (1916/17): 395-9. See also Freud's introduction to the congress reports when they were assembled into a single volume in early 1919. Freud, "Einleitung zu *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen*," *GW* XII (1919): 321-24.

<sup>29</sup> Freud to Abraham, 17 February 1918, in *Briefe*, 255.

<sup>30</sup> Simmel, "Zweites Korreferat", 42-3.

<sup>31</sup> Freud to Abraham, 17 February 1918, in *Briefe*, 255.

hard-won insights of the prewar years even as they enabled a form of analytic therapy to reach far greater numbers of sufferers.<sup>32</sup> The book that indicated to Freud that “German war medicine had taken the bait,” thus, simultaneously, drew psychoanalysis beyond itself into an awkward proximity to its professional rivals, threatening to blur the very lines between inside and outside that Freud’s 1914 essay had sought to enforce.<sup>33</sup>

### Suggestion and its Discontents

Freud’s own address at the 1918 Budapest Congress was fittingly devoted to the issue of psychoanalytic technique and the possibility of an effective mass therapeutic application of a modified analytic method. Obliquely, however, it also addressed itself to the inherent difficulties of analytic therapy and the anxieties generated by its potential modification. In this sense, it struck a markedly different note than the self-assured reports of Abraham and Ferenczi. The title alone – “The Paths of Psychoanalytic Therapy” – signaled a certain distance from his closest followers. While Ferenczi confidently invoked the “path” of psychoanalysis and challenged skeptical colleagues to follow Freud along the *Weg* he discovered (*den von Freud begangenen Weg*),<sup>34</sup> the same path appeared to Freud in 1918 to have split or, at least, to have multiplied. The volatility and disorder of the current state of affairs called forth not a confident assertion of the veracity of his insights and the correctness of established therapeutic procedure, but rather a reflective consideration of the very uncertainties attending analytic practice.

Beyond the psychoanalytic movement, the unprecedented challenges posed by the war neuroses had generated intensive discussion of the question of therapeutic technique in German

---

<sup>32</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 17 February 1918, in *Briefwechsel*, 133.

<sup>33</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 17 February 1918, in *Briefwechsel*, 133.

<sup>34</sup> Ferenczi, “Die Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen,” 20.

medical science at large. As a consensus formed among medical and psychiatric experts that the war neuroses were essentially a form of male hysteria – and thus based on the psychological conversion of affects and ideas into symptoms – it seemed a new field had been opened up for effective therapeutic intervention. Where the theory that the war neuroses were caused by physical damage to the brain itself had condemned doctors to passivity, the recognition of the psychological factors at work in symptom formation had the opposite effect of empowering the medical profession vis-à-vis the afflicted soldiers it confronted.<sup>35</sup> The war witnessed a proliferation of more “active” techniques often accompanied by reports of staggering therapeutic successes. Methods as diverse as the painful – and on occasion even fatal – application of electrical currents to the neurotic soldier’s noncompliant body and the forcible administration of hypnotic suggestion vied for official support and professional recognition. What united most such techniques – alongside a willingness to use psychological or physical violence – was their reliance on a rigidly authoritarian model of the doctor-patient relationship that reinforced the subordination of the neurotic soldier while elevating the physician to a position of absolute authority. By structuring treatment along the lines of the hierarchical relations of the military, doctors sought to exacerbate the patient’s dependence and subjection in order to compel him – by verbal order or physical force – to return to health.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the astounding reports of therapeutic success furnished by adherents of such “active” methods, a high rate of recidivism and a growing chorus of ethical protests marred their claims and motivated military authorities to search for less coercive and more effective alternatives.<sup>37</sup> It was in this context that Simmel’s work and the possibility it presented of applying

---

<sup>35</sup> Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 70-1, 87.

<sup>36</sup> Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 87-8, 104-5, 114.

<sup>37</sup> See Abraham, “Erstes Korreferat,” 40 and Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 175.

a modified psychoanalytic method in the treatment of the war neuroses piqued the interests of both analysts and military authorities alike. Yet Simmel's contributions exposed a unsettling paradox: despite his indignation at what Abraham termed the "all too 'active' methods" of military doctors,<sup>38</sup> it was through his own innovations and particularly the admixture of hypnosis to orthodox methods that psychoanalysis was drawn closest to the very therapeutic techniques he rejected so decisively. For Simmel, treatment by hypnotic suggestion, far from curing the patient, only exacerbated his underlying pathogenic condition – in both its invasiveness and the lasting psychological harm it wrought, it was tantamount to a "rape of the patient."<sup>39</sup> Consistent with his conviction that the "weakening of the soldier's personality complex" in the context of the army represented an essential condition for the development of a neurosis, Simmel understood the neurotic afflictions of wartime as a consequence of the soldier's "readiness to subordinate" (*Unterordnungsbereitschaft*) – the very susceptibility of the patient to suggestion was thus an index of his illness. In Simmel's critique, the subordination of the soldier in the military was reproduced intrapsychically by his subjection (through unconscious autosuggestion) to pathogenic ideas, and was, in turn, reproduced and reinforced by the suggestive methods deployed in "active" treatments.<sup>40</sup>

Yet for all his outrage at the brutality of these therapeutic methods, Simmel was convinced that the exigencies of the conflict necessitated changes to orthodox psychoanalytic technique. Not only did the sheer quantity of neurotic soldiers call for an abbreviated mode of analytic therapy, but the low social origins and corresponding lack of education of most war neurotics made it impossible, in Simmel's view, for them to take an active part in their own treatment and thus

---

<sup>38</sup> Abraham, "Erstes Korreferat," 40.

<sup>39</sup> Simmel, *Kriegsneurosen und 'Psychisches Trauma'*, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Simmel, "Zweites Korreferat", 47.

necessitated the admixture of new methods to analysis proper, above all, that of hypnosis.<sup>41</sup> While the widespread use of hypnotic suggestion by military physicians as a means of imposing an injunction to return to health only deepened the patient's illness, Simmel believed hypnosis could nonetheless serve as a means of expediting analysis by overcoming the patient's amnesia and allowing the physician to arrive directly at the unconscious sense of symptoms. Hypnosis in Simmel's analytic-cathartic method was intended to bring about the lifting of the "command imposed by the unconscious," a process that was accompanied by the abreaction of the affect bound up with the unconscious ideas or images and that resulted in an expansion of consciousness. In Simmel's calculus, the deficiencies of the patients and the exigencies imposed on analysis had to be made good through the activity of the doctor. When coupled with an interpretation of the war neuroses as recapitulations of recent traumas, the immediacy and impersonality of the main etiological factors dovetailed with the presumed simplicity of the patients he confronted to legitimate a technique that relegated the personal history of the patient to a position of subordinate importance. In the context of the "mass treatment" imposed by the war, Simmel's insistence that he "only treated patients whose dreams [he] knew" appeared to preserve for his therapy merely a residue of individuality and interiority in the face of external forces that threatened to overwhelm and efface them entirely.<sup>42</sup>

While Simmel was forthcoming regarding what he saw as the therapeutic limitations of his work, he viewed these shortcomings not as effects of the technique itself but the inevitable consequences of the constraints imposed by the war – indeed it was foreseeable that an "analytic

---

<sup>41</sup> "Ich komme bei den Kriegsneurotikern ohne Hypnose auch gar nicht aus: denn die Psychoanalyse nur im Wachzustande durchgeführt, würde ein Krankenmaterial voraussetzen, wie es wohl Freud in Friedenszeiten hat: gebildete Leute, die über die Methode schon mehr oder weniger orientiert sind und so dem Arzt von vornherein ein wesentlicher Helfer werden." Simmel, *Kriegsneurosen und 'Psychisches Trauma'*, 23.

<sup>42</sup> Simmel, "Zweites Korreferat," 49, 51.

cure of the total personality” through an abridged and combined method could one day be implemented in the “*Psycho-Klinik* of the future.”<sup>43</sup> If Simmel’s innovations were not only necessary given the circumstances of the war but also adequate to the forms of suffering the war produced and the subjects it afflicted, they nonetheless raised a number of problems. In a review of *War Neuroses and ‘Psychical Trauma’* that echoed Freud’s earlier epistolary critiques, the reviewer (almost certainly Abraham) noted that Simmel’s method led him to overlook the very psychological phenomena critical to analytic therapy, namely, resistances and the transference – relapses, he added, would instruct him further.<sup>44</sup> While Abraham’s own congress report marginalized the traumatic impact of the war by placing exclusive emphasis on dispositional factors, Simmel’s could be read as having the inverse effect of allowing the immensity of the traumatic forces of the war to engulf the patient’s individuality. By flattening and abridging analytic therapy, his treatment opened onto the prospect – at once exhilarating and unsettling – of a psychoanalysis for a post-individual age.

In Freud’s own reckoning, offered only a year earlier in his *Introductory Lectures*, the beginning of “psychoanalysis proper” could be dated to the moment when he “dispensed with the help of hypnosis.”<sup>45</sup> Recalling his abandonment of hypnosis in a short paper titled “On Psychotherapy” from 1905, Freud insisted that the “greatest possible antithesis” exists between the hypnotic treatment by suggestion and the analytic method. While treatment by suggestion ignores the “origin, strength and meaning” of the symptom, seeking rather “to superimpose something” (*etwas auflegen*) in the hopes of preventing the pathogenic idea from expressing itself, “analytic therapy... does not seek to add or to introduce anything new, but to take away something, to bring

---

<sup>43</sup> Simmel, “Zweites Korreferat,” 42-3.

<sup>44</sup> [D. J. H.] “Referat,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* (1919), 128.

<sup>45</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 302.

out something.” Freud explained that he dispensed with the method of hypnotic suggestion out of despair of being able to make the suggestion sufficiently strong and durable to effect a permanent cure – “In every severe case I saw the suggestions which had been applied crumble away again.” To this admission Freud added the criticism that suggestion obscures insight into the play of forces in the psyche, preventing the physician from recognizing the resistance with which patients cling to illnesses and struggle *against* their recovery, and “which alone makes it possible to understand [their] behavior in daily life.”<sup>46</sup> In place of a therapeutic technique premised on the imposition of a new interdiction, psychoanalysis framed its efforts negatively, as a process of loosening or lifting the mechanism of automatic rejection of unpleasant ideas – psychoanalytic treatment, as he put it in 1905, “may in general be conceived as an after-education (*Nacherziehung*) in the overcoming of the internal resistances.”<sup>47</sup>

The fact that psychoanalysis had in a certain sense originated with the abandonment of a technique that was now, in 1918, reemerging within its ranks, drew it back towards its origins and presented Freud with the challenge of recovering the identity of his science from the encroaching threat of hypnotic suggestion. Despite his earlier assertion that the “greatest possible” contradiction exists between the two, their tangled prehistory meant that extricating analysis from suggestion was anything but straightforward. While Freud saw analytic therapy as “struggling unceasingly against resistances” in its patients, illness and suggestibility, nonetheless, seemed to him to go hand-in-hand – “My clients are sick people, hence especially, irrational and suggestible,” he wrote Wilhelm Fliess in 1901.”<sup>48</sup> And if the “capriciousness” of the suggestive technique, its

---

<sup>46</sup> Freud, “Über Psychotherapie,” *GW V* (1904/5): 17-18, 25.

<sup>47</sup> Freud, “Über Psychotherapie,” 25.

<sup>48</sup> Freud to Fliess, 7 August 1901, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, 1985), 446. Freud’s contention that analysis was forced to struggle “unceasingly against resistances” together with the argument that this exonerated his science from the accusation of having merely “talked the patients into everything” can be found in “Vorlesungen,” 470-1. See also Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen and Douglas Brick in “Neurotica: Freud and the Seduction Theory,” *October* 76 (1996): 15-43.

unreliability and impermanence, led Freud to abandon it early in his career, suggestion itself persisted as a problem by virtue paradoxically of its strength.<sup>49</sup> Even after Freud had replaced treatment by direct suggestion with the talking cure, he continued for several years in the 1890s to employ hypnosis in a fashion similar to the role it played in Simmel's later method – not, that is, in order to compel his patients to return to health but as a means of inducing them to talk. Yet hypnosis, because it sought to neutralize the patient's resistances, to disable them in order to facilitate access to the unconscious, brought psychoanalysis perilously close to suggestion, a danger Freud sought to contain through its replacement by the method of *free* association.<sup>50</sup>

The paradox that suggestion seemed to be too unstable to produce a lasting cure and yet too pervasive for psychoanalysis to ever fully escape pushed Freud to reframe the problem it posed. Even if psychoanalysis could not liberate itself from suggestion, it could turn the latter into an object of critical analysis and direct its attention to the underlying phenomena from which it emerged – the patterns of loving and hating taken over from the past that structured the patient's relations to authority figures in the present. The concept of the transference that Freud developed over the decade prior to the war encompassed both suggestion and resistance while converting them into objects to be reflexively grasped and critically dissected. Where formerly the activity of the analyst had appeared sufficient, as the concept of the transference took center stage it became increasingly apparent that the overcoming of the resistances is a task that “the patient has to accomplish.”<sup>51</sup> Penetrating to the unconscious by forcibly subduing the patient's resistances and simply communicating its repressed contents was no longer adequate – “*our* knowledge about the

---

<sup>49</sup> Freud discusses the “capriciousness” of the method and the “impermanence of its results” in “Vorlesungen,” 467.

<sup>50</sup> On this subject see John Forrester, “Contracting the Disease of Love: Authority and Freedom in the Origins of Psychoanalysis,” in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry*, vol. 1, ed. W. F. Bynum *et al.* (London, 1985), 255-70.

<sup>51</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 469.

unconscious material is not equivalent to *his* knowledge,” Freud would later write. The essential process of overcoming the resistances, which would allow the patient to integrate the new knowledge “*instead of* his unconscious material” as opposed to merely “*beside it,*” could not be accomplished through the one-sided activity of the analyst but only through the self-reflective process that Freud termed “after-education.”<sup>52</sup>

As Freud came to re-center analytic therapy around the problematic of the transference he simultaneously altered his stance towards suggestion. Where he had earlier hoped to safeguard his science from suggestion by asserting their antithetical characters, in his writings on analytic technique after 1912 his rhetorical strategy underwent a radical transmutation, one best conveyed by his disarming admission that the analyst’s influence rests “essentially on transference – that is, on suggestion.” Psychoanalysis was the “legitimate heir” of the work of the hypnotists in Freud’s view: “it must dawn on us,” he wrote in the preceding lecture, “that in our technique we have abandoned hypnosis only to rediscover suggestion in the shape of transference.”<sup>53</sup> The “extraordinary increase of this universal characteristic” in neurotics – their suggestibility and tendency to transference – was critical to the therapeutic efficacy of analytic therapy. While the patient was herself responsible for overcoming the psychic resistances, the analyst offered vital assistance in this process through “suggestion operating in an *educative* sense,” that is, as a means of drawing the patient’s attention back repeatedly to the force of the transference in the analytic encounter.<sup>54</sup>

Analytic therapy thus moved in another direction simultaneously – where treatment by direct suggestion left the authority of the doctor intact and inviolate, psychoanalysis turned its

---

<sup>52</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 453, 469.

<sup>53</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 466, 482. See also “Zur Dynamik der Übertragung,” *GW* VIII (1912): 364-74, at 371-72.

<sup>54</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 464, 469.

attention towards “the nature and origin of one’s authority in suggestive treatment.” Analytic treatment progressed through the continual resolution of the transference, and it was this characteristic, Freud argued, which was “the fundamental distinction between analytic and purely suggestive therapy.” While all other modes of suggestive treatment left the transference “carefully preserved” and “untouched,” in analysis “it is itself subject to treatment and is dissected in all the shapes in which it appears.” Analysis culminated not with the erection of a new repression but with the clearing away of the transference and an internal change marked by the enlargement of the patient’s ego through the overcoming of the resistances and the restoration of her “mental unity.”<sup>55</sup> With the dissolution of the transference, the libido that had converged on the analyst was handed back to the patient’s ego.<sup>56</sup> The aim of analysis (“the sole task of our therapy”), Freud explained, consisted in bringing the contending forces within the psyche onto the same ground, that is, into consciousness, in order to enable the patient to decide how to resolve her conflicts. Consistent with the self-undermining nature of the analyst’s authority, Freud maintained that analysts should avoid playing the role of mentor and refrain from interfering in the life decisions of their analysands. Regardless of how the patient chose to resolve his conflicts “we feel our conscience clear,” Freud contended, “We tell ourselves that anyone who has succeeded in educating himself to the truth about himself is permanently defended against the danger of

---

<sup>55</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 468, 471, 473.

<sup>56</sup> In his 1914, “Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten” (*GW X* (1914): at 135), Freud described the transference as a *Zwischenreich*, a term he deployed in the truncated sense of an intervening period (“zwischen der Krankheit und dem Leben”) but that can also signify a “ruling between,” in the literal sense of an *inter-regnum*. Pursuing this insight, Nancy Luxon has interpreted the transference as the site of a “crisis of authority,” “a cacophonous space defined through the spectral presence of authoritative others refracted onto a single relationship.” (Luxon, *Crisis of Authority: Politics, Trust, and Truth-Telling in Freud and Foucault* (Chicago, 2013), 67). The paradox of the transference is not only that it is both the vehicle of and an obstacle to the cure, but that it involves the deepening of infantile attachments in relation to the analyst as a precondition for the working-through of dependencies and the attainment of greater individual autonomy. Yet even as it reawakened old dependencies in relation to the figure of the analyst, analytic therapy simultaneously preserved the patient’s autonomy by serving as a containing matrix for the unfolding of these libidinal tendencies, one distinctly separated from everyday life.

immorality.”<sup>57</sup>

More than faith in the ethical value of self-knowledge was implicit in Freud’s remark however, rather his confidence rested on a number of assumptions regarding the ethical and intellectual character of his patients. “*Only* in the case of some very youthful or quite helpless or unstable individuals are we unable to put the desired limitation of our role into effect,” Freud argued, “with them we have to combine the functions of a doctor and an educator.”<sup>58</sup> If an educational capacity inevitably devolved on the analyst within the transference, it was one that operated within strict limitations and was to eventually make way for the free decision of the patient herself.<sup>59</sup> Against the rival therapeutic models of former adherents, now dissidents, Carl Jung and Alfred Adler, Freud and his closest followers upheld a liberal conception of analysis, one that eschewed the aim of ethical elevation and renounced any responsibility for directing the future course of the patient’s life. Far from enacting a radical transformation of the patient’s character, analysis simply enabled him to become “what he might have become at best under the most favorable conditions.”<sup>60</sup> The self-imposed limitations of the analyst’s role reflected a fundamental respect for the unique individuality of the patient, which analysis sought not to modify but rather to restore to the patient in its fullness.

### Forming a Class Body for Psychoanalysis

For all the liberality of Freud’s conception of his therapeutic procedure, the conviction that one’s patients were endowed with personalities worth preserving and restoring bore the marks of a class-

---

<sup>57</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 450.

<sup>58</sup> Quote continues, “but when this is so we are quite conscious of our responsibility and behave with the necessary caution.” Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 450 (emphasis added).

<sup>59</sup> See Freud, “Ratschläge für den Arzt bei der psychoanalytischen Behandlung,” *GW* VIII (1912): 385.

<sup>60</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 452.

bound paradigm and the traces of a prior exclusion. The technique that Freud developed over the preceding decades not only emerged out of a particular social matrix – “an educated [*gebildeten*] and literate social class”<sup>61</sup> – but also encountered its own limits at the margins of this social strata: “One should not overlook the value of the individual beyond the illness,” Freud contended, “and should refuse patients who do not possess a certain level of education [*Bildungsgrad*] and a fairly reliable character.” Not only were candidates for analytic therapy to be sufficiently educated, reliable, and valuable (“it is gratifying that precisely the most valuable and otherwise highly developed persons are best suited for this procedure”), but Freud placed particular emphasis on their autonomy: “It is also not applicable to people who do not *themselves* feel impelled to seek treatment by their suffering.”<sup>62</sup> For all the suggestibility of neurotics, a degree of independence – itself a reflection of their *Bildungsgrad* and ethical character – appeared nonetheless to be an essential condition for analytic therapy.

The independence and intellectual maturity that Freud identified in his patients were instrumental to his abandonment of hypnotic suggestion in the early 1890s. Having learned the technique from pioneering hypnotists in France who applied it with rote repetition to members of the lower classes, Freud’s attempt to transplant the hypnotic method to the world of the educated bourgeoisie in which he established his practice faltered on the fundamentally different relations of authority and submission that obtained within it: as Freud moved from a scenario in which treatment was a public display of the doctor’s authority over members of the lower classes – socialized, as they were, to respond with gratitude and deference to experts who helped them for free – to the world Viennese *Bildungsbürgertum*, the rudiments of this hypnotic contract broke

---

<sup>61</sup> Freud, “Studien über Hysterie. Vorwort zur ersten Auflage,” *GW I* (1895): 77.

<sup>62</sup> Freud, “Über Psychotherapie,” 20-24 (emphases added and translations modified). See also Freud, “Die Sexualität in der Ätiologie der Neurosen,” *GW I* (1898): 282-3.

down.<sup>63</sup> The complications introduced into the hypnotic relationship by these new social dynamics undermined the hierarchical relations and the asymmetrical distribution of authority on which the French hypnotists had relied. In place of a technique that proved wholly inadequate among a bourgeois cliental, Freud was drawn into an intensive and highly intricate relationship with his patients, and one that rested on their shared social and cultural background. “It was his patients’ *Bildung*,” José Brunner argues, “which enabled them to enter into a complex and reflexive dialogue with him, which, in turn, led him to inquire into the sources of their illness.” The “confidential alliance” of analytic therapy was soldered with the cultural capital of *Bildung*.<sup>64</sup>

Beyond the unreliability of its therapeutic effects, the suggestive technique appeared to Freud to be a form of degrading servitude and mental bondage, one that was undoubtably all the more troubling when applied to the “valuable” individuals of his own class.<sup>65</sup> Far from requiring subordination, analysis entailed the conversion of the patient “into a collaborator” and thus presupposed a degree of intellectual interest.<sup>66</sup> The ethical and cultural criteria that made analytic therapy possible, that enabled Freud to see his patients as potential collaborators – rather than simply deviants, malingerers, or resisters – reflected, in turn, the very form of psychic health it aimed to inculcate. As Sarah Winter has argued, the deepening of self-knowledge, the awakening of a consciousness of universality, and the internal unification of the personality that Freud claimed for analytic therapy marked it as a continuation of a process of inward cultivation (*Bildung*) that distinguished the members of his class from the masses.<sup>67</sup> By framing analytic therapy in a manner consonant with *Bildung*, a cultural achievement that presupposed a reliable fundament of

---

<sup>63</sup> Brunner, *Freud and the Politics of Psychoanalysis*, 97-100.

<sup>64</sup> Brunner, *Freud and the Politics of Psychoanalysis*, 99.

<sup>65</sup> On Freud’s hostility to the tyranny of suggestion see, “Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse,” *GW* XIII (1921): 96-7.

<sup>66</sup> Freud, “Studien über Hysterie,” 282.

<sup>67</sup> Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalytic Knowledge*, 40-7.

*Erziehung*, Freud was able to disclaim any strong formative, pedagogical role for analysis, since, like *Bildung*, it entailed not the formation but the full, self-conscious realization of the personality in question. “Through *Bildung*,” Winter argues, drawing from Georg Simmel, “the subject should ‘recognize’ as internal, ‘instinctual,’ and the ‘prefiguration’ (destiny) of its ‘perfection’ the ‘cultural values’ that in fact have produced the form of subjectivity under ‘cultivation’.”<sup>68</sup> If a certain circularity thus defined the instantiation of *Bildung* in analytic therapy, the very factors that inscribed psychoanalysis within a socially reproductive regime simultaneously fashioned the lineaments of a mutual recognition that bound analyst and patient across the alienating manifestation of the neurosis.

The recognition that Freud extended to his patients went beyond even a shared adherence to the cultural and ethical ideal of *Bildung*, however. The fact that it was precisely the “most valuable and highly developed” individuals who were the most suitable candidates for analytic therapy disclosed a darker side to the formative processes that united analyst and patient. If his patients approximated paragons of *Bildung*, they were simultaneously victims of *Erziehung* and thus of *Kultur*. “Nowhere else have civilization and education done so much harm” as in the sexual lives of neurotics, he wrote in 1905.<sup>69</sup> If their subjection to what Freud termed “civilized sexual morality” united analyst and patient, it also served to distinguish both from the lower social orders: where the conflict-ridden development of the bourgeois individual offered fertile ground for psychoneuroses, the animal-like sexual unfolding that, in Freud’s eyes, characterized the development of the proletarian subject had the opposite effect of rendering her immune to neurotic conflict.<sup>70</sup> The excessive curtailments imposed by a culture from which the lower strata were

---

<sup>68</sup> Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalytic Knowledge*, 46.

<sup>69</sup> Freud, “Über Psychotherapie,” 25.

<sup>70</sup> The foreclosure of the psychic suffering of the lower classes was vividly illustrated in a just-so story (albeit one that Freud averred was “in no respect divorced from probability”) intended to elucidate the influence that the development

apparently exempt defined the ethical value of the individuals analytic therapy was intended for. If Freud was sanguine about allowing his patients to decide their lives for themselves after having undergone analysis, it was in large part because of the foundation of *Erziehung* that paradoxically lay at the root of their problems. Underneath the disturbing difference of neurosis thus rested a reassuring promise of sameness furnished by the very cause of their suffering. The assumption of an identity between analysts and their patients, one furnished by common formative experiences and cultural ideals, would be fundamentally shaken by the impact of the war.

### The Ways and Means of Psychoanalysis

As they turned their attention to the disorders produced by the war, Freudians were thus confronted by precisely the forms of suffering and the classes of sufferers whose exclusion had played such a formative role in the development and self-articulation of psychoanalysis as a therapeutic practice. Not only did the make-up of the mass conscript armies mean that the overwhelming majority of war neurotics were of lower class origin, but as a category, the war neuroses were identified with the crasser and more debilitating symptoms exhibited by rank-and-file soldiers against the more

---

of the ego – and behind it, *Erziehung* – has on the generation of the psychical conflicts underlying neurotic illness. In his story, Freud imagined a proletarian girl, who would naturally “have had opportunity to observe a great deal of adult sexuality,” seducing her bourgeois playmate into games of a “naughty – that is to say – sexual character.” Despite the initial difference in their roles, their experiences at that age – the sexual impulses their activities awakened and their continuation as masturbation after their sexual games had ceased – would have been fundamentally similar. The final outcome in the two children would nonetheless be very different. While the proletarian child would remain undisturbed in her sexual development, the bourgeois girl will already at an early age “get an idea that she has done something wrong.” After quickly relinquishing masturbatory gratifications, though perhaps only after a “severe struggle,” she would in the future turn away from sexual subjects “with unexplained disgust and prefer to remain in ignorance.” While sexual activity will remain as “natural and harmless” for the proletarian girl later in life as it had in childhood, the landlord’s daughter would likely find her hopes in life dashed by the outbreak of a neurosis. “If after this an analysis succeeds in gaining insight into her neurosis, it will turn out that the well-brought-up, intelligent, and high-minded girl [had] completely repressed her sexual impulses” while remaining unconsciously fixated on the sexual experiences of her childhood. The decisive factor, the intervention of *Erziehung* and the cultural demands it imposed, had pushed the landlord’s daughter and, in particular, her ego along a course of development that the proletarian girl was, to her benefit, spared. See Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 365-67. Similar views were evident in Freud’s thought as early as 1896, see Freud, “Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie,” *GW I* (1896): 443, 448.

diffuse nervous disorders that prevailed among the officer class. If previously psychoanalysis had sought validation in its patients' independence, the neurotics it treated in the context of the war effort were anything but. And while prewar analysis had – *ideally*, if not always in practice – restricted its therapeutic efforts to patients who *chose* to undertake analysis and had sought to enable the patient to make an independent decision, the treatment of the war neuroses inverted these classical principles and thus overturned the therapeutic politics of psychoanalysis.<sup>71</sup> The symptoms that in more civil times had destroyed the patient's happiness, now represented salvation in the form of an escape from the war, while a restoration of psychic health posed a life-threatening danger. The war thus not only curtailed the patient's incentive to return to health but also forced the analyst into a more authoritarian role. In so far as psychoanalysts addressed the new disorders, the war inevitably converted them from theoretically passive figures (the blank screens for the analysand's transferences) into the concrete representative of the very reality that had produced their neuroses while, simultaneously, perverting the analytic contract by depriving the patient of the freedom to decide his future.

The war thus presented Freud with the daunting task of drawing up a new analytic contract. Beginning his address on a modest note he acknowledged that we have always been ready “to admit the imperfections of our understanding, to learn new things and to alter our methods in any

---

<sup>71</sup> The most (in)famous exception to this rule is, of course, Freud's treatment of the adolescent hysteric Ida Bauer (Dora), who was brought to Freud by her father in order, in the latter's words, to “bring her back to reason (*auf bessere Wege zu bringen*).” Freud, “Bruchstück einer Hysterie-Analyse,” *GW V* (1905): 184. An even more striking parallel with the treatment of the war neuroses, however, is Freud's one case study involving a lower-class (specifically petty-bourgeois) neurotic, Katharina, who sought his assistance when Freud was vacationing in the Alps in the early 1890s. Like Katharina's analysis, which unfolded in a public setting, lasted all of one conversation, and was conducted in a spirit of *bourgeois oblige*, a different set of rules appeared to apply to the treatment of the war neurotic. Just as Freud found it far easier to arrive at the sense of hysterical symptoms with Katharina than he did with the “prude ladies in his Stadtpraxis,” a basic lack of distortion characterized both the symptoms and the dreams of Simmel's war neurotics. The exceeding intricacy of Freud's more famous case studies and the involuted, self-referential logic of drive and repression at work within them appeared in both cases to have vanished. Freud, “Katharina,” *GW I* (1893): 184-95.

way that can improve them.” After “the long and difficult years of separation,” Freud felt drawn to review “the position of our therapeutic procedure” and to survey “the new directions in which it may develop.” Against the demands of critics that psychoanalysis should supplement its analytical work of separating mental manifestations into their constituent elements with the synthetic task of combining them into new and better unities, Freud argued that such tasks should be left to the mind itself. Far from destroying the patient’s mental unity, analysis was confronted by patients whose minds were already fissured by resistances. Through analyzing the patient’s torn mental life and removing the resistances, analytic therapy enabled the mind’s own “compulsion towards unification and combination” to assert itself through the reintegration of split-off elements.<sup>72</sup>

While Freud understood analysis as merely creating the conditions for a renewed psychical synthesis that unfolded during treatment “without our intervention, automatically and inevitably,” the lines of development along which he envisioned analytic therapy proceeding were first and foremost ones that he subsumed – in an echo of the discourse surrounding the treatment of the war neuroses – under the heading of the “activity” of the analyst. If the essential work of analysis consisted of the tasks of “making conscious the repressed material and uncovering the resistances,” the pressing question was whether the analyst could offer the patient any assistance “besides the stimulus he gets from the transference?” That the analyst should not hesitate to intervene in the patient’s life in order to ensure a combination of external circumstances conducive to the resolution of conflicts in analysis was a notion that Freud found “unobjectionable and entirely justified.” Yet the fundamental principle that he enunciated and which he believed would “dominate our work in this field” was strictly negative: “*Analytic treatment should be carried through, as far as possible,*

---

<sup>72</sup> Freud, “Wege,” 184-86.

*under privation – in a state of abstinence.*” Since every improvement in the patient’s condition reduced the instinctual force impelling him towards recovery, “cruel as it may sound” it was important that the patient’s suffering not be allowed to find a premature end. The activity of the doctor consisted in this regard in an “energetic opposition to (*Einschreiten gegen*) premature substitutive satisfactions.” By attempting to make the patient’s condition as pleasant as possible, the overly accommodating analyst merely furnished him with another refuge and failed to “give him more strength for facing life and more capacity for carrying out his actual tasks in it.” In language that must have resonated with the military authorities in attendance, Freud averred, “in analytic treatment all such spoiling must be avoided.”<sup>73</sup>

Yet analytic therapy did not only impose a condition of abstinence on the patient but demanded self-denial from the analyst as well. This other direction of analytic activity – the forbearance of the analyst – had already surfaced as a point of contention between Freudians and the followers of Carl Jung at the time of the prewar splits in the movement. The Freudian analyst, in contrast to the Jungian, resolutely resisted the temptation to occupy the position of a guide or model for the patient:

We refused most emphatically to turn a patient who puts himself into our hands in search of help into our private property, to decide his fate for him, to force our own ideals upon him, and with the pride of a Creator to form him in our own image and see that it is good.

Insisting that he still adhered to this refusal, Freud contended that such a “far-reaching activity towards the patient is not in the least necessary for therapeutic purposes.” Reaffirming the liberal principles of analysis he continued, “I have been able to help people with whom I had nothing in common – neither race, education, social position nor outlook upon life in general – without affecting their individuality.”

---

<sup>73</sup> Freud, “Wege,” 185-89.

Even as the liberality of Freud's position overrode and effaced the social limits to analytic therapy that he had drawn in 1905, it was checked from within. Recalling his own reservations at the time of the dispute with the Swiss Jungians regarding the "harsh and uncompromising" objections of "our spokesmen" he claimed that psychoanalysis cannot avoid taking on some patients "who are so helpless and incapable of ordinary life (*haltlos und existenzunfähig*) that for them one has to combine analytic with educative (*erzieherische*) influence." "Even with the majority," he continued, "occasions now and then arise in which the physician is bound to take up the position of teacher and mentor (*Erzieher und Ratgeber*)." While he insisted that such roles should only be assumed with the utmost caution, Freud's contention amounted to a reversal of the stance he maintained just two years prior when he contended that only in a minority of cases was such far-reaching exercise of authority indicated. "One must proceed differently," Freud argued, as he turned to examples of neurotic disorders that "have made it necessary for us to go beyond our former limits." In the severer cases of both phobias and obsessional behavior an "attitude of passive waiting" promised to achieve little, rather the analyst was compelled to intervene, suggesting certain behaviors and forbidding others. Even if the aim of analysis remained that of enabling the patient "to liberate and fulfill his own nature," realizing that possibility appeared to require the analyst to exercise a new, *erzieherisch* authority.<sup>74</sup>

In the "glance at a situation that belongs to the future" with which he concluded his address, Freud directed his attention towards a different set of limitations that constrained analysis. "You know that our therapeutic activities are not very far-reaching...Compared to the vast amount of neurotic misery which there is in the world" the quantity that psychoanalysts could address was "almost negligible," he acknowledged. Limited by the "necessities of our existence" to the "well-

---

<sup>74</sup> Freud, "Wege," 190-2. "...der Kranke soll nicht zur Ähnlichkeit mit uns sondern zur Befreiung und Vollendung seines eigenen Wesens erzogen werden."

to-do-classes,” psychoanalysts, “at present,” could “do nothing for the wider social strata, who suffer extremely seriously from neuroses,” he conceded. The fact that the social strata whose psychosexual development had earlier seemed so unburdened by psychic conflict now appeared to be especially vulnerable, a veritable reservoir of “neurotic misery,” prompted a new departure. Freud asked his audience to envision the creation of “some kind of organization” that would increase their numbers and enable them to treat a “considerable mass of the population.” Fantastic as this vision might sound,

it is possible to foresee that at some time or other the conscience of society will awake and remind it that the poor man should have just as much right to assistance for his mind as he now has to the life-saving help offered by surgery; and that the neuroses threaten the health of the nation (*Volksgesundheit*) no less than tuberculosis, and can be left as little as the latter to the impotent care of individual members of the community. When this happens, institutions or out-patient clinics will be started, to which analytically-trained physicians will be appointed, so that men who would otherwise give way to drink, women who have nearly succumbed under the burden of their privations, children for whom there is no choice but between running wild or neurosis, may be made capable, by analysis, of resistance and of efficient work (*widerstands- und leistungsfähig*).

Treatment in these institutions would be free of charge, Freud added. While he acknowledged that it may be a long time before the state comes to recognize the urgency of these duties and that “present conditions may delay its arrival even longer,” “some time or other,” he maintained, “it must come to this.”<sup>75</sup>

As Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg has noted, a peculiar ambiguity haunts the use of the “resistance” (*Widerstand*) in Freud’s address. At the beginning of the speech, “resistance” “bears its ‘proper’ psychoanalytic meaning,” she writes, in that it denotes a psychic force that “lays itself in the way *against* knowledge of the unconscious” and must “for that reason...be combated with all the therapeutic means at the disposal of psychoanalysis.” Yet by the end of his address, “resistance” “has migrated elsewhere, to another and indeed wider social stage: resistance now

---

<sup>75</sup> Freud, “Wege,” 192-3 (translation modified).

fights the same battles of psychoanalysis against mass neurosis” and to that end has come to speak “the language of freedom.”<sup>76</sup> While Freud’s remarks were not the first instance that he had pointed to a capacity to resist as an essential condition for psychic health, the prominence it now assumed as an aim of analytic therapy signaled a dramatic shift.<sup>77</sup> The neurotics this organization would treat were subjects whose suffering unfolded not in the private, interior spaces of the bourgeois home, but on a “wider social stage,” in close proximity to the brutal social conditions that generated them. As a consequence, the “capacity to resist” took on an additional dimension: where earlier it had signified an ability to effectively oppose the claims of the libido (together with the enlightenment offered by analysis), now, in the context of the war neuroses and endemic social deterioration, it denoted a capacity to withstand the pathogenic force of external circumstances. In the new context, the first task of analytic therapy would be to reinforce the fragile borders of the psyche against the violence that threatened to overwhelm it entirely.

Yet Freud’s remarks disclose another paradox beyond the shifting significations of the term “resistance.” The recognition of mass neurotic misery that pushed him to champion the right of those without means to psychotherapeutic treatment and to envision an organization capable of treating masses of neurotics was closely bound-up with a recognition of their deleterious impact on social stability. This new perspective altered the status of the neuroses psychoanalysis addressed itself to – from the personal, private afflictions of “valuable” individuals, neuroses now figured as the collective manifestations of a general social pathology. The right of the poor man to assistance for his mind – a right that derived from the brutality of the conditions that generated his suffering – was supplemented *but also challenged* by a concern for the health of the social whole, which was jeopardized by the pathogenic forces in the individual psyche. The victims of

---

<sup>76</sup> Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity: Anna Freud, Psychoanalysis, Politics* (Ithaca, 2011), 27.

<sup>77</sup> For this earlier use of *Widerstandsfähigkeit*, see Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 389.

the endemic social disorder were no less the subjects responsible for perpetuating the same pathogenic conditions – in the very act of being drawn out of the private sphere, neuroses assumed a threatening guise. With the emergence of this new perspective, the recognition that social forces had caused unprecedented misery came up against the claims of society itself as neurotics were effectively re-diagnosed as deviants whose illnesses posed a threat to the *Volksgesundheit*.

Just as an alteration of the classical psychoanalytic perspective on the neuroses is evident in Freud's address, a new understanding of the social role of analytic therapy is equally apparent: the identification of the analyst with the vulnerable ego in the overwhelming context of the war appeared to go hand-in-hand with a deepening professional identification with the very social authorities the ego represented within the psyche. In the treatment of the war neuroses and in Freud's address to the congress, psychoanalysts now represented the claims of a social and political order vis-à-vis the neurotics they treated – or, in Freud's case, proposed to treat. Instead of framing his address as a contribution to a given sociopolitical order, to a state and society at war, however, Freud shifted the focus to the coming era of peace and the challenges of reconstruction. The war represented merely an obstacle to the far-reaching reforms he envisioned and a major source of the neurotic misery he sought to redress. Yet even as he eschewed any and all forms of violence in the treatment ("in my opinion," he wrote in response to one proposed revision, "this is after all only to use violence, even though it is overlaid with the most honorable motives"),<sup>78</sup> the war appeared to lend analytic therapy a sterner countenance. In warning against the dangers of spoiling neurotics, in contending that the tasks of a mass analytic therapy should be to equip the subject with a capacity to resist and work efficiently (as opposed to the earlier aim of restoring the patient's capacity to love and enjoy), and in casting the neuroses as a danger to the health of the *Volk*,

---

<sup>78</sup> Freud, "Wege," 191.

Freud's address appeared to open onto the possibility of a socially disciplinary analytic therapy.

A similar paradox haunts the final paragraph of Freud's address in which he turns to the task of "adapting our technique to the new circumstances." "I have no doubt that the validity of our psychological assumptions will make its impression on the uneducated too," he averred, "but we shall need to look for the simplest and most easily intelligible ways of expressing our theoretical doctrines." Freud found it probable that the poor would prove even less willing to dispense with their neuroses than the rich, since the "hard life that awaits them if they recover offers them no attraction" whereas illness "gives them one more claim to social help." If such an insight made the coupling of "some material support" with mental assistance appear necessary, it also indicated the need for more authoritarian therapeutic methods: "It is very probable, too, that the large-scale application of our therapy will compel us to alloy the pure gold of analysis freely with the copper of direct suggestion." Hypnotic influence might also find a place in it again, "as it has in the treatment of war neuroses," he acknowledged. In a final turn, however, Freud reassured his listeners that whatever form this psychotherapy would assume, "its most effective and most important ingredients will assuredly remain those borrowed from strict and untendentious psychoanalysis."<sup>79</sup>

By altering psychoanalysis in the very moment he proposed to extend its benefits to the socially disadvantaged, Freud was implicitly reaffirming the assumptions he had made explicit in 1905 – in particular, that pure psychoanalysis was suitable only for a subset of valuable individuals. As Sarah Winter has argued, the "intensive working through of a particular life story" in analysis was not just a luxury available only to the privileged classes but one that "reconstitutes and confirms the value of such clients' 'individuality' and thus ideologically reinforces the patient's

---

<sup>79</sup> Freud, "Wege," 193-4.

superior social position.” It is this dimension of individual distinctiveness, Winter argues, that sets the *Bildungsbürgertum* off from the masses, for Freud. Lacking the “psychological ‘integrity’” and the depth of feeling of members of the middle classes, the “‘common people’ ...do not qualify as individuals.” Their identity, instead of being determined by unique formative experiences and rooted in a dimension of interiority, is merely a reflection of their position in the social order, a “communal”, not a personal, identity, Winter writes. While “Freud’s proposal to extend analysis to the poor seems to grant them a version of this middle-class individuality as well,” it is clearly a truncated individuality, a fact made evident by the modified technique their treatment required.<sup>80</sup>

Yet if Freud’s address reaffirmed the ideological bases of classical psychoanalysis, it also registered the powerful sociopolitical forces that were transforming the context in which analytic therapy worked.<sup>81</sup> The entire ground upon which the social categories of classical psychoanalysis rested was shifting, and the reverberations of this movement could be felt throughout Freud’s address. The “‘natural,’ undifferentiated, species-level existence” that, as Winter writes, characterized the life of members of the lower classes for Freud, appeared increasingly to be becoming a general social reality over the course of the war. Just as the individual psychological integrity that was held to separate the bourgeois subject from the proletariat had proven deeply vulnerable to the mass enthusiasm that marked the outbreak of the war, the material security that distinguished the *Bürgertum* from the masses was eroded over the following years by the dire material shortages and the inexorable inflation the war produced. As they watched the inflation

---

<sup>80</sup> Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalysis*, 144-5.

<sup>81</sup> The term “classical analysis,” it should be noted, would only become a standard part of psychoanalytic parlance over the coming years. If anything, the very notion that there was a *classical* analytic therapy – as opposed to simply analysis and what Freud, in 1914, termed bluntly *Unsinn* – was generated recursively by Freud’s validation of therapeutic modification and his simultaneous insistence on the purity of “strict and untendentious psychoanalysis.” Freud himself would always remain suspicious of the term, however, embedding it, for instance, in a pair of skeptical quotation marks when referring to an earlier statement by Ferenczi (“our ‘classical technique,’ as Ferenczi called it in Vienna”). See Freud to the “Secret Committee,” 15 February 1924, *Die Rundbriefe des ‘Geheimen Komitees’: Bd. 4, 1923-1927* (Tübingen, 2006), 170.

steadily eat away at their savings and salaries and struggled to find adequate food and fuel, members of the *gebildete* social class from which classical analysis emerged were gripped by a fear that they were being reduced to the ranks of the proletariat. In such a conjuncture the metaphor of currency devaluation that Freud chose to describe the alteration of analytic technique spoke as much to the material concerns and status anxieties of a middle class whose livelihoods were especially vulnerable to inflation as it did to the persistence and stability of the hierarchies of value underpinning analytic therapy.

In the context in which Freud spoke, a simple recapitulation and reaffirmation of the ideological presuppositions of classical psychoanalysis would thus have been untenable. With return outside the realm of possibility, the only viable alternative was for the class bases of psychoanalysis to be renegotiated, a process Freud undertook through a reflective mediation between classical analysis and the new “active” methods he proposed. At the heart of his address was the recognition – or perhaps merely an admission – that classical analysis had, in fact, *never* fully adhered to its stipulated limits and that the “pure gold” of analysis had rarely, if ever, gone unsupplemented by the more authoritarian measures that would make their full emergence in the institutions Freud envisioned. If Freud’s address offered his most emphatic articulation of the ideal of classical analysis and the limits that defined it, it did so precisely as a defense *against* the active measures he anticipated – as a means, that is, of containing and countering the unsettling implications of his own proposal. In the context of Freud’s mediation, the exceptional figure of the “helpless” neurotic “incapable of ordinary life” represented simultaneously a new norm and a *Grenzgänger*, a border crosser, one that by traversing the threshold between *Analyse* and *Erziehung* tied the untethered model of “pure” psychoanalysis to the vision Freud proposed for an expanded analytic therapy and thus bound the social representatives of the two models of

therapeutic technique, the *Bürgertum* and the proletariat. The compromise Freud fashioned between these two classes – classes that had formerly seemed so alien to one another and yet now appeared to be merging in the impoverished, emaciated body of the *Volk* – was one that attempted to reconcile the antitheses of suggestion and liberation through a new mediation centered on *Erziehung*. As “resistance” came to “[speak] the language of freedom,” in Stewart-Steinberg’s words, “the paths of psychoanalytic therapy” appeared to converge upon the formative process responsible for the instauration of a “capacity to resist” – that is, upon *Erziehung*.

The new prominence of *Erziehung* in the post-classical model of analytic therapy Freud offered was thus inseparable from the collapse of the ideal of the *gebildete* individual whose reliable, valuable, and independent character psychoanalysis had previously viewed as essential to its operations. *Bildung* in this catastrophic moment would come to appear less a material reality instantiated by a given social group than an ideal suspended over a volatile mass – it represented the all too distant and perhaps unrecoverable patrimony of a bourgeois age on the cusp of an era that promised to be radically different. Loosened from its social moorings the ideal of *Bildung* and of *gebildete* subjectivity became theoretically available to all, albeit in the corrupted form offered by the modified analytic therapy Freud envisioned. As the social bearers of the ideal of *Bildung* appeared to be rapidly and irresistibly sinking into the anonymous collective, the analyst’s function as *Erzieher* became more pronounced. Through an *erzieherisch* analytic therapy Freud hoped analysis could contribute to stemming the psychosocial deterioration produced in the crucible of total war by equipping the subject with a greater capacity for resistance. The war, by unleashing this deterioration and by raising the specter of an even more catastrophic regression had transformed *Erziehung* into an existential necessity.

## Beyond the Classical Paradigm

“In the years before the war,” Freud wrote at the end of the *Introductory Lectures*, “when arrivals from many foreign countries made me independent of the favor or disfavor of my own city, I followed a rule of not taking on a patient for treatment unless he was *sui juris*, not dependent on anyone else in the essential relations of his life.”<sup>82</sup> Beneath the elegiac sense of loss that pervades his words, a new and telling identification can be discerned: with the erosion of his personal independence and security, Freud was compelled to turn to subjects whose immaturity and dependence placed them outside of the constitutive limits of orthodox analytic practice. If classical psychoanalysis had rested on a secure basis of bourgeois identification, the war had profoundly unsettled this foundation. By displacing Freud and his fellow *Bildungsbürger* into a new and threatening proximity to proletarian existence (“all one’s energy,” he wrote to Abraham, “is required to maintain one’s economic level”), the experience of the past four years compelled him to rethink the social politics of analytic therapy.<sup>83</sup>

The apparent disappearance of the autonomous bourgeois individual at the close of the war and the confrontation with new subjects and types of suffering exposed a gap at the heart of psychoanalytic practice, one that divided the norms that guided and legitimated analytic therapy from their application in real, concrete settings. Summoned in 1920 to provide expert testimony in an official enquiry into accusations of the abuse of war neurotics by military physicians, Freud would argue that an “insoluble conflict between the claims of humanity, which normally carry decisive weight for a physician, and the demands of a national war was bound to confuse [the physician’s] activity.”<sup>84</sup> In his 1918 address, Freud had attempted to resolve this confusion by

---

<sup>82</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen,” 480.

<sup>83</sup> Freud to Abraham, 1 December 1919, *Briefe*, 278.

<sup>84</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Gutachten über die elektrische Behandlung der Kriegsneurotiker,” *GW XVIII* (1920): 708-9.

mediating between the contradictory responsibilities shouldered by the physician in this new context. The specific tension he identified in his 1920 memorandum, however, was one that seemed to him in “Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie” to reach back to prewar practice and simultaneously to extend forward into the future – to constitute, that is, something on the order of an aporetic knot at the heart of analytic therapy. In exposing the ideological character of classical psychoanalytic principles, the war laid bare what Freud would later describe as the “impossibility” of analytic therapy, a quality it shared with the professions of “governing” and “educating.”<sup>85</sup>

By forcing analysts to shoulder an authority that exceeded and transgressed classical principles, the war also gave rise to a new political consciousness within psychoanalytic practice. The crumbling of bourgeois society meant that simply enabling the patient to make a choice regarding his or her future, in the conviction that this decision would return him or her to a stable social order (the world of satisfying responsibilities and responsible satisfactions), no longer made sense at the close of the war. Faced with these circumstances, Freud recognized that analytic therapy had to “proceed differently.” In terms that would reverberate throughout the debates surrounding psychoanalytic practice between the wars, Freud described the new authority the analyst was forced to assume as active and educational.<sup>86</sup> Formed around a rudimentary idea of social citizenship, in which new rights were balanced with heightened responsibilities towards the collective, Freud’s post-classical model of analytic therapy departed markedly from orthodox technique. From a classical conception of analytic therapy formed around (and limited by) the principles of negative liberty and self-discipline, Freud shifted, if haltingly and ambivalently, in

---

<sup>85</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort zu *Verwahrloste Jugend*,” *GW* XIV (1925): 565-67, and Freud, “Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse,” *GW* XVI (1937): 59-99, at 94.

<sup>86</sup> Notably an “enthusiasm for *Erziehung*,” in Edward Ross Dickinson’s words, extended well beyond the ranks of psychoanalysts at this moment. Dickinson, *The Politics of German Child Welfare: From the Empire to the Federal Republic* (Cambridge, 1996), 125.

1918, towards one premised on positive rights and social discipline – towards what might be called a Social Democratic psychoanalysis.

Amid the chaotic aftermath of the conflict, however, anxiety and bitterness overwhelmed the optimism that marked Freud's 1918 address. In a statement from the same letter with which this chapter opened, Freud wrote Ferenczi, "No sooner does [psychoanalysis] begin to interest the world on account of the war neuroses than the war ends...Our kingdom is indeed not of this world."<sup>87</sup> Far from retreating from the world in the face of these disappointments, however, the psychoanalytic movement experienced a "second birth" in the wake of the war.<sup>88</sup> Galvanized by Freud's call for a progressive psychoanalysis capable of embracing the masses, a younger, more politically radical generation of analysts would emerge over the following years. With the establishment, over the same period, of a series of psychoanalytic polyclinics intended to provide free treatment along the lines Freud had envisioned in 1918 (as well as training material for aspiring analysts) the postwar years witnessed the professional breakthrough that the war failed to yield. In 1923, in a preface to a report by Max Eitingon on the first three years of the Berlin Psycho-Analytic Policlinic, Freud wrote,

If psycho-analysis, alongside of its scientific significance, has a value as a therapeutic procedure, if it is capable of giving help to sufferers in their struggle to fulfill the demands of civilization, this help should be accessible as well to the great multitude who are too poor themselves to repay an analyst for his laborious work. This seems to be a social necessity particularly in our times, when the intellectual strata of the population, which are especially prone to neurosis, are sinking irresistibly into poverty<sup>89</sup>

If his remarks seemed to signal a partial return to the assumption that the neuroses were the particular affliction of the educated classes, the same strata appeared still at risk of disappearing into the masses. No less significant, was the fact that the "demands of civilization" that individual

---

<sup>87</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 17 November 1918, *Briefwechsel II/2*, 186.

<sup>88</sup> Karl Fallend, *Wilhelm Reich in Wien. Psychoanalyse und Politik* (Vienna, 1988), 37.

<sup>89</sup> Freud, "Vorwort," *GW XIII* (1923): 441.

sufferers struggled to meet applied, for Freud, not only to this particularly vulnerable strata but also to the “great multitude,” who were deserving of free treatment as if by virtue of the “demands” (now) placed upon them. Even if the accent seems to have reverted to its earlier exclusivist emphasis, Freud’s preface provided ample evidence that the lineaments of the class compromise he fashioned in 1918 were still largely intact.

In the new context that the war created, the struggle of the bourgeois individual under the demands of *Kultur* was shadowed by a more primitive threat – namely, that posed by the intrusive, potentially overwhelming violence of external reality. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), the struggles of the vulnerable ego to manage the dangers impinging upon it from within and without would furnish the point of departure for a far-reaching revision of the psychoanalytic theory of the instincts, the organization of the psyche, and the formation of symptoms. If this altered perspective suggested a new task for the psychoanalyst – i.e. reinforcing the ego’s “capacity to resist” – it also opened new horizons for analytic therapy since the privileged objects of this modified psychoanalysis were the most exposed, powerless, and dependent. Confronting the new circumstances would require moving beyond the classical paradigm into the mass democratic era of the postwar.

Fashioning a New Psychoanalysis: Exceptional States and the Crisis of Authority in Analytic Practice, 1919-1925

*Das Ich, mit dem wir einen solchen Pakt schließen können, muß ein normales Ich sein. Aber ein solches Normal-Ich ist, wie die Normalität überhaupt, eine Idealfiktion.*

Sigmund Freud, “Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse” (1937)

The seminal text of the postwar revision of Freudian metapsychology, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), had at its heart a simple, if unsettling, question – namely, why was the mind compelled to revisit and relive experiences of an unpleasurable kind. The question was an especially difficult one for a theory that had previously identified the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of unpleasure (*Unlust*, the consequence of an unrelieved build-up of tension in the psyche) as the governing principle of mental functioning. While most sources of unpleasure posed no substantive challenge to the so-called pleasure principle, “the investigation of the mental reaction to external danger” raised new problems for the Freudian conception of the psychical apparatus. In particular, in the “traumatic neuroses” produced by the “terrible war that has just ended” Freud saw himself confronted with a category of neurotics whose fixation to traumatic experiences appeared to contravene the pleasure principle and undercut the theory of the neuroses it informed.<sup>1</sup> In attempting to make sense of these afflictions, Freud was led to consider what lay beyond, and indeed before, the pleasure principle, namely the attempts of the primitive psychical apparatus to bind the invasive quantities of stimuli that threatened to overwhelm it.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Jenseits des Lustprinzips,” *GW* XIII (1920): 8-9.

To understand the compulsion of neurotic soldiers to return to the precipitating cause of their affliction and repeat this experience in their dreams, Freud felt it necessary to “leave the dark and dismal subject of the traumatic neuroses and to pass on to examine” the operations of the mental apparatus in one of its “earliest *normal* activities” – that of children’s play.<sup>2</sup> In turning from adult war neurotics to infants in his discussion, Freud was in fact recapitulating a move that Sándor Ferenczi had made in his contribution to the discussion of the war neuroses at the 1918 Budapest congress. At the close of his address, Ferenczi speculated that the symptoms exhibited by war neurotics represented regressions to “modes of adaptation” that had played a prominent role in the biological evolution of the species but none at all in the individual’s development. In a postscript to his address, Ferenczi attempted to clarify this obscure contention with recourse to a study by the Heidelberg pediatrician Professor E. Morros on the responses of infants to experiences of shock, responses Ferenczi classified as forms of artificially created “fright (or traumatic) neurosis.” Pointing to the parallel between the gestures of the frightened infants and the tendency of baby primates to cling to their mothers, he concluded that the “natural clasping reflex” activated in the infants at moments of sudden shock reflected an “atavistic reversion of the mode of reaction in sudden terror.”<sup>3</sup>

The turn to the child in Ferenczi’s postscript and Freud’s essay reflected the emergence of a new understanding of neurotic suffering in psychoanalytic thought, one anticipated by Ernst Simmel’s two 1918 contributions to the psychoanalytic theory of the war neuroses (chapter two). In each of these studies, it was the vulnerability of an ego exposed to overwhelming violence from

---

<sup>2</sup> Freud, “Jenseits des Lustprinzips,” 11 (emphasis in original).

<sup>3</sup> Sándor Ferenczi, “Die Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen,” in *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen* (Leipzig, 1919), 28-30. Ferenczi would further develop this line of thought in his 1921 essay “Psychoanalytische Betrachtungen über den Tic,” in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band I: Theorie* (Bern, 1984 [1921]), 193-234 and his response to Abraham’s critical commentary, “Beitrag zur ‘Tic-Diskussion’,” in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band III: Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1908-1933* (Bern, 1984 [1921]), 168-69. See on this subject, Ruth Leys’ brilliant analysis in *Trauma: A Genealogy*, 138-47.

without and unmanageable affects from within that dominated the clinical picture, all but displacing the conflict between sexual desire and repression at the core of the classical psychoanalytic etiology of the neuroses.<sup>4</sup> Yet far more was in play: for both Freud and Ferenczi, the new emphasis on the vulnerability of the subject and the analogy to the child it suggested resonated with fears of a potentially irrevocable collapse of civilization into infantilism and barbarity.<sup>5</sup> In tracing an arc that led from adult neurotics to children and, in fact, *beyond* – in Ferenczi’s case to frightened infant primates and in Freud’s to the most rudimentary form of organic life (“an undifferentiated vesicle of substance...susceptible to stimulation”)<sup>6</sup> – psychoanalytic thought appeared to open onto the possibility of an almost limitless capacity for regression. As soldiers became infants recapitulating adaptive behaviors from evolutionary prehistory, it seemed that the war had revealed a retrogressive tendency to organic life in which highly organized forms were in constant danger of sliding back into a pre-individual, pre-linguistic, creatural (*kreatürlich*), existence.<sup>7</sup> The manifestations of the traumatic neuroses may have figured as defensive formations (*eingeschaltete Sicherungen*, in Simmel’s words) against the threat of psychosis or even as attempts to restore a disturbed psychological equilibrium through a piecemeal discharge of the overwhelming fright as Ferenczi (following a “hint” from Freud) suggested, but

---

<sup>4</sup> Later in the same decade Freud’s texts would increasingly emphasize what he described as “the overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction” that “rage against” us in the external world. Sigmund Freud, “Das Unbehagen in der Kultur,” *GW* XIV (1930): 434. Similar statements can be found in Freud’s 1926 “Die Frage der Laienanalyse,” *GW* XIV (1926): 209-86 and “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” *GW* XIV (1927): 325-80. See chapter seven.

<sup>5</sup> See especially Freud and Ferenczi’s correspondence in November of 1918 (discussed in chapter two), which returned repeatedly to the theme of civilizational collapse. See also Louis Rose, *The Freudian Calling*, 147-76.

<sup>6</sup> Freud, “Jenseits des Lustprinzips,” 25.

<sup>7</sup> A neologism in the interwar years, the term *Kreatürlichkeit* served to convey the sense of pitiless exposure to the violence of the external world that accompanied the devastating and disorientating impact of the war and the ensuing upheavals. In *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago, 2006), Eric Santner connects this interwar consciousness of creatural vulnerability to the contemporary concept of “the state of exception,” arguing that exposure to the normative groundlessness of human existence (an existential condition that was particularly acute during the interwar moment) was fundamental to the concept of the creature. On the place of the *Kreatur* in German literature and thought in the Weimar era see especially Helmuth Lethen, *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, 2001), 195ff.

the danger of a more fundamental (and perhaps irremediable) collapse seemed already inscribed in the symptomatic behaviors and compulsive reenactments of the traumatized soldiers.<sup>8</sup>

The attempts of Freudians to grapple with the psychological consequences of the war led to a partial displacement within psychoanalytic thought of the mature, autonomous, and cultivated individual that classical analytic therapy had taken as its legitimate object.<sup>9</sup> If in 1909 Freud could write that psychoanalysis requires a “state of normality for its application” and that it paradoxically “*meets the optimum of favorable conditions where its practice is not needed* – i.e., among the healthy,”<sup>10</sup> the collapse of liberal bourgeois society in the crucible of the war directed analysts’ attention to subjects who lay beyond the classical norm at the same time as it lent extraordinary urgency to the task of developing a mass psychotherapeutic response to the war’s devastation. The subjects Freud addressed in his 1918 address to the Budapest congress (chapter two) – “men who would otherwise give way to drink,” women in danger of succumbing to “the burdens of their privations,” and “children for whom there is no choice but between running wild or neurosis” – appeared to require the exercise of a novel form of authority within analytic treatment, one that was “active,” pedagogical, and thus, disciplinary in its exercise.<sup>11</sup> In the new context, as the previous two chapters have argued, education (*Erziehung*) thus took on a new valence within psychoanalytic thought: whereas prior to the conflict, it had figured primarily as a source of

---

<sup>8</sup> See Ernst Simmel, “Zweites Korreferat,” in *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen*, 45, and Sándor Ferenczi, “Die Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen,” 29.

<sup>9</sup> One register on which this shift can be discerned is Freud’s use of clinical material in his postwar writings. Where his prewar work included a number of famous book-length case studies, which read, Freud himself acknowledged, much like works of imaginative fiction, his postwar writings include no similar studies. On the scant occasions when he did discuss clinical material at length over the interwar years, his patients remained the unnamed subjects of “A Child is Being Beaten” (1919) and “The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Women,” (1920) a stark contrast to his prewar studies, replete as they were with distinctive pseudonyms (from Emmy von N. to Little Hans) that reinforced the individuality of their central subjects. Coinciding as they did with Freud’s investigations of mass psychology, the decision to leave his patients unnamed speaks to the markedly different conception of selfhood and subjectivity that emerged in psychoanalytic thought following the war.

<sup>10</sup> Freud to Pfister, 18 January 1909, *Letters of Sigmund Freud, 1873-1939*, 278 (emphasis in original).

<sup>11</sup> Freud, “Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie,” 193.

neurotic suffering, in the disordered environment created by four years of total war, *Erziehung* and the ego resistances it inculcated came to appear essential to recovery of individual autonomy and social stability.

The program Freud articulated in 1918 for a mass application of analytic therapy, one administered as a basic right but premised on a disciplinary reinscription into the social order, was a fundamentally Social Democratic vision.<sup>12</sup> Pedagogical authority was likewise central to the ambitious programs for recovery that Social Democrats articulated over these years – as the educator Otto Glöckel wrote in 1916, “the new times have created new educational needs.”<sup>13</sup> Viewing the collapse of the family unit amid the social upheavals of the war, Glöckel argued that the disruption of the educational function of the family placed new responsibilities on society. The massive welfarist intervention that Social Democrats like Glöckel and Julius Tandler envisioned in the last years of the war was formed around the figure of the vulnerable and immature subject in need of care and education.<sup>14</sup> Overcoming the dilapidated state of the social, however, required not only the construction of an all-encompassing welfare apparatus on behalf of the child, but also the education of the masses of adults who lacked an adequate consciousness of their responsibilities in the enormous tasks of reconstruction.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond the ranks of the Social Democrats, however, the ruination of the *Volkskörper* through the combination of mass slaughter, collective starvation, and the spread of epidemics generated an overriding concern among many observers with the health of the coming

---

<sup>12</sup> For a different interpretation of the Social Democratic valence of Freud’s address see Elizabeth Ann Danto, *Freud’s Free Clinics: Psychoanalysis and Social Justice, 1918-1938* (New York, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Otto Glöckel, “Das Tor der Zukunft,” in *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, ed. Erik Adam et. al. (Vienna, 1983 [1916]), 346.

<sup>14</sup> See Glöckel, “Das Tor der Zukunft,” 334-35, and Julius Tandler, “Krieg und Bevölkerung” (Vienna, 1916),

<sup>15</sup> A consciousness of the necessity of comprehensive welfarist intervention had to “emerge from below in the *Volk* and grow upwards” out of a “reciprocal readiness to help others” as Tandler wrote in 1917. In a letter to Emperor Karl Habsburg, Tandler charged physicians with this task of “echte Volkserziehung.” Quoted in Karl Sablik, *Julius Tandler. Mediziner und Sozialreformer, eine Biographie* (Vienna, 1983), 144 and 140.

generations.<sup>16</sup> If the physical effects of the war on the population placed the upbringing and education of the younger generation at the center of programs for recovery, the social and political upheavals of the war and the ensuing revolution likewise trained the attention of many observers on the essential role of education in restoring social stability and securing the democratic achievements of the revolutions.<sup>17</sup> While many programs for reconstruction envisioned the mobilization of the total resources of the war and the subordination of individual concerns to collective problems, the unprecedented triumph of liberal, democratic values in the war's aftermath posed an ideological challenge to these far-reaching (and often anti-liberal) ambitions. If *Erziehung* loomed so large in the thought of many reformers at this juncture, its prominence reflected, in part, its ability to reconcile the exercise of disciplinary authority with the democratic aspirations enshrined in the constitutions of the young Austrian and German republics. Through a new education, the divergent needs of the moment could be aligned in a single program that encompassed biological recovery, social reconstruction, and democratic renovation.

In the psychological theory and therapeutic technique of Alfred Adler, Social Democratic reformers found an invaluable resource for their program of pedagogical social reconstruction. Adlerian Individual Psychology was essentially an “*erzieherisch* psychotherapy,”<sup>18</sup> one whose guiding aim in the aftermath of the war was the pedagogical task of cultivating feelings of community (*Gemeinschaftsgefühle*) against the individual egotism that Adler and many Social

---

<sup>16</sup> On this subject see especially Paul Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945* (New York, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> Edward Ross Dickinson, *The Politics of German Child Welfare from the Empire to the Federal Republic* (Cambridge, 1996), 125. In the words of Herman Nohl, a bourgeois nationalist who recalled “convert[ing]” to the calling of education the day the German Republic was proclaimed, a new *Erziehung* was the only possible means of healing the nation (“es gibt kein anderes Heilmittel für das Unglück unseres Volkes als die neue Erziehung seiner Jugend...”). Quoted in Dudek, *Grenzen der Erziehung im 20. Jahrhundert*, 31.

<sup>18</sup> Alfred Adler, “Die neuen Gesichtspunkte in der Frage der Kriegsneurosen,” in *Praxis und Theorie der Individualpsychologie. Vorträge zur Einführung in die Psychotherapie für Ärzte, Psychologen und Lehrer* (Frankfurt a. M. 1974 [1918]), 207-16, at 210.

Democrats believed was destroying the collective good. For Freudians, however, the adoption of a disciplinary, pedagogical procedure in the service of social reconstruction represented a transgression of its classical liberal principles (its politics of autonomy) and raised the unsettling specter of a loss of its unique identity. By clinging to its liberal principles and its individualist orientation in the midst of social deterioration and political upheaval, however, psychoanalysts, Freud recognized, would significantly delimit their ability to contribute constructively to the broader tasks of reconstruction and renovation.

Psychoanalysts were thus confronted with a fundamental problem following the Great War: while the social collapse brought about by the war demanded an ambitious therapeutic intervention, the mass application of analytic therapy appeared to necessitate the adoption of a mode of therapeutic authority that violated the liberal principles at the heart of analytic practice. For Freud in 1918, this contradiction demanded a cautious mediation between competing alternatives, a defensive recasting of the politics of bourgeois psychoanalysis in the interest both of preserving its identity and expanding its social efficacy. In the thought of two of his more radical followers – Ferenczi and Wilhelm Reich – by contrast, the displacement of the classical bourgeois norm and the prominence of new types of neurotic suffering demanded a fundamental rethinking of the means and ends of analytic therapy. Their work over the following years would come to refashion the practice of analytic therapy around the figure of the vulnerable, immature, and dependent – in a word, childlike – constituent of the masses. Like Freud, they thought of their transgressions of orthodox principles – at least initially – as a means of restoring the conditions of possibility for the flourishing of a kind of liberal (i.e. autonomous, self-regulating) subjectivity.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Writing on Anna Freud, the chief inheritor of this fraught legacy (as discussed in chapter seven), Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg has described this mode of thought as “impious fidelity,” in that it violates and transgresses with the aim of preserving or restoring. Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity: Anna Freud, Psychoanalysis, Politics* (Ithaca, 2012).

Yet unlike Freud, they simultaneously viewed the collapse of bourgeois liberalism and the undermining of its ideal of subjectivity as opening up a horizon of possibility for the exercise of therapeutic and pedagogical authority that exploded the limits of classical analysis. Increasingly, their work would draw psychoanalysis away from its *bildungsbürgerlich* roots into a bracing confrontation with the mass, democratic spirit of the times.

The war had revealed a fissure within psychoanalysis, a gap between the norms that oriented its practice and their application in real, concrete settings. By acknowledging the disjuncture between the norms of classical psychoanalysis and the new reality that the war had created, Freud's 1918 address opened onto a crisis of authority in analytic practice. For Giorgio Agamben, the "impossible task of welding norm and reality together, and thereby of constituting the normal sphere," necessitates at such moments the suspension of the norm itself and the consequent production of a "state of exception."<sup>20</sup> In psychoanalytic thought, the task of managing the gap identified in Freud's address led to an increasing concern with so-called "exceptional states," with subjects and types of suffering beyond the classical norm. In their responses to the crisis in psychoanalytic practice, Ferenczi and Reich both overlapped with and diverged from Freud's own response, in the process staking out a new politics of psychoanalysis for a post-liberal age.<sup>21</sup>

### States of Exception

In April of 1919 Freud wrote Ferenczi in a cautionary tone. Urging "restraint" at a time when, as Ferenczi had reported, psychoanalysis was "being courted on all sides," Freud insisted, "we are

---

<sup>20</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Keven Attell (Chicago, 2005), 40.

<sup>21</sup> Reich would later discuss this postwar crisis in his work *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (New York, 1973 [1942]), 59 ff.

not suited to any kind of official existence, we need our independence on all sides... There is also an aftermath, in which we must again find a place. We are and remain nonpartisan except for one thing: to investigate and to help.”<sup>22</sup> Over the months following the military collapse, psychoanalysis appeared to be in danger of becoming the plaything of political forces in Ferenczi’s Budapest. After having been embraced and championed by radical youth during the revolution and an object of official patronage under the short-lived communist regime that followed the war, psychoanalysis became the target of conservative backlash amid the virulently anti-Semitic reaction that ousted the revolutionary soviet government and established the nationalist authoritarian regime that would rule Hungary for the remainder of the interwar period.<sup>23</sup> While it had appeared to both Freud and Ferenczi over the preceding months that Budapest was destined to become the capital of the psychoanalytic movement, the political reversals that dashed their hopes to see psychoanalysis established at the university and the death early the following year of a major Hungarian-Jewish benefactor (the same businessman who financed the 1918 congress), put an end to this hope and relegated Budapest to the status of a mere provincial center in the psychoanalytic movement.<sup>24</sup> If Ferenczi had written at the end of the war, amid the destruction of “Globus Hungaricus,” that “it is a good thing that along with the Hungarian, one has a Jewish and a

---

<sup>22</sup> Ferenczi’s statement to the effect that psychoanalysis was “being courted on all sides” was part of a broader assessment worth quoting at length. “Es kostet mich Mühe, die Werbungen abzuwehren. Gestern konnte ich aber vor der direkten Aufforderung, eine Staatliche Spitalsabteilung zu übernehmen, nicht ausweichen. In der neuen Ära will man alle ärztliche Praxis kommunisieren; die Privatpraxis hört ganz auf. Die [Psychoanalyse] wird sich auf das Spitalsmaterial verlegen müssen.” Ferenczi to Freud, 13 April 1919, *Sigmund Freud-Sandor Ferenczi: Briefwechsel, Bd. II/2, 1917-1919*, ed. Ernst Falzeder and Eva Brabant (Vienna 1996), 227. Freud’s reply to this overview of the state of affairs in Budapest was penned seven days later, see *Briefwechsel: Bd. II/2*, 229.

<sup>23</sup> Oszkár Jászi even goes so far as to described psychoanalysis as “the idol” of the revolutionary youth at this moment. Ferenc Erös notes, however, that Jászi’s contention, offered in his 1920 book *Hungarian Calvary – Hungarian Resurrection*, of the enthusiastic embrace of psychoanalysis by Communist youth, despite containing an “element of truth,” is nonetheless an exaggeration. See Erös, “Some Social and Political Issues Related to Ferenczi and the Hungarian School,” in *Ferenczi and His World: Rekindling the Spirit of the Budapest School*, ed. Judit Szekacs-Weisz and Tom Keve (London: 2012), 44.

<sup>24</sup> See Sigmund Freud, “Dr. Sandor Ferenczi (Zum 50. Geburtstag),” in *GW XIII* (1923): 443-44.

psychoanalytic ego, which remain untouched by these events,<sup>25</sup> the upheavals that followed the war seemed once again to convince him of the truth of Freud's gloomy assessment that "our kingdom is not of this world."<sup>26</sup> Resigning himself to the new order established by the reactionary-clerical regime, Ferenczi wrote, "It is naturally the best thing for [psychoanalysis] to continue working in complete withdrawal and without noise."<sup>27</sup>

Far from signaling the denouement of the tumult that runs through Ferenczi's postwar letters, however, the disabusing political reversals of 1919 marked rather its transposition to a new plane – that of psychoanalytic theory. The same dramatic fluctuation between caution and enthusiasm that distinguishes Ferenczi's commentary from Freud's more consistently dour and circumspect prognoses would be similarly evident in Ferenczi's writings on therapeutic technique over the 1920s. Where in the aftermath of the war, the future chances for psychoanalysis appeared to hinge primarily on external circumstances beyond their control, within a few years, Ferenczi was convinced that the opportunities for the expansion of psychoanalysis lay well within its grasp. These possibilities arose from the exceptional circumstances produced in the crucible of war and revolution: by internalizing the lessons of the past years and modifying analytic therapy accordingly, psychoanalysis would be able to emerge from its isolation and expand well beyond the limits imposed by orthodox practice. While the political situation would stabilize over the coming years, the upheaval of the postwar moment thus left a deep imprint on Ferenczi's thought – far more than he cared to admit, the psychoanalytic ego he cast as inviolable and imperturbable was both shaken and altered by the tumult of the past years. Through detailed reconstruction of

---

<sup>25</sup> Ferenczi to Freud, 4 October 1918, *Briefwechsel: Bd. II/2*, 170.

<sup>26</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 17 November 1918, *Briefwechsel: Bd. II/2*, 187.

<sup>27</sup> Quote continues, "Persönlich wird man dieses Trauma zum Anlass nehmen müssen, gewisse aus der Kinderstube mitgebrachten Vorurteile abzulegen und sich mit der bitteren Wahrheit, als Jude wirklich vaterlandslos zu sein, abzufinden." Ferenczi to Freud, 28 August 1919, *Briefwechsel: Bd. II/2*, 249-50.

his contributions to the theory of psychoanalytic technique, which built directly off of Freud's address to the Budapest congress, one can begin to discern the extent to which, what Ferenczi described as, "the great and powerful shocks of this volcanic epoch" shifted the foundations of psychoanalytic thought.<sup>28</sup>

In the wake of the 1918 congress, it was Ferenczi who took the lead in attempting to work out the technical implications of Freud's address, and in particular, his consideration of the need for a more "active" therapeutic technique. A basic uncertainty, in fact, surrounds the concept's provenance within psychoanalytic thought, for while Ferenczi would claim in his second paper on the subject to have been following a verbal suggestion from Freud in adopting a more "active" technique,<sup>29</sup> Freud himself credited Ferenczi with introducing the concept into the psychoanalytic lexicon.<sup>30</sup> Whatever its origins, however, Ferenczi's contributions over the immediate postwar years would soon give him a proprietary interest in the concept of analytic "activity." If, as the previous chapter argued, Freud's circumspection inclined him to place limits on his own innovations, in particular on the application of methods designed to abridge analytic treatment and to extend its therapeutic reach to the masses, Ferenczi's more impulsive intellectual temperament, which fluctuated dramatically between the extremes of intransigent orthodoxy and breathtaking

---

<sup>28</sup> Ferenczi to Freud, undated (likely after 21 April 1919), *Briefwechsel: Bd. II/2*, 232.

<sup>29</sup> Sandor Ferenczi, "Zur Frage der Beeinflussung des Patienten in der Psychoanalyse," in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band II: Praxis* (Bern 1984 [1919]), 59. Slightly earlier in the same 1919 issue of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* appeared Ferenczi's first paper on the subject, "Technische Schwierigkeiten einer Hysterieanalyse," in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band III*, 119-128. In "Technische Schwierigkeiten" Ferenczi credits Freud with providing the model he was following through his (Freud's) attempts to overcome the stagnation of analysis in particular cases of anxiety hysteria (127).

<sup>30</sup> "Die Entwicklung unserer Therapie wird also wohl andere Wege einschlagen, vor allem jenen, den kürzlich Ferenczi in seiner Arbeit über "Technische Schwierigkeiten einer Hysterieanalyse"... als die "Aktivität" des Analytikers gekennzeichnet hat." This passage would, of course, not have been present in the original address on which this text is based, but rather would have been added when the address was prepared for publication the following year. Sigmund Freud, "Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie," *GW XII* (1919), 186. Ernest Jones – generally disinclined to be generous to his former analyst, Ferenczi – would later acknowledge that the intimacy of Freud and Ferenczi's collaboration over the years of the war occasionally poses insurmountable challenges to determining with whom particular innovations originated. Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud: Volume II – 1901-1919* (New York, 1955).

heterodoxy, would increasingly threaten the limits Freud sought to uphold.<sup>31</sup>

Ferenczi's first brief contributions to the question of active technique, "Technische Schwierigkeiten einer Hysterieanalyse" and "Zur Frage der Beeinflussung des Patienten in der Psychoanalyse," both from 1919, posed no such challenges to the defining limits of Freudian thought. The latter paper in particular reads essentially as a gloss of Freud's address, one intended to draw out and clarify the theoretical stakes at play that may have escaped less sensitive listeners. Like Freud, Ferenczi aimed to uphold the purity of psychoanalytic therapy while contemplating its modification, a process that similarly involved the definition of psychoanalysis against the rival techniques and methodological criticisms of outsiders. Recalling how in 1913 at the Munich congress of the IPA, he had defended the austere conception of analytic therapy against the suggestions of the Swedish psychiatrist Poul Bjerre that "pure psychoanalytic therapy be combined with the medical and ethical education of the patient," Ferenczi now felt compelled to revisit the question he had resolved so decisively six years earlier. If in 1913 Ferenczi had insisted that psychoanalytic therapy exhausts itself in the "methodical enlightenment" of the patient and "the overcoming of the internal resistances," the most recent issue of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* contained, he noted, two contradictory statements on the subject: "The psychoanalyst never advises a patient, least of all to take up sexual relations," Jones had asserted categorically, only to have his contention belied by Isidor Sadger's candid admission that a patient

---

<sup>31</sup> Ferenczi's (at times, fanatical) commitment to upholding psychoanalytic orthodoxy has often been overshadowed by his heterodox contributions over the 1920s and early 1930s, yet Freud would occasionally note with disapproval his tendency to react with suspicion and hostility to outsiders. In a letter from 15 June 1917, for instance Freud wrote, "In your reaction against Dr. Groddeck I again find a long-standing characteristic trait in you, the tendency to leave a stranger standing outside." Freud to Ferenczi, *Briefwechsel Bd. II*, 82. See also Ferenczi's 1919 letter to Max Eitingon ostensibly welcoming him into the secret ring of Freud's closest collaborators: "Alles, was er [Freud] uns sagte und sagen wird, muss also mit einer Art Dogmatismus gehegt werden...Die Fähigkeit, auf eine eigene Idee zu Gunsten der Zentralen, zu verzichten, ist also eine der Hauptbedingungen, an die die Mitgliedschaft des Komités geknüpft ist." Quoted in Karl Fallend, *Sonderlinge, Träumer, Sensitive. Psychoanalyse auf dem Weg zur Institution und Profession – Protokolle der Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung und biographische Studien* (Vienna, 1995), 17.

of his had copulated for the first time “as a consequence of [his] advice.”<sup>32</sup>

The importance of the problem demanded a new consideration of the underlying question: was the analyst justified in interfering in the patient’s life decisions, and, if so, how? In this new context, the abstemious position upheld by Jones was one that Ferenczi, like Freud a year earlier, found exaggerated; in certain cases (specifically, “anxiety hysteria” and “hysterical impotence”) the progress of the treatment necessitated the analyst’s active intervention. Acknowledging that opponents of psychoanalysis would contend that this new method was merely a “form of suggestion in disguise,” Ferenczi systematically distinguished his employment of medical advice from cures by suggestion: while the latter promised the patient immediate relief, was either violent or cajoling in application, and functioned as the direct means of cure, Ferenczi’s method made no such promises, relied on the insight and compliance of the patient, and fulfilled only the circumscribed function of loosening the internal resistances.<sup>33</sup>

Yet, by acknowledging and validating the split Freud’s address had opened up in the theory of psychoanalytic practice, Ferenczi’s article effectively inserted a thin wedge into the once unified model of analytic technique, one that his more substantive contribution two years later, “Weiterer Ausbau der ‘aktiven Technik’ in der Psychoanalyse,” would use to further pry open the gap Freud had identified. Two countervailing impulses marked this lecture. While, on the one hand, a desire to contain the potential ramifications of his intervention is manifest from the outset, on the other, his reaffirmation of orthodox principles appeared merely a prelude to a more far-reaching revision. The guiding principles of analysis now seemed to furnish less a constant source of orientation than a foothold from which to launch a more radical departure. The purpose of his earlier contribution, he asserted, had not been to propose any changes to psychoanalytic technique – a method, he

---

<sup>32</sup> Ferenczi, “Zur Frage der Beeinflussung,” 58-9.

<sup>33</sup> Ferenczi, “Zur Frage der Beeinflussung des Patienten in der Psychoanalyse,” 60-1.

averred, that had remained essentially unaltered since the introduction of the “fundamental rule” of free association – but to make psychoanalysts more conscious of an authority they had to some extent *always* exercised. By naming something “long familiar” and that had, in fact, “never ceased to exist” within analysis, he hoped his essay would make analysts more cognizant of their *activity* and more effective in its exercise.<sup>34</sup>

In a similar spirit, Ferenczi insisted that the analyst’s activity was not “an end in itself” nor were the specific methods he mentioned anything more than means of assistance applicable “only in certain exceptional cases.” More strikingly, even within these limits, the analyst’s activity works, Ferenczi specified, “always ‘against the grain,’ that is, against the pleasure principle.” Echoing Freud’s statements on the subject, Ferenczi insisted that the treatment must be carried out in a “situation of abstinence” – “it is even practicable,” he contended, “to refuse precisely the satisfactions that the patient desires most intensively.” Ferenczi’s conception of “activity,” consisting, as it did, in the “the systematic issuing...of commands and prohibitions” under the “constant observance” of the Freudian rule of denial, aimed to overcome the patient’s resistances in order to expose fresh unconscious material. Since the new experiences could precipitate a crisis in the treatment, however, Ferenczi urged “the greatest possible economy” with active methods and pointed to the necessity of a strong transference if the patient was to be prevented from breaking off analysis. Given its difficulties and dangers, Ferenczi cautioned that inexperienced practitioners generally do better to refrain from adopting such methods until they became indispensable for the progress of analysis.<sup>35</sup> Yet by specifying that the forms of “pedagogical

---

<sup>34</sup> “Es handelt sich also hier um die Schaffung eines Begriffes und eines Kunstausdruckes für und die zweckbewußte Verwendung von etwas, was de facto, wenn auch unausgesprochen, immer verwendet wurde.” Sándor Ferenczi, “Weiterer Ausbau der ‘aktiven Technik’ in der Psychoanalyse,” in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band II* (1921), 68-9.

<sup>35</sup> Ferenczi, “Weiterer Ausbau der ‘aktiven Technik,’” 78, 62, 78, 67, 72, 74, 75.

assistance” offered by active methods were to be the prerogative of experienced analysts, Ferenczi implied that the use of active techniques would inevitably increase with the growing expertise of the majority of practitioners. Despite his avowed circumspection, “activity,” with its promise of greater efficiency and certainty in treatment, clearly corresponded, in Ferenczi’s thought, to the inner developmental logic of analytic therapy.

If Ferenczi was merely extending the line of thought Freud had already (albeit more cautiously) advance in 1918, what proved far more decisive in eroding the limits to the exercise of analytic activity was the prominence he gave to the very cases in which more active methods were indicated. Consistent with the exceptional times in which he elaborated his technical innovations, the “exceptional cases” Ferenczi identified came both to overwhelm the limits he upheld from without while hollowing them out from within, threatening, in the process, to replace the strictures of orthodox analysis with a new set of formative principles. Where his earlier papers had mentioned only two specific forms of neurotic suffering in which the application of a more active technique was indicated, in his 1921 article, Ferenczi identified not only several more distinct neurotic symptomatologies but also two entire fields that rewarded the therapeutic application of such pedagogical methods – namely, those devoted to the treatment of children’s neuroses and of mental insanity. While the latter fell outside of Ferenczi’s purview, as it did of psychoanalysis more generally at this time, they nonetheless found a close approximation in cases “when certain abnormal traits, comparable to the psychoses, disturb the progress of analysis.” For Ferenczi, such traits were tantamount to “recognized private psychoses” (*anerkannte Privatpsychosen*) that were tolerated by a narcissistic ego that accepted them as part of its organization – if the qualifier of “private” distinguished them from the psychoses proper, the recognition extended to them by the ego marked them off from neurotic illnesses, since what was lacking in the former (as in the

psychoses) was the basic awareness of their pathological status, what Ferenczi termed “*Krankheitseinsicht*.”<sup>36</sup>

Their treatment thus posed enormous obstacles: confronted by patients who failed to view their condition in the terms and categories supplied by the analyst and who furthermore strenuously resisted any attempts to alter what they recognized as part of their own ego, Ferenczi felt compelled to take a more active line (“*Einen recht ausgiebigen Gebrauch von der Aktivität...[zu] machen*”). Framing his efforts as an overcoming of the character neurotic’s narcissism, understood to limit his susceptibility to influence by preventing his full entry into the transference, Ferenczi contended that by setting the patient tasks that he would experience as unpleasurable, the analyst could irritate and stimulate the abnormal character traits (“*die oft nur angedeutet sind*”), bringing them to full unfolding and consequently “leading them to the point of absurdity.”<sup>37</sup> Much as he had in the discussion of the war neuroses, Ferenczi directed his intervention against the patient’s narcissism and thus against his ego.<sup>38</sup> By leveraging his authority against the ego’s unconscious acceptance of such “abnormal” traits, he aimed to impose on the patient an extrinsic valuation of his own character.

The intervention involved in what Ferenczi termed “character analyses” was thus significantly more far-reaching than that entailed by orthodox analysis, since it involved not only a change in how the ego relates to the unconscious but also a coercive alteration of how the ego views itself. The paradox that character analysis raised was that by overcoming the patient’s resistances and turning the ego against itself, it in fact, actively undermined the patient’s

---

<sup>36</sup> Ferenczi, “Weiterer Ausbau der ‘aktiven Technik,’” 78, 83, 80.

<sup>37</sup> Ferenczi, “Weiterer Ausbau der ‘aktiven Technik,’” 80.

<sup>38</sup> Of Ferenczi’s two papers on the war neuroses see especially his keynote address (discussed in the previous chapter) to the Budapest Congress of the IPA. “Die Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen,” in *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen* (Leipzig 1919), 9-30.

independence as a means of enabling his displacement into the transference relationship previously forestalled by his “abnormal” character traits. In this sense, character analysis represented a forcible (even violent) preparatory stage for analysis proper, one that rather than yielding “health” merely established the preconditions for “normal” neurotic illness (with the heightened suggestibility and dependency it entailed), a condition treatable through orthodox technique. While it aimed to remove the patient from his contaminating proximity to psychosis as a means of making him amenable to analytic therapy, Ferenczi’s method of character analysis threatened to erode the very structures – the modes of resistance – that may have served to defend the patient from a hostile environment.

Ferenczi offered no comparable overview where the analysis of children was concerned, yet tellingly, his discussion of character analysis led directly into a set of questions regarding the educational work of analytic therapy, a subject he believed was of especial significance to the treatment of children’s neuroses. In particular, the recognition of the importance of the pedagogical aids of praise and censure in the analysis of adults seemed to bind this field to the nascent one of child analysis (chapter six) while blurring the lines between them. “Freud has said on occasion, that with children the analytic after-education [*Nacherziehung*] is not to be separated from the current tasks of pedagogy,” Ferenczi wrote. “Neurotics, however, especially in analysis, all have something childish about them,” he continued, and the analyst is at times obligated to regulate the intensity of the analytic relationship – cooling all too stormy transferences through reserve and showing demure patients friendliness – as a means of maintaining an optimum temperature over the course of the treatment.<sup>39</sup> The importance of such pedagogical aids in the

---

<sup>39</sup> Ferenczi, “Weiterer Ausbau der ‘aktiven Technik,’” 81. See also on the subject of the childishness of neurotics, Ferenczi, “Zur psychoanalytischen Technik,” in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band. II* (1919), 38-54 (here 50). This essay, published the same year as Ferenczi’s first contributions to the question of activity in analysis offers only a brief allusion to the necessity of an occasional application of “aktive Therapie” (47).

treatment of children, a process inseparable for both Freud and Ferenczi from *Erziehung* proper, was thus broadened, through Ferenczi's recognition of the childishness of *all neurotics*, into a mandate and guideline for the exercise of pedagogical authority within all analyses.

The significance of these two fields of *Charakter- und Kinderanalyse* lay not only in their potential breadth, which evoked the prospect of an extraordinary expansion of a modified psychoanalytic technique, but thus also in their reciprocal effect on the orthodox conception of analytic therapy – the new perspective yielded by the consideration of the physician's "activity" in analysis was one that took as its starting point the exceptional (children and the mentally ill) before turning back on the orthodox model (the norm) and reaching deeply within it to reframe its understanding of its own therapeutic work, a process that took the form, in Ferenczi's work, of a new emphasis on the importance of the "alteration" and "education" of the ego in analysis.<sup>40</sup> Activity, Ferenczi argued towards the end of the lecture, works above all to increase the resistances in that it irritates the sensitivity of the ego. It plays the role of an "agent provocateur," disturbing "in their peace" areas of the mind previously spared analysis (*von der Analyse verschont*) and thus provoking the acting out of "deeply concealed impulses" in front of the physician. Bringing through active means such "latent repetitive tendencies" to the surface, increased, where Ferenczi was concerned, both the efficiency and efficacy of analysis. At the same time, the regression it entailed necessitated a resolution framed in *erzieherisch* terms: "if we then give [the patient] the task of consciously mastering these impulses we have likely subjected to a revision the entire process that had once been dealt with in an inexpedient fashion by means of repression."<sup>41</sup> Far from a limited *Nacherziehung*, Ferenczi's revisionist critique of analytic therapy opened onto a

---

<sup>40</sup> See especially "Weiterer Ausbau der 'aktiven Technik,'" 64-5, where orthodox analysis and, specifically, the dissolution of the transference and the detachment from the physician are interpreted as a process of *Icherziehung* requiring the active intervention of the analyst.

<sup>41</sup> Ferenczi, "Weiterer Ausbau der 'aktiven Technik,'" 85-6.

conception of analysis as a comprehensive *Umerziehung* (re-education), one in which the active pedagogical influence of the analyst was indispensable.

### Analysis for the Masses

Ferenczi's emphasis on the essential role of repetition in analysis ran firmly against the grain of orthodox technical theory. In his prewar writings on therapeutic technique, Freud had cast repetition not as an aim with therapeutic effects of its own, but rather as an obstacle to the patient's recovery, a form of resistance against the task of conscious recollection.<sup>42</sup> Yet in a work that Ferenczi coauthored over the following years with Otto Rank, *Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse. Zur Wechselbeziehung von Theorie und Praxis* (1924), repetition was granted a place of priority in analytic therapy that it had forfeited in Freudian thought with the abandonment of the cathartic method.<sup>43</sup> While the breadth of their revision, which they understood as a continuation of Freud's own 1914 "History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," exceeds the scope of this inquiry, what is essential to grasp is the enormity of the shift it signaled in the conceptualization of the means and ends of analytic therapy.<sup>44</sup> What Freud's 1918 address had

---

<sup>42</sup> See Sigmund Freud, "Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten," *GW X* (1914).

<sup>43</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse. Zur Wechselbeziehung von Theorie und Praxis* (Leipzig, 1924). In a very long and highly critical review of Ferenczi and Rank's work, Franz Alexander would take issue with their reading that the importance of repetition (or acting-out) had been downgraded in Freud's thought. Freud himself, however, recognized this as the most important contribution of their joint work and a valuable corrective to his own "skittishness about 'acting out'" in analysis. Freud to Ferenczi, 4 February 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 184. Franz Alexander, "Referat: Dr. S. Ferenczi und Dr. Otto Rank, *Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse*," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse XI* (1925): 113-122.

<sup>44</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele*, 5. A different – though by no means incompatible – interpretation of the significance of Ferenczi's therapeutic innovations and his attempt with Otto Rank to provide a "surer foundation for the field" (354) can be found in Makari, *Revolution in Mind*, 345-65. Makari's contention that Ferenczi and Rank's "effort to reform psychoanalysis into a more epistemologically careful, clinically rooted discipline failed in good part due to their own bad faith" (364), certainly captures an important dimension of the repudiation that followed their publication. By placing the emphasis on the emerging "rules of the science" (362) that the two authors violated, however, it misses the political implications of Ferenczi's *Aktivität*, which were spelled out most clearly in *Entwicklungsziele*, and suggests that the rejection that the latter met with was largely contingent on the simultaneous publication of Rank's even more revisionist *Das Trauma der Geburt*. More fateful for the negative reception of *Entwicklungsziele*, I argue, was the attempt to radically refashion the basic ethico-political commitments of psychoanalysis.

recognized as a gap between the principles of psychoanalysis and reality of their implementation, a rift he simultaneously aimed to suture, was widened into a chasm through Ferenczi and Rank's intervention. The breach that was exposed by the treatment of the war neurotics would thus find in their collaboration its first comprehensive theorization.

The thrust of the intervention offered by *Entwicklungsziele* was directed against what the authors diagnosed as the preponderance of an all-too theoretical tendency in psychoanalysis and an "increasing disorientation" among analysts with regard to "practical-technical questions." Against this current of theoretical speculation and the intellectualization of analysis it implied, Ferenczi and Rank emphasized the experiential dimension of analytic therapy – the immediacy of the patient's repetitions and the importance of the abreaction (affect discharge) it yielded. In a reversal of Freud's own position, Ferenczi and Rank assigned the "main role" in analysis to repetition in place of recollection, a fundamental reorientation that correspondingly enhanced the importance of the analyst's "activity" "in the sense of a direct encouragement of the tendency to reproduce in the treatment that was earlier neglected and even considered a disruptive side effect." By encouraging this tendency against the resistances that inhibited it, the physician enabled the patient to return to the point from which his so-called "maladaptive development (*Fehlentwicklung*) took its point of departure."<sup>45</sup>

Yet far from a sudden, potentially violent, upsurge of infantile impulses in analysis, Ferenczi and Rank envisioned a systematic regression that was consistently regulated by the physician and contained within the analytic relationship. The step-by-step transformation of the patient's personality into its libidinal preliminary phases, a process they compared to the unwinding of a spool, was bound-up with an "incremental dissolution of infantile libidinal

---

<sup>45</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele*, 6, 8, 15.

demands to the point of final conscious adaptation.” The patient’s repetitions of these libidinal strivings yielded not only a “fractional catharsis” and a modicum of satisfaction in fantasy, but also the insight required for the relinquishing of abnormal modes of gratification and conscious adaptation to social demands. By “living through these infantile strivings and experiencing them, for the first time, to the end (*Durchlebens und erstmaligen Zuenderleben*)” in the context of the analytic transference, the patient, they argued, learns ultimately to “renounce the failed adaptation and, on the basis of a new thrust of development, to replace it with a more realistic [one].” The process of *Realanpassung*, or adaptation to reality, that unfolded through this form of analytic therapy and that involved the elevation of the patient’s psychical existence to a new level, was closely bound up with conception of analysis that, in the words of its authors, “approximated, in certain respects, an *Erziehungstechnik*.”<sup>46</sup>

A proper psychoanalysis was a social process or a “mass formation of two” (*Massenbildung zu zweien*), Ferenczi and Rank argued. In his 1921 study of mass psychology (chapter four), Freud had coined this description to characterize the authoritarian relationship of hypnotists to their subjects; by appropriating it to describe the analytic scenario, Ferenczi and Rank were inverting the liberal therapeutic politics of analysis. While Freud, in his writings on analytic therapy, had consistently emphasized what the analyst and the patient had in common *across* the alienating manifestations of the latter’s symptoms and, consistent with this reciprocal identification, had sought to systematically deconstruct the authority that accrued to the person of the analyst within the transference, Ferenczi and Rank appeared far less troubled by the analyst’s accession to the position of leader within the mass and far more willing to leave his authority intact over the course of analysis as a means of influencing the patient – identification now appeared to

---

<sup>46</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele*, 15, 17-19, 39, 19, 29, 56.

have a single vector in analysis, one running vertically from the supine patient to the analyst-leader. While they echoed Freud's conviction that the analyst need not bother himself over the direction of the patient's future ("*Man kann diese Sorge jedem der über seine gegenwaertigen und vergangenen seelischen Strebungen genuegend aufgeklaert wurde, ruhig selbst ueberlassen*"), they joined this liberality to a belief in the necessity that analysis lead to the formation of a new psychological representative of social authority (ego ideal, *Ichideal*), by which its accomplishments would be permanently secured within the patient's psyche.<sup>47</sup> The fact that the analyst, as leader of the mass formation and thus object of the patient's identifications, would logically function as the model for this new *Ichideal* – a contravention, if ever there was one, of the liberality of orthodox analysis – was a conclusion that Ferenczi and Rank passed over in silence.<sup>48</sup>

The repercussions of the war experience were evident throughout *Entwicklungsziele* much as they had been in Ferenczi's writings on technique over the preceding years. In his 1921 essay, Ferenczi had explicitly invoked Ernst Simmel's treatment of the war neuroses through a modified analytic-cathartic technique as a model for expediting treatment through active intervention.<sup>49</sup> By emphasizing, in their joint work, the incremental nature of the abreaction as opposed to a single dramatic instance of repetition (and simultaneous recollection) and by insisting that such repetitions be understood as occurring in relation to the physician-cum-love-object (i.e. within the transference), Ferenczi and Rank sought to redress certain deficiencies in the cathartic method Simmel revived and to render it compatible with basic Freudian insights. Yet the significance of a shift to a technique predicated on the priority of *Erlebnis* can hardly be overstated: through it,

---

<sup>47</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele*, 19, 22, 29, 39. On the new *Ichideal* formed in analysis see 14, 18-19, 22.

<sup>48</sup> Freud's own views on the subject, which strictly prohibited the analyst putting himself in the place of the patient's ego ideal, can be found in "Das Ich und das Es," *GW XIII* (1923): 237-89, at 279. On the principle that analysis was to be a process of *self*-liberation see Freud, "Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie," 190.

<sup>49</sup> Ferenczi, "Weiterer Ausbau," 78.

the analytic encounter was transformed from one in which regression was (ideally) contained by intellectual restraint, into one reverberating with the affects and reproductions of the patient. In *Entwicklungsziele* the predominate passivity of both the listening analyst and the associating patient was increasingly invaded by both the *active* interventions of the analyst and the *acting-out* of the patient himself.<sup>50</sup> The very dynamic Freud had hoped to contain thus formed the fulcrum of the new technique Ferenczi and Rank elaborated.

If the systematic revision of analytic technique they undertook inverted a number of orthodox presuppositions, it testified more fundamentally to what might be understood as the loss of a basic identity between analyst and patient. As the previous chapter discussed, the background of assumptions that knit together analyst and analysand had vanished at the close of the war; in Ferenczi and Rank's study, the exercise of a more *erzieherisch* authority in analysis appeared, first and foremost, an attempt to recover and restore what had been lost – namely the bourgeois habitus of rational self-control so central to classical analysis.<sup>51</sup> Their contention that the abreaction (discharge) of affects has persisted as the “essential therapeutic agency” in psychoanalytic treatment signaled less a recovery of a forgotten truth than a profound shift in how psychoanalysts conceived of their patients and their needs.<sup>52</sup> Yet equally significant in this regard was their insistence that repetition, with the affect discharge it entailed, in fact, opened onto conscious recollection rather than obstructing it, as Freud had believed. What had previously represented a *condition for* progress in analysis – namely the capacity to recall experiences as opposed to repeating them – was now understood as the *culmination of* a therapeutic process that unfolded

---

<sup>50</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele*, 56.

<sup>51</sup> Ferenczi would apparently use this term in a presentation to the *WPV* in late 1923 on the subject of the therapeutic innovations of his joint work with Rank. In a letter to his closest followers, Freud would refer to “our ‘classical technique,’ as Ferenczi called it in Vienna,” thus embedding the term significantly within a pair of skeptical quotation marks. See Freud to the “Secret Committee,” 15 February 1924, *Die Rundbriefe des ‘Geheimen Komitees’: Bd. 4, 1923-1927* (Tübingen, 2006), 170.

<sup>52</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele*, 27.

through the patient's repetitions and his transference attachment to the analyst himself.<sup>53</sup>

The three years over which Ferenczi and Rank developed this radically new conception of psychoanalytic technique coincided with the founding of a series of teaching institutes and outpatient clinics dedicated to regulating the training of prospective analysts and to offering more affordable treatment for the general public. The Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, which developed out of a psychoanalytic polyclinic founded three years earlier in 1920 established a model for the admission and systematic training of candidates that other associations would seek to emulate over the coming years. As the founding of such institutes indicates, the need to combat the widespread confusion with regard to therapeutic technique that Ferenczi and Rank referenced was broadly recognized in psychoanalytic circles. Yet *Entwicklungsziele* went far beyond an attempt to merely enforce the borders of orthodoxy and secure their transmission amid a prevailing disorientation, one that stemmed both from rapid professional expansion and sociopolitical upheaval. To a much greater extent, Ferenczi and Rank sought to mobilize this very instability and uncertainty in order to push beyond the limits of classical technique by accelerating its therapeutic procedure and extending its social reach. Their work, which they situated within a broader narrative of the continual expansion of psychoanalytic thought and its extension into fields lying well beyond its original sphere of interest, was intended to enable psychoanalysis to finally abandon its previously "indispensable" "splendid isolation."<sup>54</sup>

Crucial to this process was the "essential simplification" of analytic technique: if psychoanalysis was to penetrate further into society and to avoid generating insurmountable intellectual resistances among the masses it reached, then a clarification and systematization of its

---

<sup>53</sup> Ferenczi and Rank spoke of a "schrittweisen Gestattung und Auflösung, beziehungsweise Verwandlung des Reproduzierten in aktuelle Erinnerung." *Entwicklungsziele*, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele*, 63. See also p. 66 where they write of the "zu erwartenden Eindringen der Psychoanalyse in das Allgemeinwissen der Menschen."

operative principles and procedures appeared essential. That through their attempt to furnish a unifying set of technical guidelines analytic therapy might assume the “appearance of a certain monotony or a formulaic quality” was of little concern, they insisted, since the “correct practitioner was always also a *Handwerker*, and should perhaps, at bottom, be so.” In the same spirit, Ferenczi and Rank contended that, on account of its ability to eliminate intellectual resistances and expedite treatment, the “rehabilitation of hypnosis or other suggestive means” within analytic technique would perhaps be “the capstone” of this process of expansion. A correspondingly simplified psychoanalysis, they argued, might one day become a “nodal point for the entirety of medical knowledge.” Transformed into the “common property” (*Gemeingut*) of all physicians it would exercise “from the family outward a yet undreamt of influence on society... thus indirectly working towards the amelioration of education and thereby also contributing, in this way, to the prophylaxis of the neuroses.” The culmination of this visionary program was a utopian conviction that the essential progress of psychoanalysis consisted, in the final instance, of a “massive expansion of consciousness,” an “evolutionary leap” of such moment that one could consider it a “biological advance of humanity.”<sup>55</sup>

From the moment of its publication, *Entwicklungsziele* had a profoundly polarizing effect on the psychoanalytic community.<sup>56</sup> While some would take it, along with Freud’s own 1918 address, as a source of validation for their own innovations, others, above all Karl Abraham and Ernest Jones, would view it as a dangerous deviation from orthodox practice and a harbinger of

---

<sup>55</sup> Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele*, 62-7.

<sup>56</sup> Helmut Dahmer, who aptly characterizes Ferenczi’s conception of analytic activity as an *Erziehungsdiktatur*, has argued that this stage of the development of his therapeutic technique, unlike his later *antiauthoritarian* approach, met the approval of his colleagues. While not quite as beyond the pale as his later experiments in mutual analysis, Dahmer’s contention massively downplays the level of criticism that Ferenczi’s “active” analytic therapy generated, at least in its most fully realized form in *Entwicklungsziele*. Dahmer, *Libido und Gesellschaft. Studien über Freud und die Freudsche Linke* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), 236.

impending misfortune for “our cause.”<sup>57</sup> The fact that its publication coincided with Otto Rank’s even more radically revisionist study *Das Trauma der Geburt* (discussed in chapter seven), a contribution that shared the joint work’s emphasis on the positive role of repetition (acting-out) in analysis and the ambition of expediting treatment, only served to fan the flames of dissension. Their publication, in Max Eitingon’s words, “acted like a bomb in the Committee” composed of Freud’s closest followers, a group that included, along with Eitingon himself, the two authors plus Jones, Abraham, and Hans Sachs.<sup>58</sup> In the controversy that ensued, Freud’s own position on the two works underwent a marked shift – from the broadly supportive, at times, even enthusiastic, attitude he assumed during the composition of the two works, he soon adopted a critical view of both in the wake of their publication.<sup>59</sup> Amplifying the critique he voiced at an earlier stage of composition that the slogan-like insistence on experience could allow their work to be “sold by the barrel,” he reiterated his anxieties in a caustic remark that the two “co-conspirators”<sup>60</sup> were in danger of transforming the path of analysis into a way “for traveling salesmen.”<sup>61</sup> In an intervention intended to quell the discord within the committee, however, Freud adopted a characteristically circumspect line: while recognizing their collaboration as a perfectly legitimate contribution to psychoanalysis, he nonetheless alluded to “various dangers” that were “no doubt...involved with this deviation from our ‘classical technique,’ as Ferenczi called it in

---

<sup>57</sup> “Ich sehe Anzeichen einer unheilvollen Entwicklung, bei der es sich um Lebensfragen der Psychoanalyse handelt.” Abraham to Freud, 21 February 1924, *Sigmund Freud-Karl Abraham: Briefe, 1907-1926*, ed. Hilda C. Abraham and Ernst L. Freud (Frankfurt a. M. 1965), 324.

<sup>58</sup> Max Eitingon to Sigmund Freud, 31 January 1924. Quoted in André Haynal, *Disappearing and Reviving: Sándor Ferenczi in the History of Psychoanalysis* (London, 2002), 35

<sup>59</sup> “The one fact exists that I don’t like it as well as at the beginning, before I had gained some distance from it.” Freud to Ferenczi, 4 February 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 184.

<sup>60</sup> Freud had apparently apostrophized Rank with this term on the occasion of Ferenczi’s presentation to the WPV in late 1923. See Ferenczi to Freud, 20 January 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 179 and 14 February 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 179 and 187.

<sup>61</sup> In a conciliatory vein, however, he added, “it does seem out of the question to me that either you or Rank, in your independent excursions, would ever abandon the ground of analysis. So, why shouldn’t you have the right to try and see whether something doesn’t go differently than I intended.” Freud to Ferenczi, 4 February 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 184-85.

Vienna.” Voicing his skepticism regarding the possibility of penetrating and bringing about lasting changes in the deep layers of the unconscious within four to five months, as the new technique claimed to achieve, he wrote, “personally I will probably continue making ‘classical’ analyses.”<sup>62</sup>

Given his own earlier proposal for the modification of classical analysis, Freud’s restraint is not difficult to comprehend – as different as they were in spirit from his own, his two followers’ innovations could be defended as attempts to unfold the logic of Freud’s earlier address.<sup>63</sup> Yet simple confusion seems also to have played a role in inhibiting him from developing a more substantive critique – “now,” Freud admitted, “I wouldn’t know how to say what I don’t agree with.”<sup>64</sup> In place of a clearly formulated position, appears rather a deep suspicion regarding the political implications of the new technique;<sup>65</sup> framing his skepticism of the new *erzieherische* method in the language of *Bildung*, Freud argued that a foreshortened analysis would prevent his analysands – most of whom, he specified, were pupils undergoing training analyses as opposed to patients in need of cure – from experiencing as much of their inner lives as possible.<sup>66</sup> The distinction between training and therapeutic analyses that Freud upheld indicates a parallel distinction between self-knowledge and treatment as the ends of analysis – ultimately, it points to

---

<sup>62</sup> Even if such dangers could be avoided, “Ferenczi’s active therapy” would remain “a dangerous temptation for ambitious beginners,” he asserted, “and there is scarcely any way to keep them away from such experiments.” Freud to the “Secret Committee,” 15 February 1924, *Rundbriefe: Bd. 4*, 170.

<sup>63</sup> Ferenczi himself would point to the continuity of their suggestions with Freud’s own proposals in his address to the Budapest congress: “There is above all the reference to the possibility that at some time psychoanalysis could be amalgamated with suggestion (hypnosis). It goes without saying that we spoke of this possibility only in extremely hypothetical form, not much differently than you, Herr Professor, spoke about it in the Budapest lecture.” 30 January 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 182.

<sup>64</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 4 February 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 184. Ferenczi would immediately latch onto this admission, shooting back, “you yourself don’t know what you actually disagree with in the joint work.” Ferenczi to Freud, 14 February 1924, *Briefwechsel*, 187.

<sup>65</sup> Freud was much more outspokenly critical of Rank’s independent work despite acknowledging that here too he had yet to reach “a secure and conclusive opinion.” “On top of [Rank’s “inept presentation”] comes the rumor of a new technique, which saves two thirds or three quarters of the treatment time – I admit I can’t imagine myself how that is possible without sacrificing analysis to suggestion.” Freud to Ferenczi, 20 March 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 192-3.

<sup>66</sup> Freud to the “Secret Committee,” 15 February 1924, *Rundbriefe: Bd. 4*, 170-1.

a deeper reluctance to equate the aims of analysis with the simple disappearance of symptoms and adaptation to reality.

Freud's insistence on upholding distinctions – like that he made between pure and modified analysis in 1918 – reflects a profoundly different orientation to the politics of analytic therapy than that present in Ferenczi and Rank's work. In the latter, the modifications that Freud initially hoped might make psychoanalysis suitable for application to the masses (alterations he described as corruptions of the purity of his science) were understood to represent the endpoint of an inner teleological development that embraced the entirety of the clientele psychoanalysis addressed regardless of their social standing and education. At the end of the development they envisioned, *all* analyses would be modeled on the lines Freud had cautiously proposed for the treatment of the masses. As Ferenczi and Rank hollowed out the liberal content of orthodox psychoanalysis, the masses emerged as the privileged subject of their post-classical model of analytic therapy.

Even as he acknowledged that his proposals drew psychoanalysis closer in some respects to the unpsychoanalytic techniques of prewar deviants, Ferenczi had insisted repeatedly in his earlier writings on active therapy that the modifications he proposed in no way controverted the basic principles of analysis – indeed, he suggested they enabled their realization. In *Entwicklungsziele*, however, the concern for safeguarding that had previously contained these expansionist ambitions effectively collapsed before them. In the process, the cautious biopolitics of social defense that Freud articulated in 1918 was displaced in the work of his two followers by a utopian biopolitics of species transformation. Yet the prospect of a permeation of the social by psychoanalysis did little to expel the underlying anxieties of invasion and colonization by the very reality they hoped to reshape through a psychoanalytic inflection of the mechanisms of social reproduction. Similar to their conception of the ends of analytic therapy, the expansion of

psychoanalysis they envisioned was one that appeared to entail a process of professional *Realanpassung* and in particular, of an adaptation to the postwar reality of masses and leaders. The anxieties awakened by this radical modification are thus best understood with reference to this outside, and specifically to the movements against which they struggled to define themselves.

### Ego Politics and the Pedagogy of Reconstruction

More telling than the fact that Freud upheld the purity of psychoanalysis in 1918 against the criticisms and suggestions of the Swiss Jungians and the American James Putnam, respectively, is the fact that he failed to mention Alfred Adler entirely – the very proximity of his former follower whose movement was also centered in Vienna and whose therapeutic method anticipated the direction of Freud’s proposals appeared to necessitate his omission amid the confusion and anxiety produced by the war.<sup>67</sup> What Freud elided, however, Ferenczi would later make explicit. After noting that his present suggestions reveal certain analogies to the methods developed by Jung, Bjerre, and Adler, he singled out the latter for particular criticism: “the investigation of character,” Ferenczi wrote in his 1921 essay on “activity,” “is never drawn to the foreground of our technique; here too it does not play the decisive role as it does with Adler, but is only drawn in (*angerührt*) when certain traits comparable to the psychoses disturb the normal continuation of analysis.”<sup>68</sup> To the extent that Freudians were opening to the prospect of a more educational and disciplinary application of their therapeutic technique – one that addressed itself to their patients’ characters

---

<sup>67</sup> Adlerian Individual Psychology combined in one movement what was most threatening about both the challenges posed by the Jungian apostasy and by Putnam’s suggestions. While the latter threatened to blur the line between inside and outside, since Putnam, whom Freud believed to be like many Americans too favorably disposed towards Adler’s thought, had declared himself an adherent of Freudian theory, the Jungians represented a formidable professional adversary whose ideas were nonetheless too foreign and too “unsteady” (*zu schwankend*, as Freud put it in 1914) to sow confusion within analytic circles. Conjuring up Adler at that moment would thus only have compounded the confusion Freud sought to manage. See Freud, “Wege,” 190. See also, Samuel Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Stanford 2000), 35-49.

<sup>68</sup> Ferenczi, “Weitere Ausbau,” 82-3.

rather than just their symptoms – they were thus encroaching on a territory that the Adlerians had staked out as their own over the preceding years. An even more fundamental parallel, however, is evident in the homology between the vision offered in *Entwicklungsziele* of an analysis allied to medical practice in the service of *Erziehung* and the attempts of Adlerians to embed their theories in social practices related to psychosocial development. More consistently than the generally more cautious Freudians, Adlerians hoped their work would furnish a nodal point of medical and pedagogical knowledge through which they could exercise a far-reaching influence on the work of education.

The roots of this pedagogical orientation reached deeply into Adler's prewar thought and were furthermore closely entwined with a prevailing focus on the ego of the neurotic against the unconscious determinants of her neurosis. In the wake of his shift (discussed in chapter one) from a biological theory that stressed the psychological consequences of organic inferiorities to one that rested on the etiological priority of the individual's *feelings* of inferiority (*Minderwertigkeitsgefühle*), the character of the neurotic subject became the central object of Adler's investigations. What mattered, he came to believe, was not the specific conflict that precipitated the outbreak of a neurosis but the characterological foundation that predisposed certain individuals to neurotic suffering. In the neurotically disposed child, pathologically exacerbated *Minderwertigkeitsgefühle* gave rise to a compensatory striving for superiority, embodied in a deviant life plan or "guiding principle" (*Leitlinie*), which, in turn, prevented it from accepting normative social roles. For Adler, it was precisely the refusal of established and accepted social roles that defined neurosis – the "etiological kernel of the neuroses," Paul

Stepansky writes, consisted, for Adler, “in the adoption of a guiding principle that was neurotic precisely to the degree that it presupposed conflict.”<sup>69</sup>

The focus on the analysis of character in Adlerian Individual Psychology anticipated one of the main directions that analytic therapy would take in the last years of the war and the first years of the postwar era. In their reports on the war neuroses, discussed in the preceding chapter, both Abraham and Ferenczi emphasized the disposition of the patients they confronted while relegating the concrete, immediate factors that precipitated the outbreak of the neurosis to the role of mere “triggering” factors. What enabled Freud’s closest followers to disavow the pathogenic force of the war experience and lend etiological priority to the supposedly deviant character of the war neurotic was the concept of narcissism, a comparatively recent addition to the armature of Freudian thought. The theory that Ferenczi and Abraham turned to, and which Freud had elaborated most fully in his 1914 essay “On Narcissism,” was one that served to bind sexuality to the ego. Rather than merely the repository of an irreducible instinct for self-preservation, the ego now appeared to be the great reservoir of the libido, which it could alternately send out to invest in external objects or withdraw back into itself.<sup>70</sup>

By sexualizing the psychical representative of social authority, the introduction of the theory of narcissism effectively made the ego more interesting to psychoanalytic investigators, trained as they were to track the permutations of libido in all of its manifestations. Yet, alongside this theoretical development, the impact of the war markedly deepened the turn to the ego. As the preceding chapter discussed, this development was fundamentally an ambivalent one, combining as it did the recognition of the ego’s helplessness and vulnerability with a greater insistence on its failure in the face of normative social demands. In psychoanalytic thought, it was the figure of the

---

<sup>69</sup> Paul Stepansky, *In Freud’s Shadow: Adler in Context* (London, 1983), 163.

<sup>70</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Zur Einführung des Narzißmus,” *GW X* (1914): 137-70.

war neurotic – a figure that stood out against a backdrop of rampant social deviance – that exemplified the ego’s twofold incapacity to resist the violence of the social and the asociality of the drives. While some Freudians – Simmel and Freud himself – were primarily concerned with the ego’s defenselessness in the context of the war, others – Abraham and Ferenczi, in particular – emphasized its failure to uphold the dictates of social authority (in the guise of military discipline) within the psyche. Compounding this shift towards a more normative evaluation of neurotic suffering was the professional development charted in the previous chapter: alongside an intensified concern for the social and political effects of the manifold forms of psychosocial deviance generated by the war, the treatment of the war neuroses profoundly unsettled the therapeutic politics of classical analytic therapy by enhancing the normative authority of the analyst (qua military physician) over against the patients he treated. The conjunction of these various developments – the sociopolitical, the professional, and the theoretical – produced a new conception of the psychoanalyst’s responsibilities, which now included that of enforcing social discipline. If, for Freud, such a marked departure from the tolerance and forbearance enjoined on the analyst in classical technique was experienced both as an exhilarating expansion of analytic therapy and as an anxiety-inducing disorientation (a potential loss of its identity), his closest followers exhibited far less ambivalence. With the help of the concept of narcissism, Ferenczi and Abraham were able to adapt to this new scenario, casting off the restraint characteristic of classical psychoanalysis and extending their analytic work to include the normative evaluation of the patient’s character.

The consequences of this expansion of analytic authority would be particularly evident in Ferenczi’s postwar essays on activity, yet Abraham’s work too reflected this broadening of the psychoanalyst’s purview. While the main thrust of this theoretical and practical reorientation

would be felt in his postwar writings on the libidinal dynamics of character formation,<sup>71</sup> another facet is discernable in an essay he wrote in 1919 on “a particular form of neurotic resistance.” While Abraham’s paper evinced none of the enthusiasm for technical experimentation that marked Ferenczi’s essays, it nonetheless reflected the new active, disciplinary approach to neurotic disorders that the war promoted among psychoanalysts. In one species of particularly challenging patients, Abraham argued that a “narcissistic feeling of self-satisfaction” foreclosed the possibility of the emergence of a positive transference, the essential precondition for a collaborative approach to the difficult work of analysis. To counteract the patient’s refractory character, Abraham suggested that the analyst set about analyzing her narcissism, uncovering and exposing the “nature (*Wesen*) of her resistance” from the outset of the treatment.<sup>72</sup>

Abraham’s emphasis on overcoming the patient’s narcissism through a one-sided analysis of resistances was strikingly removed both from the classical model of analytic therapy, in which, as Freud put it, the overcoming of the resistances was a task that the patient has to accomplish, and even further from the positive valuation of the resistances that emerged in Freud’s 1918 address.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, it drew analytic therapy into an unacknowledged proximity to Adlerian therapeutic technique. Individual Psychology, Adler explained in a review essay on the recent literature on the war neuroses, was “educational psychotherapy, in which basic characterological features that have existed since childhood are exposed as defective and erroneous.” Since what defined neuroses, Adler argued in the same essay, was “how the neurotic retreats in the face of the universal demands of life into a subjective sense of weakness,” “any difficulties of distinguishing

---

<sup>71</sup> Karl Abraham, *Versuch einer Entwicklungsgeschichte der Libido auf Grund der Psychoanalyse seelischer Störungen* (Leipzig, 1924).

<sup>72</sup> Karl Abraham, “Über eine besondere Form des neurotischen Widerstandes gegen die psychoanalytische Methodik,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 5 (1919), 173-80, at 179.

<sup>73</sup> Freud, “Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse,” 469 and Freud, “Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie,” 193.

simulation and neurosis...do not exist.” Neurosis, no less than conscious malingering, was “a means of evasion,” for Adler, and thus, the task that fell to the psychotherapist was fundamentally an ethical and pedagogical one.<sup>74</sup> In the same way that Abraham’s active procedure – under the cover of a moral evaluation of the patient’s character – set about systematically deconstructing the narcissistic patient’s resistances, Adler’s therapeutic technique was premised on uncovering and exposing the neurotic’s deviant guiding principle with the aim of bringing about its eventual abandonment.

The normative, disciplinary thrust of Adlerian therapy was heightened by the impact of the war, which Adler viewed as unleashing a rampant egotism that threatened to engulf the social entirely. At the same time, however, the experience of total war led Adler to set Individual Psychology on a new foundation: alongside the negative task of dismantling the neurotic’s deviant guiding principle, the positive task of inculcating sociability or a “feeling of community” (*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*) would provide Adlerian therapy with an overarching pedagogical aim in the postwar era. For Adler, writing in the immediate aftermath of the war, the phenomenon of the war neuroses and the war itself were two aspects of the same pathology – the striving for power of the elite that had prosecuted the war was reflected on the opposite end of the social spectrum by the innumerable manifestations of egotistical behavior into which society fractured and fragmented. “A silent, unflagging, bitter struggle” unfolded between the leaderless masses and the authorities striving to keep them in a state of submissiveness and ignorance.<sup>75</sup> Only socialism, by which Adler understood Social Democracy, could counteract the prevailing dissolution and facilitate recovery, since “only in socialism does sociability (*Gemeinsinn*) remain the ultimate

---

<sup>74</sup> Alfred Adler, “Die neuen Gesichtspunkten in der Frage der Kriegsneurosen,” 211.

<sup>75</sup> Alfred Adler, “Die andere Seite,” in *Alfred Adler Studienausgabe* vol. 7 *Kultur und Gesellschaft (1897-1937)*, ed. Almuth Bruder-Bezzel (Göttingen, 2009 [1919]), 120-30, at 123 and 127.

purpose and end.”<sup>76</sup> The challenge that confronted Adler and his fellow Social Democrats was fundamentally a pedagogical one: faced by a desperate population whose “immaturity” exonerated it of ethical judgment, Adler contended, “it is time we turned our attention to advising the *Volk* how its injuries can be made good.”<sup>77</sup>

“What the world chiefly wants today,” Adler reputedly declared in 1916, “is *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*.”<sup>78</sup> The task of inculcating feelings of community in the service of restoring stability and reconstructing the social along more democratic lines bound Adlerian Individual Psychology to the programs for social recovery and political transformation developed by Social Democrats over the preceding years. As a result of this intensive collaboration with Social Democracy in the practical work of reconstruction, Individual Psychology was transformed, in the wake of the war, into a pragmatic and serviceable pedagogical psychology.<sup>79</sup> Where prior to the war, Adlerian theory had (rather paradoxically) coupled a socially normative view of the neuroses with a strong vein of social and cultural critique, in its wake, the critical dimension collapsed before a militant partisanship on behalf of *Gemeinschaft*. As the critical strain of Individual Psychology gave way before an unequivocal affirmation of community, the normative thrust of Adlerian therapy came ever more to the fore of his work.<sup>80</sup> The fact that *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* figured in Adlerian thought as an instinct – and later as an innate endowment – rendered the ethical obligation it imposed effectively inescapable.<sup>81</sup> No less important was the fact that the new instinct

---

<sup>76</sup> Alfred Adler, “Bolschewismus und Seelenkunde,” in *Alfred Adler Studienausgabe* vol. 7 [1919], 112-19, at 113.

<sup>77</sup> Adler, “Die andere Seite,” 130.

<sup>78</sup> Phyllis Bottome, *Alfred Adler: A Biography* (New York, 1939), 120.

<sup>79</sup> Bernhard Handlbauer, *Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Individualpsychologie Alfred Adlers* (Vienna, 1984), 115.

<sup>80</sup> The apex of this normative, disciplinary strain was reached in two essays on homosexuality that Adler wrote in 1917 and 1918. Alfred Adler, “Das Problem der Homosexualität,” in *Studienausgabe* vol. 7 [1917], 88-100 and Adler, “Über die Homosexualität,” in *Praxis und Theorie der Individualpsychologie* [1918], 123-34.

<sup>81</sup> On the development of the concept of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* in Adlerian thought see especially Heinz L. Ansbacher, “Die Entwicklung des Begriffs ‘Gemeinschaftsgefühl’ bei Adler,” *Zeitschrift für Individualpsychologie* 6 (1981), 177-194.

offered a built-in justification for the therapeutic technique Adler developed, since henceforth the work of exposing and dismantling the patient's "guiding principle" could be defended as an attempt to develop an innate capacity rather than a means of imposing external constraints – with the help of an intrinsic feeling for community, compulsion could thus be recast as cultivation.

Like the tasks that Adler set out for Individual Psychology in the wake of the war, the comprehensive Social Democratic program of educational, welfarist intervention combined far-reaching ambitions for democratic reform and humanitarian relief with a more disciplinary conception of its political responsibilities. At the heart of the Social Democrats' program for recovery and renovation was the defenseless child in need of nourishment, protection, and education. "One cannot begin early enough," wrote Julius Tandler in 1916<sup>82</sup> – only a comprehensive welfare apparatus, one in which care for the child would begin before birth, would be able to effectively combat the heightened exposure to the brutality of social life.<sup>83</sup> Yet the emphasis in many Social Democratic writings on the vulnerability and the perceived immaturity of the broad masses had the effect of reducing its constituents to children at the same time as it validated more authoritarian responses to the catastrophe. For Tandler, in particular, it was clear that one needed to go beyond the limits of liberal individualism and personal freedom in order to fashion an effective biomedical response to the war – across his wartime statements, a palpable impatience with the legal and ethical barriers to the comprehensive hygienic and welfarist measures he envisioned surfaces repeatedly. Just as Adler, faced with what he believed to be an epidemic of sexual deviance at war's end, would assert that "sexuality is not a private matter," for Tandler, health was a matter of public concern that could not be left up to the individual.<sup>84</sup> Like

---

<sup>82</sup> Tandler, "Krieg und Bevölkerung," 20.

<sup>83</sup> Glöckel, "Das Tor der Zukunft," 335.

<sup>84</sup> Adler, "Über die Homosexualität," 129 and Tandler, "Krieg und Bevölkerung," 18 ("Dieselbe Gemeinschaft, der Staat, welche so und soviel tausende Menschen ohne Rücksicht auf die individuell Freiheit in die Lage bringt, am

Adler, leading Social Democrats would describe their programs as a struggle against asocial egoism, an attempt to discipline the “primitive individual drives” that governed the masses and to elevate its consciousness to a new comprehension of its responsibilities.<sup>85</sup> Alongside its ethical obligation to the child, an obligation that took the form of a desire to provide a “counterweight to the cruelty of life” in Glöckel’s words, the Social Democratic reform program that took shape at war’s end thus placed a heavy emphasis on social discipline.<sup>86</sup>

In subsequent years, Individual Psychology would furnish the basis of psychological knowledge for the pedagogical and welfarist reforms implemented by the Social Democrats, yet its very success at permeating the institutions of “Red” Vienna brought with it a loss of professional independence, one increasingly evident in its uncritical acceptance of the status quo. The development of Individual Psychology thus provided a cautionary example for psychoanalysts, concerned as they were with maintaining the professional integrity and specific identity of analytic therapy. Yet the admonition furnished by the trajectory of the Adlerian movement was one that extended well beyond the institutional plane into the inner workings of analytic therapy as a political praxis. Adler, who styled himself as a populist *Menschenkenner* against what he viewed as an aggressive, egotistical “caste of academics,” anticipated the turn to the masses and the corresponding alterations of psychoanalytic technique that unfolded over these years.<sup>87</sup> While Adler described his relationship to the patient as friendly and comradely, for Freudians, Individual

---

Schlachtfeld zu fallen, also das Gemeinwohl durch den Tod zu schützen, steht in dem Augenblicke vor der Barriere der persönlichen Freiheit, wenn es sich darum handelt, Mitglieder dieser Gemeinschaft im Interesse der Allgemeinheit von einer Krankheit zu heilen. *So wenig in einem Staate Leben eine Privatsache ist, so wenig ist Gesundheit eine solche*) (emphasis added).

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Karl Sablik, *Julius Tandler, Mediziner und Sozialreformer. Eine Biographie* (Vienna, 1983), 151. “No one has the right to stand aside in this struggle,” Glöckel would write in his wartime essay. “Das Tor der Zukunft,” 335.

<sup>86</sup> Glöckel, “Das Tor der Zukunft,” 347.

<sup>87</sup> See Alfred Adler, “Diskussionsbemerkungen zum Vortrag des Prof. Max Adler im Verein für Individualpsychologie,” in *Studienausgabe* vol. 7 [1925], 158-62.

Psychology was defined by a crass authoritarianism, one evident in its reliance on normative evaluation and moral exhortation in the service of pedagogical reformation. Yet as analysts began to address themselves to the masses in the wake of the war – allowing what had formerly been deemed exceptional cases to displace the norm – it was Adlerian technique that loomed ever larger on the horizon. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Freud’s polemics against Adler lost none of their bitterness over the interwar years. In the implacable hostility of Freud’s remarks can be discerned an unacknowledged testament to the persistent threat he perceived in Adler and the *individualpsychologische* movement of the interwar years.

The attempts to standardize and abridge analytic treatment that accompanied Ferenczi and Rank’s effort to embrace the masses thus seemed to point in the direction of what Freud termed derisively *Adlererei* (Adlerian nonsense). The lesson Freud drew in the mid-1920s from the preceding years of experimentation was thus largely a disillusioning one: the more psychoanalysis sought to overcome its classical limits in order to adapt to the changing circumstances, the more it ran the risk of sacrificing the liberal principles at the core of its identity. Where in his 1918 address Freud had spoken with a Social Democratic voice, arguing that one had to push beyond the limits of classical psychoanalysis to address the catastrophe of the war, as a number of his closest followers proceeded to do just that, Freud increasingly reverted to a more cautious politics, insisting that analytic therapy was incompatible with therapeutic enthusiasm and that strict limits hedged the authority that the analyst could legitimately exercise. Yet over the very years that Freud reverted to classical presuppositions, in an attempt to preserve the liberal principles of analytic therapy, the psychoanalytic movement was flooded by a host of younger practitioners, many of whom were galvanized by the social democratic ethos of Freud’s 1918 address. The “second birth” of psychoanalysis after the war coincided with the emergence of a second

generation of analysts whose political radicalism would increasingly strain the classical identity of analytic therapy.<sup>88</sup>

### *Psychoanalytisches Neuland*

One of the most radical members of the younger generation that streamed into the psychoanalytic societies of central Europe in the wake of the war was Wilhelm Reich. A war refugee from Galicia, Reich would turn to analysis together with a number of like-minded medical students who met in Julius Tandler's anatomy class in early 1919 and formed a seminar for the study of the relatively neglected subject of sexuality. The *Wiener Seminar für Sexuologie*, as it was named, quickly drifted into the orbit of psychoanalysis, evolving, in the process, into a seminar for the study of yet another comparatively overlooked subject, that of psychoanalytic technique. While the impetus for forming the reading circle came from Otto Fenichel, like Reich a radical socialist, Fenichel's departure for the recently founded Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute in 1922 allowed Reich to assume the position he vacated as de facto leader of the informal seminar on analytic technique, a group that came to be known as the *Kinderseminar* on account of the youth of its members. From there, Reich would go on to become the youngest instructor at the Training Institute attached to the Viennese psychoanalytic ambulatorium after its founding in 1922. The forum offered by his classes at the Institute would provide Reich over the coming years with the matrix for the development of a new conception of analytic technique, one that owed a great deal to the innovations of the preceding years.

The years immediately following the controversy surrounding *Entwicklungsziele* represented a period of retrenchment for a chastened Ferenczi. In a series of reviews and lectures,

---

<sup>88</sup> On this "second birth," see Karl Fallend, *Wilhelm Reich in Wien. Psychoanalyse und Politik* (Vienna, 1988), 37.

Ferenczi criticized the independent innovations of his erstwhile collaborator and delimited the “active” technique he had previously promoted so enthusiastically.<sup>89</sup> Yet Reich, “an originally gifted therapist” as Ferenczi remarked to Freud in 1924,<sup>90</sup> would essentially pick up where Rank and Ferenczi had left off with a book the following year titled *Der triebhafte Charakter. Eine psychoanalytische Studie zur Pathologie des Ich.*<sup>91</sup> Contending that analytic therapy had “long since ceased to be a mere symptom analysis” and had instead “developed constantly” into a comprehensive “therapy of character,” Reich lent his full support to this development with the statement that only “analytic elimination” (*Beseitigung*) of what he termed the “neurotic *Reaktionsbasis*, that is the neurotic character,” could prevent recidivism and bring about an “actual cure.” Basing his assertion on Ferenczi and Rank’s insistence on the necessity of grasping the patient through his actions, Reich argued that to a far greater extent than analysis premised on recollection, this new method of character analysis would find its main point of application, its *Hauptangriffspunkt*, in the neurotic *actions* of the patients.<sup>92</sup>

While Reich believed this new technique was indicated in all cases of analytic treatment – given that the latter was increasingly oriented towards the treatment of the patient’s character – his 1925 study was built off of a specific group of so-called “uninhibited *Triebmenschen*.” Specifying that his material was culled from the cases of severe character neuroses that he deliberately selected for treatment at the new Viennese psychoanalytic ambulatorium, Reich described his patients as a

---

<sup>89</sup> See Sándor Ferenczi, “Zur Kritik der Rankschen ‘Technik der Psychoanalyse,’” in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band II* (1927), 116-128, and “Kontraindikationen der aktiven psychoanalytischen Technik,” in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band II* (1926), 99-115. By the time Rank wrote the work Ferenczi reviewed, however, he was already well beyond the pale of psychoanalytic acceptability, had largely severed ties with Freud, and had furthermore relocated to the United States. His work, which drew out the “rumors of a new technique” that had so distressed Freud in early 1924 (see note 49 above), thus falls outside the purview of this chapter.

<sup>90</sup> Ferenczi to Freud, 26 April 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 208.

<sup>91</sup> Important critical assessments of Reich’s project can be found in Paul Robinson, *The Freudian Left: Wilhelm Reich, Geza Roheim, Herbert Marcuse* (Ithaca, NY, 1990 [1969]), 9-73 and Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women* (New York, 1974), 137-223.

<sup>92</sup> Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter*, 6-7.

kind of *psychoanalytisches Neuland*, a terrain previously investigated only by August Aichhorn and Franz Alexander.<sup>93</sup> The patients Reich labeled “impulsive characters” were ones who exhibited “crass defects of ego-structure” and lived in “constant struggle with the external world.” The symptomatology alone of such patients marked them as a distinct category of neurotic sufferers:

We would like to say that they are pathological distortions of “good bourgeois” symptoms. How banal and innocuous appear the *Zwangsgedanke* (compulsive thought) of a simple symptom neurotic to murder his child or his friend, alongside the *Zwangsimpuls* (compulsive impulse) of the *Triebmenschen* to roast his child slowly with a piece of kindling.

While such cases did not lack for “circumscribed neurotic symptoms...to this is added, however, an excess absent from the simple symptom neuroses” and one that not only constituted their difference from classical conversion, anxiety, and obsessional neuroses, but also brought the impulsive character into an alarming proximity to schizophrenia. The symptom rests on the neurotic character “like the pinnacle of a mountain massif,” Reich maintained. While this was true of every neurosis, it was especially so for impulsive characters, whose disorders represented disturbances of the “entire personality” and the “entire ego (*Gesamt-Ich*) [which] remained on a primitive level” in contrast to the compulsive actions of obsessives, which appeared rather as encapsulated “foreign bodies in the midst of an otherwise orderly personality.”<sup>94</sup>

Paradoxically, the very inflexibility of the behaviors of obsessional neurotics was an index of the relative freedom of the individuals they afflicted, since unlike the “diffuse” impulses of *Triebmenschen*, which were “completely contingent on the conditions of the milieu,” the former testified to a degree of independence from environmental forces. Much as the symptoms of

---

<sup>93</sup> Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter*, 11-12. Reich gave a detailed and deeply moving retrospective account of his experiences treating destitute patients at the ambulatorium in *The Function of the Orgasm*, 73ff.

<sup>94</sup> Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter*, 11-12, 16-17, 23, 85, 24.

Simmel's war neurotics bore undisguised witness to the violence of their immediate environment, Reich contended that "the relationship of the impulsive character to the external world is in general much clearer and its meaning far easier to grasp than that of circumspect neurotic symptoms." "The 'breadth' of communication between ego and external world" – i.e. the extent of the psyche's exposure to environmental forces – explained the tendency of such neurotics to narcissistic withdrawal and corresponding regression. If in simpler neuroses "crass abuses" (*grobe Schaedigungen*) at the hands of *Erziehungspersonen* surface only on occasion and are no more conspicuous than with healthy individuals, in impulsive characters such injuries are "manifestly apparent" – "one gets the impression that, to use a drastic simile, an elephant had rampaged in the china shop of the nursery."<sup>95</sup>

Like the exceptional cases that play such a decisive role in Ferenczi's 1921 essay, the *psychoanalytisches Neuland* Reich mapped-out in his study provided the fulcrum for the development of a new *erzieherische* psychoanalysis. The fact that such impulsive characters – like Ferenczi's character neurotics – lacked an awareness of the pathological status of their impulsive actions (*Krankheitseinsicht*) necessitated a preliminary stage of pedagogical activity: "without amicable encouragement and persuasion, at least at the outset, one can never manage in such cases. Educational intervention must first prepare analysis *lege artis*." If Reich's study echoed the Adlerian view that a neurotic character underlies all symptomatic manifestations, it departed from *individualpsychologische Erziehung* in its insistence that the analyst win the analysand's confidence by placing himself, at the outset, on the side of the patient rather than representing the demands of the very social order that had caused their suffering: "I represented the standpoint that they were entirely correct [in their opposition to society]," Reich wrote, "but

---

<sup>95</sup> Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter*, 24, 77, 61, 70.

that they ruined themselves in the assertion of their right (*Durchsetzung ihres Rechtes*).<sup>96</sup>

While Reich based this therapeutic method on a fundamental identification with the patient, it was an identification premised on a conception of the analysand as a brutally mistreated child rather than as a mature, educated subject struggling under the demands of civilization as the classical technique had presupposed. If viewing the patient in these terms allowed for a deeper acknowledgement of his victimization at the hands of brutal educators and a violent society, it simultaneously indicated an *erzieherische* therapeutic technique, one orientated, like the method elaborated by Ferenczi and Rank, towards a disciplinary (re)inscription into the norms of social life and sexual behavior, what the authors of *Entwicklungsziele* referred to as *Realanpassung*. The vulnerability and immaturity of the patient would have to be counterbalanced by the authority of the analyst. In the course of his comprehensive rethinking of analytic technique, what Ferenczi and Rank had elided (no doubt in deference to Freud's own published views) would be made explicit by Reich, namely, that the physician could furnish a model for a new ego-ideal whose formation within the patient would serve to ensure his adaptation to social demands.<sup>97</sup>

The fact that the authority of the physician would thus be permanently anchored within the patient's psyche points to a basic paradox of *Der triebhafte Charakter* – namely that the recognition of the depth of psychic misery produced by social forces was inseparable from a profoundly asymmetrical, overbearing form of analytic authority, one at odds with the liberality of classical analysis. Within the psychoanalytic movement, Reich's essay marks the culmination of a development initiated by the devastation of the war and, above all, by the encounter with the

---

<sup>96</sup> Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter*, 16 (also 24 and 117-121 where he writes of the “mangelhafte oder vollkommen fehlende Krankheitseinsicht” of impulsive characters), 125, 119. For insight into Reich's views of Adler see his 1924 review of the latter's *Praxis und Theorie der Individualpsychologie* in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 10 (1924): 479.

<sup>97</sup> See Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter*, 121 where Reich describes how the physician can serve as the “foundation of a new superego formation” through his function as representative of the reality principle.

war neuroses. Where previously proletarian existence – the idea of a life lived outside of civilization and in immediate exposure to the hardships of social life – functioned within analytic discourse as the backdrop against which the (implicitly “bourgeois”) neuroses were brought into focus, in the wake of the war, the neurotic misery caused by social and political forces came to be taken seriously in its own right – from a purely negative position within psychoanalytic theory, “proletarian” suffering came to assume distinct contours and ones whose lines would, in turn, confuse the orthodox conception of the neuroses.

If, as the previous chapter argued, the disavowal of the neurotic suffering of the lower classes was one of the inaugural gestures of psychoanalytic thought, over the years of social, economic, and political upheaval that preceded the postwar experimentation in analytic technique, it was one that appeared increasingly hollow and less capable of commanding conviction. Placed within this arc, *Der triebhafte Charakter* signaled the full emergence within psychoanalytic thought of a new mode of understanding neurotic suffering. Where Freud in 1916 had appeared facetiously – indeed callously – sanguine about the developmental trajectory of the proletarian child, equating it simplistically with a more natural form of psychosexual maturation, for Reich, the lower-class impulsive neurotic was ill to a degree far exceeding her hysterical bourgeois counterpart – the exposure and vulnerability of the former now appeared far more pathogenic than the confinement and constriction of the latter. Psychoanalysis, Reich wrote, was capable of demonstrating how great the contributions of environmental forces – “milieu, material misery, the ignorance and brutality of parents” – were to the creation of “dissocial, sick, and contorted people.” Closing his study with a quote from Freud’s 1918 address, Reich gestured to a moment when the conscience of society would awaken and psychoanalysis would be called upon to assist (“under

better circumstances than in the present”) in the collective liberation from neurotic misery.<sup>98</sup>

Reich’s description of his patients as psychoanalytic *Neuland*, a term that combined the significations of virgin soil and reclaimed land, discloses, however, another dimension to his project, one that sits somewhat awkwardly with the emancipatory hopes he invested in the mass application of analytic therapy. The metaphor of reclamation is a telling one, testifying as it did, to a therapeutic ambition premised less on a radical liberation from the sources of neurotic suffering than on a recuperation of the psychic conditions of possibility for social stability – that is, a disciplinary reinscription into the norms of social life. While the middle years of the decade witnessed a degree of economic and political stabilization, the threat of civilizational collapse that haunted psychoanalysts in the wake of the war was by no means dispelled. The hope that psychoanalysis would contribute to the process of recovery would manifest itself over the interwar years in metaphors that framed analytic therapy as a dynamic process of reclamation. Where Alfred Döblin – the physician, novelist, and close collaborator of Ernst Simmel – wrote of dredging the sewer system of the urban unconscious,<sup>99</sup> Freud would later compare the *Kulturarbeit* of analysis to the draining of Zuider Zee, an analogy that gave graphic representation to his famous aphorism “*wo es war, soll ich werden.*”<sup>100</sup> Between these two signposts, the process of reclamation Reich envisioned involved the pedagogical reconversion of immature impulsive characters laden with pathogenic affects into civilized subjects or, at the very least, bourgeois neurotics. Through *Erziehung* civilization was being constantly recovered.

---

<sup>98</sup> Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter*, 126-7. Simmel had concluded his “Psychoanalyse der Massen” on the same quote. *Psychoanalyse und ihre Anwendungen. Ausgewählte Schriften* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1993 [1919]), 36-42.

<sup>99</sup> Veronika Fuechtner, *Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond* (Berkeley: 2011), 29.

<sup>100</sup> Freud, “Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in der Psychoanalyse,” *GW XV* (1933): 86.

## The Limits of Analytic Therapy

The same year that Reich published *Der triebhafte Charakter*, Freud would contend – in a preface to a study of youth delinquency discussed in chapter four – that the child had replaced the (adult) neurotic as the “main subject” (*hauptsächliche Objekt*) of psychoanalytic research.<sup>101</sup> While Freud framed his statement as an objective registration of an established fact, his contention that the child had become the primary object of analytic investigation in fact preceded and helped catalyze the development he described. Though the preceding years had witnessed an intensification of the long-standing interest of Freudians in child psychology, the new field of the psychoanalytic study of the child had yet to truly come into its own as it would over the following years, which witnessed both the creation of a journal devoted entirely to this new field – the *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* (chapter six) – and a series of controversies over the technique of child analysis (chapter seven). Yet if Freud’s statement thus anticipated this turn to the child, it nonetheless registered a massive reorientation in the way that analysts viewed their patients, one that reflected the reverberative impact of the upheavals of the preceding years.

If the child became the privileged subject of psychoanalysis over these years it was because all of its patients suddenly appeared to be vulnerable and dependent to a degree previously deemed incompatible with analytic therapy. In response to the new circumstances, analysts set about fashioning new forms of therapeutic authority, ones that supplemented (or indeed, displaced) the procedures of classical analysis with pedagogical tasks and that were framed in a positive, constructive vein that resonated with the broader discourse of progressive reconstruction and renovation that took shape at the close of the war. Yet as Freudians pushed beyond the limits of classical analysis to assume new kinds of therapeutic authority and embrace an ever wider cliental,

---

<sup>101</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Geleitwort zu *Verwahrloste Jugend*,” *GW* XIV (1925), 565.

the danger loomed that the identity of analytic therapy might be sacrificed in the process. For Freud, the turn to the child was thus in part a defense against this very modification of analytic therapy, an attempt to contain and limit the exercise of pedagogical authority in analysis by demarcating its proper sphere of application. In his response to Ferenczi and Rank's innovations, Freud exhibited a desire to preserve the analysis of adult neurotics (and particularly of adult *bourgeois* neurotics) from the incursions of an overweening authority in the form of pedagogical activity. Rather than radicalizing the "state of exception" that the war produced in analytic thought, Freud looked to stabilize and contain it in order to prevent the liberal principles at the heart of classical analysis from being overwhelmed and effaced by the "exceptional states" that the war had generated in such abundance.

At the same time as he sought to circumscribe the authority of the analyst in line with classical analytic precepts, Freud also aimed to delimit his personal authority within the psychoanalytic movement. In response to Ferenczi's expressions of pained bewilderment that he (Freud) appeared not to be in "agreement with everything" in the coauthored work, the latter could only reply that complete harmony between them was neither necessary nor desirable.<sup>102</sup> What mattered, as he wrote in his letter intended to quell the growing discord between his closest followers, was that they not abandon the common basis of psychoanalytic presuppositions.<sup>103</sup> In the midst of the ominous signs of dissension within the very committee created to defend this common ground and thus ensure the future of his science, Freud placed his hope in a new direction for analysis, namely that signaled by the displacement of the adult neurotic by the child in his foreword. If his 1918 address identified a split in the identity of analytic therapy – between the strict prescriptions of classical technique and the more far-reaching exercise of authority that the

---

<sup>102</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 4 February 1924, *Briefwechsel: Bd. III/1*, 185.

<sup>103</sup> Freud to the "Secret Committee," 15 February 1924, *Die Rundbriefe des 'Geheimen Komitees'*, 169.

present circumstances seemed to necessitate – it was around the figure of the child that Freud hoped to suture the very rift he recognized. Yet the new field, at least insofar as it was distinguished from earlier speculative attempts to reconstruct the psychosexual stages of child development through work with adult neurotics and was characterized instead by direct analytic and pedagogical work with children, was one that Freud himself would largely refrain from entering. While he would write in 1925 that “none of the applications of psychoanalysis has excited so much interest and aroused so many hopes, and none, consequently, has attracted so many capable workers, as its use in the theory and practice of education,” his “personal share in this application of psychoanalysis,” he conceded, “has been very slight.”<sup>104</sup>

Freud’s withdrawal at this moment left the field open to others, perhaps above all, to his own daughter, whose work, taken up in chapter seven, would draw together the various strains of this fraught legacy, bridging the gulf between her father’s circumspection and the enthusiasm of his followers. Where Freud’s own politics were concerned, retreat to classical principles thus went hand-in-hand with personal withdrawal – in both gestures, one can discern a conservative desire for stabilization, for a return to normalcy, against the far-reaching ambitions for social transformation. In the face of Ferenczi and Rank’s intervention, which appeared to sanction the disappearance of the bourgeois subject in the anonymous masses, Freud’s retreat to classical principles can be understood as an attempt to recuperate a model of subjectivity and uphold a principle of individual autonomy that appeared to be gravely threatened by disruptions of the preceding years. The fact that the exceptional cases appeared to have swelled dramatically, to the point of threatening to engulf the bourgeois norms of classical analysis, posed the additional danger

---

<sup>104</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort,” 565.

that analysis might vanish entirely, becoming, like Adlerian Individual Psychology, a pedagogical therapy dedicated to the reformation of the individual's character.

Freud's personal withdrawal, which took the form of a general unwillingness to curb his followers' independent initiative or to lay down the law in a public fashion, did not prevent him from expressing his opinion frankly in private correspondences. In his correspondence over the coming years with Oscar Pfister, a pioneer in the field that would come to be known as psychoanalytic pedagogy, Freud would return repeatedly to these anxieties, in the process, reprising (and indeed sharpening) the critiques he had earlier directed against Ferenczi and Rank. While Freud credited Pfister's pedagogical writings with opening up the only field for the application of psychoanalysis that "is really flourishing,"<sup>105</sup> the latter's work nonetheless represented a recurring challenge to the liberal politics of classical analysis. Rather than an application of one distinct theory or practice to another, Pfister's therapeutic method, which he termed tellingly *Pädanalyse*, appeared to Freud to be in constant danger of collapsing analytic therapy into education, and thus of sacrificing the former's unique identity. At the same time as his work conflated the tasks of analysis and synthesis, *Nacherziehung* and *Erziehung*, Pfister claimed to have drastically curtailed the duration of analytic treatment. Such modifications, Freud contended, brought his "much prized and much rebuked" follower perilously close to the "absurdities of Adler." Referring to the fundamental distinction between analysis and education Freud was unyielding – "on this point of therapy there has been little change or development in me," he wrote Pfister in 1928, "and I still think what I thought and said many years ago."<sup>106</sup> The chief task of analysis, Freud insisted, was to make the

---

<sup>105</sup> In the following sentence Freud wrote, "It gives me great pleasure that my daughter is beginning to do good work in that field." Freud to Pfister, 21 November 1926, in *Psycho-Analysis and Faith*, 106.

<sup>106</sup> And indeed, in October of 1918, less than two weeks after delivering his Budapest address, Freud wrote to Pfister that "It looks to me as if you want a synthesis without a previous analysis. In the technique of psycho-analysis there is no need of any special synthetic work; the individual does that for himself better than we can." Freud to Pfister, 18 January 1928 and 9 October 1918, in *Psychoanalysis and Faith*, 120 and 61-2.

patient independent, an undertaking that, because it involved the dissolution of the authority that accrued to the analyst in the transference, paradoxically “often works out to the disadvantage of the therapy.”<sup>107</sup> For Freud, the preservation of the liberal politics of autonomy on which classical analysis rested outweighed the importance of enhancing its therapeutic efficacy. In the face of his followers’ enthusiasms, Freud insisted that “we must recognize [analysis’s] limitations.”<sup>108</sup>

The challenge for the classically liberal psychoanalytic politics that Freud upheld was above all that of maintaining adequate distance between patient and analyst. In the wake of the violence and volatility of the preceding years, restraint and caution appeared to Freud the surest means of restoring a degree of security and stability to social relations.<sup>109</sup> The social relations that prevailed within analytic therapy were no exception to this rule – only a disabused recognition of the limits of analysis could safeguard the patient’s autonomy and preserve his individuality in the face of the analyst’s authority. The pedagogical character analyses developed by Ferenczi and Reich in the early 1920s were thus inherently dubious procedures. As much as he sympathized with the desire to enhance the therapeutic efficacy of psychoanalysis, the comprehensive analysis of character smacked too much of an attempt to form patient according to the analyst’s specifications. “Our aim,” he wrote in his last paper on analytic technique, “Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse,” from 1937, “will not be to rub away every peculiarity of human character for the sake of a schematic ‘normality’,” nor to eliminate all traces of internal conflicts. “The

---

<sup>107</sup> Freud to Pfister, 22 October 1927, in *Psychoanalysis and Faith*, 113.

<sup>108</sup> Freud to Pfister, 18 January 1928, in *Psychoanalysis and Faith*, 120.

<sup>109</sup> An earlier letter (17 February 1918) from Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé expressed (in a somewhat self-ironizing fashion) the rudiments of his interwar politics: “Revolutions, I believe, are acceptable only when they are over; and therefore they ought to be over very quickly. What the human beast needs above all is restraint. In short, one grows reactionary...” In *Sigmund Freud and Lou Andreas-Salomé: Letters*, ed. Ernst Pfeiffer, trans. William and Elaine Robson-Scott (New York, 1966), 75.

business of the analysis,” Freud insisted, “is to secure the best possible psychological conditions for the functions of the ego; with that it has discharged its task.”<sup>110</sup>

By the time Freud penned his late essay on analytic technique, the controversy that surrounded the publication of *Entwicklungsziele* had long been overshadowed by more recent fissiparous developments in the practice of analytic therapy. Over the late-1920s and early 1930s, Ferenczi had embarked on a number of experiments in analytic technique – almost the antithesis of his earlier dictatorial therapy – that led to a more serious rupture in his relationship with Freud, one that had failed to heal when Ferenczi died in 1933. For his part, Reich would develop a more robust, systematic form of character analysis over the years following the publication of his 1925 study. Premised on an aggressive deconstruction of the patient’s character resistances it initially served to inspire and then would increasingly alienate the younger generation of Viennese psychoanalysts who, in large part thanks to Anna Freud, came to develop a more nuanced understanding of the ego’s defenses.

It was these later experiments – discussed more fully in chapter seven – which were the main objects of Freud’s criticism in his 1937 essay and in his unfinished “Abriß der Psychoanalyse,” an essay he began the following year.<sup>111</sup> Yet the critiques he formulated in these two essays were consistent with his earlier reservations and could just as easily be applied to the postclassical techniques of earlier years. Just as he had warned in 1923 against the “temptation for the analyst to play the part of prophet, savior, and redeemer to the patient,” so in 1938 he cautioned analysts against the temptation to “serve as teacher, model, and ideal for another and to

---

<sup>110</sup> Freud, “Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse,” *GW XVI* (1937): 59-99, at 96. This paper, which began with a pointed critique of Rank, culminated in an extended coming-to-terms with Ferenczi’s late therapeutic deviations, with what Janet Malcolm calls Ferenczi’s “fervid and restless and inchoate attempt to help people over whom other analysts had thrown up their hands in despair...” Malcolm, *Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession* (New York, 1981), 134. See also Freud’s obituary “Sándor Ferenczi,” *GW XVI* (1933): 267-69.

<sup>111</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Abriß der Psychoanalyse,” *GW XVII* (1938): 64-138.

create people according to [their] model.”<sup>112</sup> By following such inclinations, Freud insisted, analysts would be merely replacing one form of dependence – that on the parents – with another and failing to respect the patient’s individuality. Even as they upheld and elevated the analyst’s authority – by exploiting the patient’s transference libidinal investment rather than analyzing and dissolving it – the postclassical techniques that emerged over the interwar years threatened it from another angle. Not only did they bring analysis into an unsettling proximity to charlatanesque cures by suggestion, they also left the analyst exposed to potentially violent rebellions against the educational authority he or she personified. By shoring-up and exploiting the analyst’s authority – rather than limiting and deconstructing it – Ferenczi and Reich not only relegated their patients to the implicit status of children but left themselves in the vulnerable position of leaders and surrogate parents in the analytic relationship. The danger this entailed was only compounded by their own insistence on releasing pent-up affects and precipitating the acting out of repressed traumas. A profoundly labile quality thus came to characterize their treatments. While Ferenczi would famously place himself on the couch in his late experiments in mutual analysis and seek to compensate his patients for the deficient tenderness they received in childhood, Reich would repeatedly find himself confronted by the unrestrained (even life-threatening) aggression his technique unleashed in his patients.<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> In 1923, Freud had written, “Since the rules of analysis are diametrically opposed to the physician's making use of his personality in any such manner, it must be honestly confessed that here we have another limitation to the effectiveness of analysis; after all, analysis does not set out to make pathological reactions impossible, but to give the patient's ego *freedom* to decide one way or the other.” “Das Ich und das Es,” 279. His warning against the temptation to serve as “teacher, model, and ideal” is from “Abriß der Psychoanalyse,” 101.

<sup>113</sup> In his description of the negative transferences generated by his technique with impulsive characters, Reich wrote, “Der Arzt wird zum bitter gehaßten Feinde, ernste Abichten ihn umzubringen, kommen vor.” One particular patient, Reich recounted, devised a plan to wait for him in an alley in order to shoot him dead. Reich, *Der triebhafte Character*, 93, 121. On Ferenczi’s experiments in mutual analysis – a subject he never published on – see *The Clinical Diary of Sándor Ferenczi*, ed. Judith Dupont, trans. Michael Balint and Nicola Zarday Jackson (Cambridge, MA, 1988).

In Erich Fromm's contention, Freud's resistance to Ferenczi's therapeutic innovations reflected the limitations of his "bourgeois-liberal tolerance" against the latter's "unqualified affirmation of [the patient's] claims to happiness."<sup>114</sup> Yet chalking Freud's liberal therapeutic politics up to a dearth of empathy in the face of suffering or a deficient sense of outrage at social injustice, misses the positive respect for limitations in Freud's oft noted therapeutic pessimism. In a political context marked by violent fluctuations between longing for and repudiation of traditional, patriarchal authority (chapter four), such a posture can be easily traced to a fear of what lay beyond the bourgeois habitus of self-restraint that had previously been so central to the workings of analytic therapy. For Freud, the techniques that pushed beyond orthodox practice all seemed to draw psychoanalysis away from its liberal origins into the post-liberal political climate of the interwar moment. Yet unappealing as this was, reverting to the therapeutic politics of classical analysis would fail to address the fundamental problem of how to mediate between the need to respect the individuality and autonomy of its patients and the deepening recognition of the childlike immaturity and vulnerability of the subjects analysis embraced. If the war exposed an aporia at the heart of analytic technique, it was one that gave rise to a paralyzing undecidability in psychoanalytic thought, an irresolvability that mirrored the interminability of classical analytic therapy itself.<sup>115</sup> In the wake of the war and in marked contrast to prewar psychoanalysis, there was no secure, taken-for-granted authority – whether personal or political – that could ultimately decide in questions of therapeutic practice. The result – as chapter seven will discuss in more

---

<sup>114</sup> Erich Fromm, "Die gesellschaftliche Bedingtheit der psychoanalytischen Therapie," in *Erich Fromm Gesamtausgabe* in twelve volumes, ed. Rainer Funk, vol. 1 *Analytische Sozialpsychologie* (Stuttgart, 1999), 115-38, at 122 and 129.

<sup>115</sup> David Bates, "Crisis Between the Wars: Derrida and the Origins of Undecidability," *Representations* 90 (2005): 1-27.

detail – was a debate in which the identity of psychoanalysis, its basic ethicopolitical commitments, appeared as open-ended as the interwar moment itself.

The Mass Psychology of Education: Freudian Experiments in Collective Upbringing in Postwar  
Vienna

In the wake of the First World War, Vienna and its environs witnessed a wide-range of experiments in the collective education of children and adolescents. The youth colonies, children's homes, and experimental schools that flourished in the war's aftermath represented ambitious pedagogical, welfarist, and hygienic responses to the devastating effects of the conflict on both children's health and on the traditional agents of youth socialization. Yet they also reflected enormous optimism in the capacity of new forms of education to contribute productively to the reconstruction and renovation of the social order. Often situated in buildings taken over from the old regime and redolent of bygone imperial authority – e.g. barracks, military hospitals, refugee camps, even the imperial palace at Schönbrunn – such experiments gave striking symbolic expression to the break with political, social, and cultural tradition brought about by the revolution.<sup>1</sup> As representatives

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the two experiments at the heart of this chapter, Siegfried Bernfeld's children's home and August Aichhorn's educational welfare institute, the postwar moment saw the emergence of an educational colony encompassing over a thousand children at Schönbrunn palace. Organized by Social Democratic educators and run by the young socialist pedagogue Otto Felix Kanitz, the "Das 'rote' Schönbrunn" was the successor to a series of wartime relief actions organized by the educational associations of the party and to a massive Social Democratic "Kinderrepublik" established at a refugee camp at Gmünd (on these undertakings see chapter five). Over the same period, a youth commune emerged at the former military barracks on the outskirts of Vienna, one that, in the volatile and often bewildering political landscape of the postwar moment, would play host to, among others, György Lukács, Karl Popper, and Friedrich Hayek. In the words of one observer, Paul Osterzetter, whoever did not know the Grinzing Barracks did not know Vienna in the period after the First World War." At the heart of the revolutionary ferment of the Grinzing colony was a group of youth, organized in the *sozialistische Mittelschüler* movement, who drew inspiration from Bernfeld's experiment and from a series of youth homes and colonies established by the pedagogue and philanthropist Eugenie Schwarzwald over the last years of the war. Their own educational undertakings (touched on below) would eventually, after a period of radical communist opposition, be integrated into the educational work of the Social Democratic party. On the *sozialistische Mittelschülerbewegung* (and for Osterzetter's quote) see Friedrich Scheu, *Ein Band der Freundschaft. Schwarzwald-Kreis und Entstehung der Vereinigung sozialistischer Mittelschüler* (Vienna, 1985). See also Malachai Hacohen's excellent biography, *Karl Popper, the Formative Years, 1902-1945: Politics and Philosophy in Interwar Vienna* (New York, 2000) and Georg Tidl, *Die sozialistischen Mittelschüler Österreichs von 1918 bis 1938* (Vienna, 1977).

of the old order moved out, children and adolescents moved in – their presence signifying the centrality of youth to the democratic order that emerged in the war’s aftermath.

The pedagogical ethos that animated such experiments was likewise a strongly progressive and, at times, markedly radical one. Not only did they implement educational methods that strove to be more responsive to the needs of children and adolescents than traditional pedagogical techniques but they also frequently positioned the young as the agents of their *own* socialization, thus privileging a notion of the self-education of youth independent of adult authority. At the same time as they gave expression to the democratic spirit of the times, however, the search for new forms of education was often framed as an attempt to mitigate the socially disruptive effects of the war and, above all, the threatening phenomenon of youth delinquency. Rampant at the close of the conflict, youth delinquency was frequently thought to be the consequence of a deterioration of traditional forms of patriarchal authority over the preceding years.<sup>2</sup> Thus, even as youth emerged as the privileged subjects of the new democratic order, they simultaneously figured, in the views of many observers, as a source of chronic social upheaval and political turmoil and thus as a fundamental obstacle to a return to stability.<sup>3</sup> Quelling the disruptive force of youth waywardness without recourse to the repressive measures of traditional education was understood to entail the fashioning of a new form of educational authority, one suitable for a mass, democratic age.

Against the backdrop of this widespread experimentation, this chapter focuses on two educational undertakings that would have enormous significance for the intellectual culture and practical politics of interwar Viennese psychoanalysis, namely, Siegfried Bernfeld’s Zionist,

---

<sup>2</sup> See on this subject, Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (New York, 2004), 247-62 and Andrew Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2010), 137-53.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Ross Dickinson, *The Politics of German Child Welfare from the Empire to the Federal Republic* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 115.

socialist experiment in collective upbringing, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, and August Aichhorn's educational welfare institute (*Fürsorgeerziehungsanstalt*) at Oberhollabrunn.<sup>4</sup> Both experiments were forms of mass pedagogy, in that they aimed to mold the individual subject by shaping the collective social environment he or she inhabited. Like the theories of mass psychology that proliferated in the wake of the war, Bernfeld and Aichhorn were thus compelled to think through the bond that united subject and social, individual and mass, and the dynamic process by which each constituted the other. Drawing heavily from psychoanalysis, the practical mass psychologies Aichhorn and Bernfeld elaborated in their educational experiments circled around many of the problems that defined the emerging field of psychoanalytic social theory. The intersection of these two bodies of thought as they attempted to grapple with the phenomenon of the masses and the social disorder of the postwar moment is the subject of this chapter.

### Confronting the Masses, Theorizing the Revolution

In March of 1919, Paul Federn, one of Freud's earliest associates and an active Social Democrat, published a brief psychological study of the revolutionary turmoil that engulfed Vienna in the wake of the war. Titled *Zur Psychologie der Revolution. Die vaterlose Gesellschaft*, Federn's essay sought to account for what he saw as a general unwillingness to adapt to social demands at a moment of pervasive misery and urgent material need: "the hunger of the cities cries as protest against every disruption of commerce. And nevertheless – strike." The source of this apparently self-destructive rebelliousness had to lie in the "mind of the masses" (*Massenseele*), Federn asserted, and yet an attempt to grasp these causes had first to account for how the normal, peaceful

---

<sup>4</sup> August Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend. Die Psychoanalyse in der Fürsorgeerziehung* (Leipzig, 1925) and Siegfried Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten. Bericht über einen ernsthaften Versuch mit neuer Erziehung*, reprinted in *Sozialpädagogik*, ed. Daniel Barth and Ulrich Hermann, vol. 4 of *Siegfried Bernfeld: Werke*, ed. Ulrich Hermann (Giessen, 2012 [1921]), 9-155.

“integration of the individual into the social order is attained.”<sup>5</sup>

This line of inquiry led Federn directly back to the family: contending that the “arrangement of the state has, up till now, been the corollary of the familial,” Federn looked to the attitude of the child (always implicitly male) to the father to account for this relationship. The intervention of external reality into the familial sphere unsettled the child’s original belief in the father’s omnipotence, Federn explained, engendering a profound disappointment in paternal authority and one with paradoxical consequences for the subsequent formation of the individual’s character. The child’s disillusionment reinforced its rivalrous hostility towards the father and could induce it to adopt an oppositional attitude towards authority later in life. Yet more often than not, Federn argued, it produced a conservative character intent on discovering and elevating new father figures in place of the old, albeit ones that were unconsciously selected according to the “ideal image” of the original father. Longing for the vanished world of infantile security sustained by a fantasy of paternal omnipotence together with the guilt engendered by the child’s incipient revolt against paternal authority gave rise to a vast reservoir of filial devotion and reverence that converted the intervention of a disillusioning reality into an impetus for the broader social reproduction of patriarchy.<sup>6</sup>

Yet a disabusing experience on the order of the cataclysms of the preceding years disrupted this cyclical pattern, Federn argued. By massively increasing the compulsion inherent in social existence and by demonstrating the willingness of the imaginary fathers to sacrifice their “sons” for personal gain, the war fed into the latter’s latent hostility towards patriarchal authority and generated widespread disillusionment with the established sociopolitical order. Having been continuously undermined over the course of the conflict, the foundation of filial devotion and

---

<sup>5</sup> Paul Federn, *Zur Psychologie der Revolution. Die vaterlose Gesellschaft* (Leipzig, 1919), 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> Federn, *Zur Psychologie der Revolution*, 7-9.

reverence that supported the existing order was overturned with the abdication of the Kaiser at the end of the war. With the deposition of the symbolic father the social principles that had been sustained by the ideal *Vatergemeinschaft* were rendered powerless – “everything was carried along” by the collapse of the paternal function. The consequent “deficiency of natural subordination” and general amicability rent the very fabric of the social – “never have people been so aggressive as now, so unready to offer mutual assistance.”<sup>7</sup>

Crisis went hand-in-hand with opportunity, however: the collapse of the patriarchal social order, he explained, cleared the way for the emergence of alternate forms of sociality grounded in the principle of fraternity. Having been cultivated in the ranks of the organized Social Democrats over the preceding decades, the spirit of fraternity had migrated to the worker’s and soldiers’ councils (*Räte*) that emerged in the wake of the war, Federn contended. Following Freud’s 1912 account in *Totem und Tabu* of the murder of the primal father by his united sons in the prehistory of the species, Federn argued that a deeply rooted sense of guilt stemming from this original murder had fatally undermined all previous attempts of the sons to liberate themselves from paternal authority. Yet the new councils, Federn believed, held out the prospect of liberation from the unconscious compulsion that hitherto dominated human history – through the new “organizations of sons” the soul of humanity could be purified and the parricidal traces expunged from its countenance.<sup>8</sup>

For all the utopian hopes Federn vested in the new organizations, he viewed his aspirations as premised on the outcome of a struggle against the destructive, anarchistic tendencies at work within the council movement. The violent leveling impulses that surfaced at the end of the war and that manifested, most strikingly, in the rampant tearing down of traditional symbols of military

---

<sup>7</sup> Federn, *Zur Psychologie der Revolution*, 14, 16, 22-3.

<sup>8</sup> Federn, *Zur Psychologie der Revolution*, 5, 22.

and patriarchal authority, presented a problem for an observer of Federn's political and intellectual temperament.<sup>9</sup> While his sympathies lay with the impulse to deconstruct patriarchy in the name of the liberty of the sons, the urgent material concerns and the fear that violent upheaval – the psychical equivalent, he believed, of a recapitulation of the original patricide – would merely prepare for the return of the hated father, pushed Federn to emphasize the consolidation of revolution's achievements and the stabilization of the volatile social field against the more radical demands that reverberated across the political landscape. Like Alfred Adler, Federn placed his hopes in the cultivation of an ethical, social principle – *Brüderlichkeit, Gemeinsinn* – capable of containing the hostile impulses of the liberated sons while mitigating the urge to submit to new forms of paternal authority. Unlike Adler, however, Federn's skepticism regarding the possibility that the conservative *Vatereinstellung* (a disposition both inherited and cultivated by upbringing) could ever be fully overcome, led him to search for compromises in the form of social and political orders (e.g. the Swiss and American republics) capable of both satisfying the ineradicable longing for the father while inhibiting the retrogressive tendency it contained.<sup>10</sup>

In staging the contemporary moment as an epochal rupture in the continuum of cyclical history, a caesura rife with both dangers and possibilities, Federn's essay captured the open-endedness of the postwar moment. Remarkably, however, it did so only by disavowing one of the most fundamental features of the contemporary upheaval: Federn's insistence on reading the contemporary political turmoil as the consequence of an intergenerational conflict between fathers and sons overlooked entirely the degree to which the war had unsettled gender roles. The war

---

<sup>9</sup> In Wolfgang Maderthaner's words, "fortgesetzten Angriffe auf Hoheitszeichen" were unleashed at the close of the war. See "Die eigenartige Größe der Beschränkung. Österreichs Revolution im mitteleuropäischen Spannungsfeld" in *Das Werden der Ersten Republik: ...der Rest ist Österreich. Band I*, ed. Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Maderthaner (Vienna: 2008), 197. The motif of tearing down insignia of authority also figures prominently in Helmut Lethen's *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte. Lebensversuche zwischen den Kriegen* (Frankfurt a. M., 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Federn, *Zur Psychologie der Revolution*, 28.

drew an unprecedented number of women out of the private sphere and into the public world of economic production and political engagement while simultaneously undermining the perceived legitimacy of traditional forms of masculine authority – not only did it leave thousands of men wounded and disabled, it also lowered the standing both of the men who remained behind on the home front and of patriarchal state itself, which appeared increasingly incapable of providing for its citizens.<sup>11</sup> Together with the inception of citizenship rights for women in the wake of the war, these developments significantly destabilized the paradigm Federn offered.<sup>12</sup> By interpreting the political struggles of the moment through the lens of masculine Oedipal conflict, Federn was thus disavowing the profound rupture in gender relations that the war had precipitated.

Despite (or perhaps because of) these limitations, Federn's essay captured something fundamental to the self-conception of the Austrian Social Democratic Party (SDAP) amid the transition to democracy. Two disjunctive imperatives appeared to confront the party leaders in the wake of the war: that of expressing the mass discontent among the working classes and of controlling and channeling the overwhelming affects the revolution had set loose. Precisely because "necessity and impotence" had prevented them from implementing more radical reforms, Otto Bauer contended in 1923, the party leadership was forced to pursue a course of restraining the "passions of the masses" through the propagation of what he termed "mass insight" – that is, through the dissemination of the means by which constituents of the masses could come to control their own passions.<sup>13</sup> In place of the old repressive, hierarchical authority that was actively being dismantled at that moment and through their "difficult intellectual struggle with the masses,"

---

<sup>11</sup> Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 258-62.

<sup>12</sup> On this subject (albeit in the German context) see Kathleen Canning, "Between Crisis and Order: The Imaginary of Citizenship in the Aftermath of War," in *Ordnungen in der Krise. Zur politischen Kulturgeschichte Deutschlands 1900-1933* ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig (Munich, 2007), 215-228.

<sup>13</sup> Otto Bauer, *Die österreichische Revolution* (Vienna, 1923), 194.

Austrian Social Democrats thus sought to establish a new form of authority premised on a kind of collective education.<sup>14</sup>

Both the *Masseenseele* and *Erziehung* taxed a remarkable number of intellectuals in the wake of the war, and the two problems appeared to be deeply intertwined.<sup>15</sup> While for conservative commentators the masses signified an amorphous, omnipresent threat to (masculine) rationality and (bourgeois) individuality and thus an object to be violently repressed, for Social Democrats – by no means immune to the prejudices of their political opponents – the masses represented an agent to be formed, cultivated, and harnessed. Yet in framing the problem of the masses as a problem for education, the Social Democrats, reflecting the long tradition of conservative thought on crowd psychology, were implicitly rendering its constituents children.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, what defined the members of the *Brüdergemeinschaft* for Federn was their status as sons, ones rendered fatherless by the political upheaval of the revolution. If Federn believed the sons capable of attaining autonomy through organization, the achievement appeared contingent on the exercise of a new intellectual and pedagogical leadership, a surrogate fatherhood whose initial gesture consisted of the very act of theorizing the contemporary disorder. Like the Social Democrats,

---

<sup>14</sup> Quote from Bauer, *Die österreichische Revolution*, 194. The roots of this educational authority ran deep in Austrian Social Democracy, stretching back to the emergence of the party in the 1880s from a worker's educational association. In the interwar period, however, the identification of the political tasks with pedagogical ones became far more complete – rearing children in a socialist spirit and molding the consciousness of the proletariat increasingly came to stand-in for political struggle (see chapter five).

<sup>15</sup> As Stefan Jonsson has argued in a remarkable study, the ambiguous and polymorphous figure of the masses represented the decisive intellectual and cultural preoccupation of interwar Germany and Austria, one expressive of both the profound anxieties and the far-reaching hopes attendant on the transition to a democratic society. Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York, 2013). For an insightful analysis of the relationship of the party to its mass base over the prewar years, see Wolfgang Maderthaler and Lutz Musner, *Unruly Masses: The Other Side of Fin-de-Siecle Vienna*, trans. David Fernbach and Michael Huffmaster, (New York, 2008 [1999]). Fittingly, both studies privilege moments (the riots of 17 September 1911 in the suburb of Ottakring and the upheavals of 15 July 1927) when the passions of the masses escaped the control of the party and exposed the limits of its disciplinary, pedagogical politics.

<sup>16</sup> As Maderthaler notes, the influence of the arch-reactionary theorist of crowd psychology, Gustav Le Bon, reached from the Viennese intelligentsia into the elite of the Social Democratic party. See “Die eigenartige Größe der Beschränkung,” 204.

psychoanalysts thus found themselves positioned indeterminately between the unruly masses and the now vacant position of the patriarchal father in the search for new (more legitimate and effective) forms of *Führertum*.<sup>17</sup>

Within the psychoanalytic movement, Federn's essay inaugurated a period of intensive engagement in the study of mass psychology. Three months after Federn presented his analysis to the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society (*WPV*) in February of 1919, Freud would state that he was attempting to discover a psychoanalytic foundation for the subject, an intention that culminated in his *Massen Psychologie und Ich-Analyse* two years later.<sup>18</sup> The practical mass psychologies developed by Bernfeld and Aichhorn in their pedagogical experiments sought to navigate the same challenges that troubled Federn and his fellow Social Democrats. Focusing on two studies that Bernfeld and Aichhorn produced in the wake of their short-lived experiments, this chapter explores how their attempts to think through the dynamics of youth socialization in the educational experiments they organized and administered offered a vital reflection on the central challenges confronting the postwar experiments in mass democracy.

While Bernfeld had become interested in psychoanalysis during his prewar activism in the youth movement, having attended sessions of the *WPV* as early as 1913, he would significantly

---

<sup>17</sup> The term *Führertum* – as distinct from *Führung* and *Führerschaft* – is admittedly no longer in common usage. During the interwar period, however, an extensive literature emerged devoted to the subject of *Führertum*. While this literature experienced its greatest period of expansion during the National Socialist era and the years immediately preceding its seizure of power (all but vanishing following its downfall), the concept of *Führertum* also resonated within the postwar youth movement in Germany and Austria, a movement that spanned a wide-spectrum of political commitments (see below).

<sup>18</sup> Sigmund Freud to Sándor Ferenczi, 12 May 1919, in *Briefwechsel. Band II/2, 1917-1919* (Vienna, 1996), 236. Federn's essay was followed by Ernst Simmel's "Psychoanalyse der Massen" published later in 1919 in *Vossische Zeitung* (reprinted in *Psychoanalyse und ihre Anwendungen. Ausgewählte Schriften/Ernst Simmel*, ed. Ludger M. Hermanns and Ulrich Schultz-Venrath (Frankfurt a. M., 1993), 36-42 and the following year by the work of a Hungarian psychoanalyst, Aurel Kolnai, *Psychoanalyse und Soziologie. Zur Psychologie von Masse und Gesellschaft* (Vienna, 1920). For an overview of this current of thought, one that continued to flourish over the coming years, see Karl Fallend, "Historische Aspekte zur psychoanalytischen Massenpsychologie. 'Prof. Freud wünscht, die Psychologie der Revolution von vielen Gesichtspunkten aus zu betrachten,'" in *Das Werden der Ersten Republik*, 251-62.

deepen his engagement with Freudian thought in the course of translating his educational ideals into pedagogical practice. Though more than a decade older than Bernfeld, Aichhorn, an educator by profession, would turn to Freudian theory only in the midst of the Oberhollabrunn experiment. Both, however, would be admitted as members to the *WPV* in the postwar years (Bernfeld in 1919 and Aichhorn in 1922), and both would undergo analysis with none other than Paul Federn. As undertakings in post-traditional, anti-patriarchal modes of youth socialization, their postwar experiments were bound by a number of common aims, ones all the more remarkable given the substantial differences in the commitments, background, and temperaments of their leaders.

Both experiments were also dangerous undertakings, a fact that owed much to their attempts to refashion traditional forms of educational authority at a moment of profound instability but which also reflected the centrality of youth to the social disorder and political ferment of the moment.<sup>19</sup> At the same time as the disruption of patriarchal authority, by exposing the contingency and precariousness of the mechanisms of social reproduction, provided an impetus for attempts to theorize the social bond, the vacated position of leader seemed to open up a field of experimentation for the creation of new forms of authority. The experiments Aichhorn and Bernfeld led have to be read both as microcosms of the political tensions that prevailed in the broader social and political arenas and as laboratories for the development of new models of educational authority, ones that spoke directly to the needs of progressive political forces at this moment of transition to democracy.

## Youth in Motion

---

<sup>19</sup> On the dangerous quality of Bernfeld's educational work see Willi Hoffer, "Siegfried Bernfeld and Jerubbaal: An Episode in the Jewish Youth Movement," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 10 (1965): 150-67, especially 156 and 165-66.

A good two decades younger than Federn and yet several years older than most of the other members of the second generation of Viennese psychoanalysts, Bernfeld was something of a transitional figure within the psychoanalytic movement.<sup>20</sup> Far more important than the difference of a few years, however, was the combination of intellectual precocity and personal charisma that set Bernfeld apart in the eyes of his contemporaries and enabled him to serve as a bridge between the more staid first generation of analysts, comprised predominately of medical practitioners and overwhelmingly male, and the more radical, professionally diverse, gender-mixed cohort that began to take shape in the wake of the war. While it appeared to epitomize the new possibilities that the postwar era opened up, Bernfeld's experiment in collective education rested on years of cultural-political activism within the prewar and wartime youth movements and was the outgrowth of a long engagement with questions of authority and education.

Prior to the war, Bernfeld's activism fell under the purview of the so-called youth culture movement (*Jugendkulturbewegung*), a radical current within the broader central European youth movement that emerged from the thought of the unorthodox educator and cultural critic Gustav Wyneken.<sup>21</sup> In a series of books and pamphlets written after 1910, Wyneken espoused the necessity of youth autonomy from the traditional institutions and agents of youth socialization.

---

<sup>20</sup> To list some of the most prominent members of this second generation: Edward Bibring was born in 1894, Anna Freud in 1895, Wilhelm Reich and Otto Fenichel in 1897, Richard Sterba in 1898, and Grete Lehner in 1899. While Ernst Kris and Robert Walder were both older than Bernfeld by two years, their rise to prominence within the WPV occurred later than Bernfeld's and significantly, only after his departure for Berlin in 1925.

<sup>21</sup> For an overview of the politics of the *Jugendkulturbewegung* see Ulrich Herrmann, "Die Jugendkulturbewegung. Der Kampf um die hohere Schule," in "*Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit.*" *Der Mythos Jugend*, ed. Thomas Koebner, Rolf-Peter Janz, and Frank Trommler (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1985), 224-243. Franz Borkenau, writing under the pseudonym Fritz Jungmann (and himself a former participant in the movement), would develop perhaps the single most brilliant interpretation of the movement in an essay from 1936, titled "Autoritat und Sexualmoral in der freien burgerlichen Jugendbewegung," on the sexual politics of youth rebellion in both the *Jugendkulturbewegung* and the broader German-speaking youth movement. Borkenau's essay, which formed a part of massive collaborative investigation by the Institute for Social Research (i.e. the Frankfurt School) on authority and the family, has informed later interpretations of the movement, most notably Ulrich Linse, "'Geschlechtsnot der Jugend'. Uber Jugendbewegung und Sexualitat," in "*Mit und zieht die neue Zeit.*" Borkenau's essay can be found in *Studien uber Autoritat und Familie, Forschungsberichte aus dem Institut fur Sozialforschung* ed. Max Horkheimer (Paris, 1936), 669-705.

Echoing and amplifying the ambivalent *bildungsbürgerlich* interpretation of youth (*Jugend*) as the incarnation of a force for cultural renewal and the source of the social instability that threatened the organization of society and the prevailing morality, Wyneken argued that the mission of youth was to be the carrier of absolute values and the dialectical negation of the oppressive bourgeois order.<sup>22</sup> “Youth wills the absolute,” he contended, and “unconditioned willing means to be young.”<sup>23</sup> In the context of the bourgeois family and the traditional school, however, youth was perverted from its cultural mission and prematurely compelled to conform to economic and political imperatives foreign to their nature. Incapable of overcoming the limitations of its private material concerns and thus of drawing youth into the realm of objective cultural values, the family, Wyneken believed, had no legitimate *erzieherisch* function. In its place – and likewise in place of the inadequate, because insufficiently *geistig* (intellectual, spiritual) state schools – Wyneken envisioned the creation of free school communities (*Schulgemeinden*) in which youth would determine the form and content of their own lives.

As the leading young intellect within the *Jugendkulturbewegung*, a movement that spread well beyond Vienna, Bernfeld contributed significantly to radicalizing and deepening Wyneken’s philosophy of youth and the critique of the existing institutions of education he elaborated.<sup>24</sup> “Every new generation places itself in opposition to its elders, and to the entire culture or a portion

---

<sup>22</sup> On the ambivalent view of youth prevalent among members of Wyneken’s own class see especially Peter Dudek, *Jugend als Objekt der Wissenschaft. Geschichte der Jugendforschung in Deutschland und Österreich 1890-1933* (Opladen, 1990). On the relation of this view to the development of Wyneken’s and Bernfeld’s thought see (respectively) Dudek, “*Versuchsacker für eine neue Jugend*”. *Die Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf 1906-1945* (Bad Heilbrunn, 2009) and Dudek, “*Er war halt genialer als die anderen*”. *Biografische Annäherungen an Siegfried Bernfeld* (Giessen, 2012). On the notion of youth as the dialectical negation of the prevailing social order, see Philip Utley, “Siegfried Bernfeld: Left-Wing Youth Leader, Psychoanalyst and Zionist, 1910-April, 1918” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1975), 23-43.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Dudek, “*Versuchsacker für eine neue Jugend*”, 75.

<sup>24</sup> On Bernfeld’s role as “führende Repräsentant und intellektuelle Kopf” of the *Jugendkulturbewegung* see Peter Dudek’s excellent biography, “*Er war halt genialer als die anderen*”, 51. In Vienna itself Bernfeld was from the outset the natural leader of the youth movement as Käthe Leichter recalled: “Immer...würde er zum natürlichen Zentrum” despite the fact that “Bernfeld gab sich...gar nicht als Führer, suchte keinerlei autoritäre Vorrechte für sich...”. Leichter, *Leben und Werk* (Wien: 1973), 332.

thereof,” he wrote in 1914.<sup>25</sup> In rebelling against the cultural values of their elders, Bernfeld contended, youth were fashioning the space necessary for the creation of a new ethics along with new forms of sociality and new models of authority. Yet far from inaugurating the anarchy adults feared, the revolt of the youth would finally allow them to contribute to the stability of the social order rather than continually destabilizing it through their dissatisfaction, Bernfeld argued. “Youth is the natural age of sociability, of order and unconditional subordination,” he averred, “but only under freely chosen leaders, for well-understood purposes, in forms suited to their peculiarity.”<sup>26</sup> One had to allow youth to govern their own drives free from external compulsion and thus to shape their lives according to their inner moral codex rather than in line with traditional precepts. The greater severity of youth in ethical matters vis-à-vis their hypocritical elders, all but ensured that the self-emancipation of youth would not culminate in destruction – “the burning down of the *Gymnasien*” – but rather in the erection of a higher, and indeed stricter, moral authority.<sup>27</sup>

The freedom Bernfeld envisioned for youth was premised on the Kantian conception of autonomy as ethical self-legislation – youth would discover their own binding maxims in the process of growing freely out of itself. Yet if youth required freedom to fulfill this cultural and ethical mission, they also required guidance, *Führung* – throughout Bernfeld’s writings on *Jugendkultur* the collective production of internal ethical authority was intimately bound up with the construction of external authority in the form of charismatic leader, one who either incarnated the ideal common to the youth or gave direction to their nebulous aspirations. Henceforth,

---

<sup>25</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, “Drei Reden an die Jugend: II. Der Kampf der Jugend gegen Familie und Schule,” reprinted in *Jugendbewegung – Jugendforschung* ed. Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 2 of *Siegfried Bernfeld: Werke*, ed. Ulrich Herrmann (Giessen, 2011), 62.

<sup>26</sup> Bernfeld, “Drei Reden an die Jugend: II,” 74,71.

<sup>27</sup> “Die Gestaltung der Schule: Das soll nicht heißen, die Gymnasien verbrennen und nun der Jugend in den Wäldern neue Schulen bauen lassen. Das soll heißen, die wesentlichen Erziehungsvorgänge die Jugend selber besorgen lassen. Es gibt keine Fremderziehung, sondern eine Selbsterziehung...” Bernfeld, “Drei Reden an die Jugend: II,” 71.

Bernfeld argued, pedagogy will consist in nothing other than the selection of leaders (*Führer*), a task that the youth will themselves undertake.<sup>28</sup>

As Wyneken would later write, the experience of *Führertum*, this passionate, unconditioned subordination to an idealized other, separated the awakened youth of the present from their elders to whom such an experience was completely foreign.<sup>29</sup> In Bernfeld's activism, however, this emphasis on radical subordination existed in marked tension with a conception of youth as a disruptive, indeed revolutionary, social force. The emancipation of youth was primarily a matter of organization and political struggle for Bernfeld, a process that entailed fashioning the institutions necessary for the emergence of a youthful public opinion.<sup>30</sup> Within this new social space, youth would be able to freely express their desires and discontents while simultaneously developing critiques of the existing order. In his writings on the subject, Bernfeld aligned his vision of a youthful counter-public sphere with a defense of the freedom of the individual, of the exceptional and particular, against the imposition of any overarching unity or identity.<sup>31</sup> Yet other

---

<sup>28</sup> Bernfeld, "Drei Reden an die Jugend: II," 72.

<sup>29</sup> Wyneken in 1920: "Für die heutige, lebendig bewegte und erwachte Jugend gibt es ein Erlebnis, das uns, der alten Generation, in unserer Jugend im allgemeinen fremd geblieben ist. Sie nennt es: Führertum. Und sie sieht in diesem, in seiner höchsten Ausprägung seltenen, Erlebnis ein Ideal, einen höchsten Gipfel eines Jugendlebens, das seiner Bestimmung entspricht. Der 'Führer' ist mehr als der lehrende Vermittler objektiver Erkenntnisse und Werte, mehr auch als der persönlich vorbildliche Mensch, bei dem Persönlichkeit und Leistung eins geworden ist, und der nicht nur Erkenntnisse verbreitet, sondern neues geistiges Leben zeugt, der neues Menschentum hervorruft." Quoted in Dudek, "*Versuchsacker für eine neue Jugend*," 75. Similar views can be found in the thought of Hans Blüher, a leading conservative ideologue and publicist within the youth movement and a champion of homosexual eros. See especially his "Führer und Volk in der Jugendbewegung" (Leipzig, 1920).

<sup>30</sup> The realization of the objectives of the *Jugendkulturbewegung* was, for Bernfeld, contingent upon the fulfillment of many of the aims of other contemporary political and cultural movements – above all, the working class and women's movements. Like the *Jugendkulturbewegung*, the women's movement, he contended in 1914, was above all a struggle for the intellectual and spiritual meaning of the lives of women. The social expectation that mothers were the born educators of their children, from infancy to maturity, prevented women from finding their focal point outside of the family. In liberating them from the compulsion to educate their adolescent offspring, the *Schulgemeinde*, as the self-educating community of youth, Bernfeld argued, would offer women new possibilities for personal fulfillment at the same time as it liberated youth from the stultifying confines of the family." "Die neue Jugend und die Frauen," in *Theorie des Jugendalters*, ed. Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 1 of *Siegfried Bernfeld. Werke*, ed. Ulrich Herrmann (Giessen, 2010), 9-42. See also Utlej, "Siegfried Bernfeld," 29-30,

<sup>31</sup> "Hier [in the *Sprechsaal*] ist die *Vielheit* gegeben: die Vielheit der Anschauungen, Weisen, Formen; und es ist überdies keine *Einheit* gegeben, die jene Mannigfaltigkeit ordnet und wertet. Das Grundgesetz des Sprechsaals ist

points in his writing, and in particular as he turned his attention from concrete institutional forms to the abstract spiritual community of youth, this celebration of nonconformity was displaced by an idealization of adolescent *Gemeinschaft* as a “*Brüderschaft des Gleichen*,” a social form in which, as Bernfeld wrote, “like finds its way to like.”<sup>32</sup> Together with the countervailing impulses to emancipate youth from repressive authority and to submit to freely chosen leaders, the tension between individual liberty and collective, spiritual identity lent an unstable, oscillating quality to Bernfeld’s contributions to the *Jugendkulturbewegung* before the war.

Exempted from combat duty by virtue of his poor health and eventually granted leave to resume his university studies, Bernfeld was able to continue his prewar youth activism over the course of the war while intensifying his psychological and sociological investigation of youth.<sup>33</sup> Yet the war also marked a caesura in Bernfeld’s intellectual and political trajectory – even as he carried his prewar activism into the new era, Bernfeld shifted its focus away from the *Jugendkulturbewegung* and into the burgeoning field of the Zionist youth movement, resolving as early as 1914, to place “all his activity and thought” in the service of the Jewish people.<sup>34</sup> While the anti-Semitism of the broader German-speaking youth movement, which all but forced Jewish youth into the radical *Jugendkulturbewegung*, played a significant role in Bernfeld’s turn to Jewish nationalism, a more decisive factor was the catastrophe of the war itself.<sup>35</sup>

---

Freiheit des Einzelnen, des Einzelfalls, des Besonderen.” Siegfried Bernfeld, “Drei Reden an die Jugend: I. Die Idee einer allgemeinen Jugendkultur,” in vol. 2 of *Werke* (1914), 56.

<sup>32</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, “Die Jugendgemeinde,” in vol. 2 of *Werke* (1914), 98. See also Bernfeld on the *Freie Schulgemeinde*, “Fuer sie ist der Umfang gegeben: sämtliche junge Menschen einer Rasse, eines Kulturkreises, eines Staates, je nachdem,” in “Drei Reden an die Jugend: I.,” 57.

<sup>33</sup> These investigations would culminate in a 1915 dissertation titled “Über den Begriff der Jugend,” a work that sought to mediate between the divergent (naïve) understandings of the peculiarity of adolescence held by adults and youth through the development of a scientific, empirically grounded approach to the subject (see also the following chapter). Bernfeld, “Über den Begriff der Jugend,” in vol. 1 of *Werke* (1915), 43-137.

<sup>34</sup> This, at least, was Bernfeld’s recollection in 1921. See Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 11.

<sup>35</sup> While Jews comprised approximately a third of the entire movement inspired by Wyneken, the Viennese branch that formed around Bernfeld – the most politically radical and outspokenly critical wing of the *Jugendkulturbewegung* – was overwhelmingly Jewish in its composition. Both the conspicuous presence of Jews within the movement and the radically critical and libertarian thrust of its politics generated a backlash in the broader public sphere. In the

The conflict that broke out in August of that year was from the outset an unmitigated catastrophe for the Jewish population of the Hapsburg Empire. By the end of 1915, well over one hundred thousand Galician Jews, fleeing the advance of the Russian army and the combination of brutal military persecution and pogrom-like violence it brought in its wake, had resettled in the imperial capital. Yet the sudden influx and visibility of so many unacculturated and impoverished *Ostjuden* led to an upsurge of virulent anti-Semitism in Vienna itself, one that initially targeted the refugees but was increasingly directed at the Jewish population in general. Further compounding the situation were the complicated attitudes of the resident Jewish population towards their desperate co-religionists: while the former mounted substantial relief efforts on behalf of the refugees, the arrival of so many unassimilated Jews amplified long-standing ambivalent attitudes towards the supposedly primitive *Ostjude*. Reflecting established traditions of charitable relief among the Jewish bourgeoisie, the forms of refugee assistance deployed by the Jewish *Kultusgemeinde* during the war tended to tie the provisioning of material aid to the educational task of instilling values of hygiene and order in the unacculturated refugees.<sup>36</sup>

The field of refugee work, however, would emerge as an important arena of political contestation in the Viennese Jewish community over the course of the war. In marked contrast to the anxious response of the liberal, integrationist establishment, the Zionist opposition viewed the refugees as a “potential reservoir of support rather than supplicants in need of cultural elevation,”

---

months immediately prior to the war, the Bavarian parliament brought proceedings against the movement and sought to prohibit the distribution of the its journal, *Der Anfang*. Rather than generating a solidaristic response from the broader *Freideutsche Jugendbewegung*, however, the scandal that unfolded around *Der Anfang* in mid-1914 prompted the mainstream youth movement to distance itself from the movement around Wyneken. On this subject see Klaus Laermann, “Der Skandal um den ‘Anfang’. Ein Versuch jugendlicher Gegenöffentlichkeit im Kaiserreich” in “*Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit*”, 360-81 and John Alexander Williams, “Ecstasies of the Young: Sexuality, the Youth Movement, and Moral Panic in Germany on the Eve of the First World War,” *Central European History* 34 (2001): 163-89.

<sup>36</sup> See David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (London, 2001), 65-100. See also Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I* (New York: 2001), 59-81.

as David Rechter writes.<sup>37</sup> The increasing salience during the war years of the democratic ideal of ethnic self-determination eventually helped the Zionists secure the ascendancy within the agencies dedicated to refugee welfare. As nationalist radicalism displaced the previously hegemonic liberal insistence on assimilation, it appeared to many – and above all, to many youth – that a new horizon of possibility was opening up for cultural and political activism.<sup>38</sup>

It was into this shifting political landscape that Bernfeld directed the thrust of his wartime youth politics. Siding with the radical nationalists, Bernfeld came to view Jewish war orphans, twenty-five thousand of whom had resettled in Vienna by the end of 1914, as, in Peter Dudek's words, the "social bearer[s] of the process of Jewish renewal."<sup>39</sup> The realization of this regenerative mission, however, required the adoption of an ambitious political-pedagogical program, one aimed at suspending the assimilationist efforts of the Jewish bourgeoisie and, beyond that, towards the ultimate and "exceedingly difficult" task of making Jews and Jewishness "worthy of love and respect" (*liebenswert und achtungswürdig*), as Bernfeld put it in 1917.<sup>40</sup> Where the educational work of the liberal assimilationists was intended to acculturate the *Ostjuden* to western bourgeois norms, the "massive educational work" (*gewaltige Erziehungsarbeit*) Bernfeld undertook in his wartime youth activism was aimed rather at the preservation and cultivation of the authentic Jewishness he saw in the refugees. Efforts at acculturation not only stymied this intrinsic regenerative potential, but also bred severe mental and physical illnesses, in particular, that of Jewish self-hatred.<sup>41</sup> "Equally endangered," in Bernfeld's view, by physical hardships and by the relief efforts of the Jewish bourgeoisie, the Jewish war orphans required protection in the

---

<sup>37</sup> Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 83.

<sup>38</sup> See Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 101-28.

<sup>39</sup> Dudek, 'Er war halt genialer als die anderen', 200.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Dudek, 'Er war halt genialer als die anderen', 167.

<sup>41</sup> Dudek, 'Er war halt genialer als die anderen', 175. See also, Eleanore Lappin, "Pädagoge, Psychoanalytiker, Psychologe und Marxist. Siegfried Bernfeld (1892-1953)," in *Jüdische Wohlfahrt im Spiegel von Biographien* (Frankfurt a. M.: 2007), 91-92.

face of assimilationist pressures no less than material salvation.<sup>42</sup>

The collapse of society and the crisis of authority over the last years of the war appeared to offer youth unprecedented opportunities to bring about radical social and political change. For Bernfeld, the new circumstances and the presence of thousands of uprooted Jewish children and adolescents seemed to hold out the possibility of implementing the ideal of the self-education of youth that had emerged in the context of the prewar *Jugendkulturbewegung*. Reflecting, in part, the more radical traditions of cultural and political activism of Galician Jewry, the Jewish refugee youth who streamed into Vienna, represented, for Bernfeld, a potential mass base for the realization of the “grand political structure of youth communities” he conceived in the years before the war, albeit now subordinated to Jewish national ends.<sup>43</sup> While the influx of these youth galvanized and radicalized the Jewish youth movement in Vienna, making ideals like those espoused in the prewar *Jugendkulturbewegung* appear suddenly practicable, the devastating effects of the war on the traditional institutions of youth socialization all but necessitated an ambitious pedagogical response. Echoing contemporary social democratic reformers, Bernfeld argued in 1916, that the destruction of the family presented the collective with new responsibilities, ones that had to be met not by “contribut[ing] alms as individuals” but by “rais[ing] taxes as a nation for our youth.” That the war orphan had been liberated from its secure, if stultifying, anchoring within the family meant that it was free for a “more demanding, higher bond” – “it is a sacred right of the orphaned,” Bernfeld contended, “to be integrated in a meaningful and momentous fashion into the process of Jewish renewal.”<sup>44</sup>

The “higher bond” of the nation was never an ultimate end for Bernfeld, rather it remained

---

<sup>42</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, “Die Kriegswaisen,” in *Der Jude* (1916/17), reprinted in Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 106. See also, Philip Utley, “Siegfried Bernfeld’s Jewish Order of Youth, 1914-1922,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 24 (1979): 349-368.

<sup>44</sup> Bernfeld, “Die Kriegswaisen,” 13-15.

subordinated to a broader ethical and cultural mission that he identified with socialist universalism – the Jewish nation, as Peter Dudek has written, was for Bernfeld a “natural principle of integration on the path to universal humanity.”<sup>45</sup> Far from being generally accepted by Zionist youth in wartime Vienna, however, the vision Bernfeld articulated of the relationship between the Jewish nation and universal humanity – one mediated by the *geistig* values he placed at the core of Jewish identity – met with vehement and sustained critique from more mainstream political Zionists. For Bernfeld’s rivals and their supporters in the Zionist parent organization, the insistence that the mission of the Jewish nation was, above all, a cultural and spiritual one on behalf of a universal humanity only distracted from the concrete political objectives – above all, the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine – that they believed should guide Jewish politics in the present. In response to these criticisms, the polemical edge of Bernfeld’s writings was increasingly directed against the Zionist political hierarchy and their representatives in the organizations of the Jewish youth movement. In attempting to make the Jewish people like any other European nation, with its own bourgeois liberal democratic state, complete with militarist and imperialist ambitions, the mainstream Zionists, Bernfeld contended, were sacrificing both the intellectual-spiritual content of Jewishness and the regenerative potential of youth.<sup>46</sup> Where his youthful detractors contended that the “chaos of nebulous mysticism” in his idealistic cultural Zionism reflected a “superabundance of puberty,” Bernfeld answered that *geistig* values alone offered a vehicle for attaining national autonomy.<sup>47</sup>

In his most substantive contribution to the subject of Jewish national education, *Das*

---

<sup>45</sup> Dudek, ‘*Er war halt genialer als die anderen*’, 175.

<sup>46</sup> The aim of making the Jewish people like any other is one that Bernfeld castigates as “klein, widersinnig, beinahe blasphemisch.” Bernfeld, *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 25.

<sup>47</sup> The two criticisms are quoted in Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 125-6. See also, Rechter, “‘Bubermania’: The Jewish Youth Movement in Vienna, 1917-1919,” *Modern Judaism* 16 (1996): 25-45. Bernfeld’s contention “Im Geistigen sind wir autonom” is offered in *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 26-7.

*jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, published in early 1919, Bernfeld combined this fundamental critique of mainstream Zionism with a utopian vision of a Jewish-socialist *Erziehungsstaat*, Erez-Israel, that he envisioned taking root in contemporary Palestine. Yet *Das jüdische Volk* reached well beyond this limited aim, offering a critique of the present European educational system and the pedagogical methods that prevailed within it. Echoing his prewar critiques, Bernfeld contended that the foundation of *Erziehung* was the European bourgeoisie and, thus, that the real function of the European higher schools – operating beneath the pretense of serving *Kultur* and *Bildung* – was to divide the social classes. While those excluded were plunged into the struggle for economic survival, which quickly extinguished their latent revolutionary potential, those fortunate enough to escape this fate were indoctrinated into respect for the existing order and simultaneously deprived of their natural, *geistig* weapons against the philistinism and brutality of life. The history of education, marked as it was by an unbridgeable gulf between pedagogical ideals and their realization, was one in which the revolutionary idealism of youth was inexorably “broken, captured, purchased, or ruined.” More bourgeois than any other national bourgeoisie, the Jewish propertied classes had abandoned what for centuries had been the Jewish nation’s sole possessions, namely, “learning, values, religion, and spirit.”<sup>48</sup> What was needed, Bernfeld concluded, was for the present generation to be “followed” by a Jewish youth that refused “to follow it.”<sup>49</sup>

For Bernfeld realizing this possibility entailed the creation of a new pedagogy, one grounded in a deeper social and psychological understanding of youth. Present educational methods rested on a naïve conception of youth as a period of linear unfolding and yet,

---

<sup>48</sup> Bernfeld, *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 28-9, 33, 39, 34-5, 38, 41, 44.

<sup>49</sup> “Und das verlangt das Jahrhundert, der Augenblick von uns: eine jüdische Jugend muss der heutigen Generation folgen, die ihr nicht folgt.” Bernfeld, *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 43.

paradoxically, were animated by a lack of confidence in the spontaneous work of nature. What normally went by the name of “development” was, in fact, a “strange and idiosyncratic (*eigenwillig*)” succession of stages – not the consistent unfolding of a given essence (*Keime*) but rather transformation, upheaval, and rupture characterized the passage through infancy to childhood and from adolescence to adulthood. The unevenness and asynchronicity that marked this process lent the succession of these stages a volatility and explosiveness that was most manifest in the period of puberty. Out of the confusion produced by the manifold crises of adolescence emerged the longing for a “Führer und Meister,” Bernfeld contended, one who “steps into the chaos and forms it into a world.” At the same time, it created a need for a *Gemeinschaft Gleicher* (a community of the equal and identical), one unified by a common bond to a leader. Both the *Gemeinschaft Gleicher* and the *Führer* around which it formed were means of attaining what Bernfeld considered the “specific revolutionary deed” of youth, namely “self-education to the ideal.”<sup>50</sup>

On a broader level, it was the relationship of the *Führer* to the *Volk* that offered the essential means of transforming the “heaps of blood relations” that constituted the nation and the “political-economic organization” on which it rested into the “spiritual order of *Kultur*.” In an allusion to the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament, Bernfeld wrote, “Jewry, like no other nation, has lived this experience between *Volk* und *Führer*. It is the foundation of all *Kultur*; every step away from this path leads into the world of barbarism.”<sup>51</sup> In the lengthy, penultimate section (“Im Anfang war der Utopie”) in which Bernfeld laid out his ideal of a Jewish *Erziehungsstaat*, the relationship of the leader to the people was of pivotal importance. In its all-encompassing and transformative ambitions, Bernfeld’s pedagogical utopia represented the antithesis of the present

---

<sup>50</sup> Bernfeld, *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 47-8, 51, 57, 60-1.

<sup>51</sup> Bernfeld, *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 79-80.

arrangement for the rearing and educating of the young. At its heart, was the conviction that only the liberation of the child from the educational dilettantism and the narrow egotism of the family would allow for its integration into the “incomparably broader and more fertile circle of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.” The return of the Jews from exile would be bound up with an overcoming of the traditional family: “with enormous force the egoism of the family was swept along by the great stream of community feeling and collective will” (*Gemeinschaftsgefühls- and willens*), Bernfeld wrote.<sup>52</sup>

Among the younger (preadolescent) children in Bernfeld’s educational utopia, learning as a process of voluntary and unconstrained activity opened onto an experience of the social totality, as they came to recognize that the collective offered far more than their isolated particularity – a “self-restricting incorporation into a sensible totality (*sinnvolle Gesamtheit*)” emerged thus of itself among the children independent of any exhortative or disciplining activity on the part of the teacher. The experience of the *Gesamtheit* would become even more salient when the youth entered puberty and moved away from their hometowns into youth colonies, educational communes that Bernfeld termed *Jugendbereiche*. While free to uproot and relocate to another *Jugendbereich*, the youth within each colony were drawn into a dynamic process of self-conscious and freely willed integration into the totality: “everyone can freely choose which force may coerce him,” Bernfeld wrote, “everyone has the desire to feel this force over him; everyone has the hope to himself become a bearer of this force.” In the course of this process, a number of leaders emerged above the collective of youth. At their pinnacle stood the “father of the youth area,” an object of youthful reverence who simultaneously functioned as educator, spiritual councilor, and final arbiter within the *Jugendbereich* while wielding enormous political influence in the state as

---

<sup>52</sup> Bernfeld, *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 95-6,

a whole.<sup>53</sup>

The ethical severity and self-divesting idealism of adolescence was fundamental to the anti-bourgeois identity of the Zionist utopia Bernfeld envisioned, yet both, together with the centrality of the *Führerprinzip*, posed dangers that he readily acknowledged. While Bernfeld was convinced that the passions of youth, which he imagined flaring-up into violent rebellion against the world of the fathers, would be contained by the ethical self-discipline of adolescence, the far-reaching influence of leaders within Erez-Israel was incontrovertibly of the “highest danger” for the nation and its youth. Yet the very institution that represented the highest danger for Bernfeld’s Zionist utopia was also the “precondition for the highest culture” and in the temperament of the youth and in the balancing of the different personalities of the father-leaders lay the possibility of gaining “the most secure foundation” for the new state.<sup>54</sup>

The work Bernfeld wrote in early 1919 had an electrifying effect on the Zionist youth movement at a crucial moment of redefinition and reorientation.<sup>55</sup> *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend* not only spoke directly to a widespread desire for guidance amid these far-reaching shifts, but also reflected the unprecedented political self-consciousness of adolescents at the end of the war. Vienna was awash with radical youth in late 1918 and early 1919, and to many, adolescents represented the active ingredient in the revolutionary ferment of the postwar months. For the Viennese Zionist youth movement, the end of the war and the fracturing of the empire were accompanied by a renewed influx of thousands of young eastern European Jews intent on realizing the promise of the 1917 Balfour declaration and establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In

---

<sup>53</sup> Bernfeld, *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 111, 128, 134.

<sup>54</sup> Bernfeld, *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*, 134.

<sup>55</sup> In the words of Ludwig Liegel and Franz-Michael Konrad, Bernfeld’s book was “von geradezu katalysatorhafter Bedeutung” in the postwar Jewish youth movement. Liegel and Konrad, *Reformpädagogik in Palästina. Dokumente und Deutungen zu den Versuchen einer ‘neuen’ Erziehung im jüdischen Gemeinwesen Palästinas (1918-1948)*, (Frankfurt a. M., 1989), 158. On the reorientation of this movement over this period see, Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 101-128.

the months following the war, Vienna was transformed into both a way station for young Eastern European Jews bound via Trieste for Palestine and a site of active preparation for the colonization of the Levant.

At the same time as Jewish nationalist youth streamed into Vienna, their eyes set on Palestine, the abysmal conditions that prevailed within the city prompted relief agencies to transport thousands of children to regions less afflicted by starvation and epidemics. For the children who remained, the same agencies, together with individual philanthropists and political organizations, established a number of *Hilfsaktionen* intended to alleviate their physical suffering while ameliorating their inadequate education. In concert with the mainstream Zionist *Israelitische Allianz zu Wien*, the American Joint Distribution Committee for Jewish Worshippers (JDC), one of the most prominent of the relief organizations that channeled money into Central Europe in the wake of the war, resolved to establish a children's home (*Kinderheim*) in the outskirts of Vienna for the Jewish refugees orphaned by the conflict.<sup>56</sup>

The idea for the creation of the *Kinderheim* stemmed, in fact, from Bernfeld himself – in his capacity as secretary of the “educational office” of the Jewish national council he had long campaigned for an ambitious social-pedagogical solution to the problem he first discussed in 1916. Yet where Bernfeld had envisioned a massive school colony capable of embracing thousands of youth and set in the countryside – essentially a self-sufficient agricultural commune – what the JDC provided was a dilapidated military hospital barracks on the outskirts of Vienna, an arrangement that would come to house two hundred to three hundred children ranging in age from three to sixteen. Installed by the financiers as the pedagogical leader of the *Kinderheim*, the

---

<sup>56</sup> The Baumgarten experiment was part of a transnational history of the expansion and redefinition of humanitarian relief in the wake of the First World War, a subject that has recently been explored in Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (New York, 2014).

experiment that Bernfeld undertook in fall of 1919, along with several dozen young adults culled mainly from the ranks of the *Jugendkulturbewegung*, was formed around the ambition of inculcating a socialist and Jewish nationalist consciousness in the refugee children through the development and implementation of a new education. When Bernfeld came to reflect on his experiences several years later, however, what was clear was that the confrontation with the catastrophic conditions produced by the war together with the objective limitations imposed by the political and economic forces under which the experiment operated had deeply unsettled some of the basic assumptions upon which his earlier work had rested.

### Education to Community

If Bernfeld had contended in 1916 that the liberation of the Jewish war orphan from the constrictive matrix of the family would clear the way for its identification with the Jewish people as a totality, the children he confronted in October of 1919 proved a far cry from the human material he had anticipated. Disorderly, violent, and deeply regressed, they bore little resemblance to the model of the idealistic, ethically severe adolescent at the center of his earlier thought. Added to this were differences in class, with the young bourgeois pedagogues confronted by refugees from a predominately proletarian milieu. The shock of this encounter was one that resonated throughout the report (subtitled “Über einen ernsthaften Versuch mit neuer Erziehung”) that Bernfeld published in 1921. Pathologizing language, like the descriptions of the children as “psychopathic” and “ineducable” (*unerziehbar*), abounded in his description of the first weeks of the experiment, a rhetorical inflation that bore oblique testimony to the impotence and confusion of the young educators in the face of their new charges.<sup>57</sup> As one participating educator, Hilda Geiringer,

---

<sup>57</sup> Daniel Barth, *Kinderheim Baumgarten. Siegfried Bernfelds ‘Versuch mit neuer Erziehung’ aus psychoanalytischer und soziologischer Sicht* (Giessen, 2007), 239 (see 237-8 for a list of pathologizing descriptions used in Bernfeld’s

recalled, “with our ideals of school and youth culture we collided fairly abruptly with a rather remorseless reality.”<sup>58</sup>

One consequence of this unsettling encounter was a marked turn to psychoanalysis in the thought of the Baumgarten pedagogues. Where, in early 1919, Bernfeld had relegated psychoanalysis to the periphery of his utopian *Erziehungsstaat*, a position from which it addressed only marginal figures whose disorders prevented their integration into the community of youth, his 1921 report placed Freudian thought at the very center of his pedagogical experiment. Had they not found a “guide” in the Freudian theory of the drives and affects, Bernfeld wrote, he and his fellow educators “would...have remained totally in the dark” – only psychoanalysis could provide a “foundation” for a “new education,” he contended.<sup>59</sup> The fact that the children he and his fellow educators encountered failed to meet even the most basic preconditions for the realization of the idea of the self-educating community of youth (the *Schulgemeinde*) developed in the *Jugendkulturbewegung* necessitated a fundamental reorientation. Contrary to their rather naïve expectations, what the Baumgarten educators performed, Daniel Barth has argued, was therapy.<sup>60</sup> But more than this, it was a self-conscious recapitulation, on a mass scale, of the process of primary socialization, whose tenuous achievements within the individual children had been disastrously undermined by the war experience. As Bernfeld and his fellow educators were drawn

---

report). Bernfeld’s tacit admission of the educators’ sense of impotence can be compared to Hoffer’s much later recollections. “We all felt helpless with a few very disturbed children, psychopaths or perhaps brain-damaged; we had to leave them to the harsh disciplinary treatment handed out by the stronger boys. The deaf and dumb had long gone to an appropriate home, but the emotionally deaf children still posed a major problem. Still, the community ideals started to work, and some consolidation was noticeable after two months.” Hoffer, “Siegfried Bernfeld and Jerubbaal,” 164.

<sup>58</sup> Hilda Geiringer, “Eine proletarische Schulgemeinde,” *Die junge Schweiz. Zeitschrift der Jugend* 2 (1920), 52. Slightly earlier in the same report, Geiringer described the children at the outset of the experiment: “[sie] hatten kein Verhältnis zu nichts und zu niemandem; es gab keine Freundschaft untereinander, keinen Anschluß an Erwachsene” (51).

<sup>59</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 91-2.

<sup>60</sup> Barth, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 222.

deeper into the process of forming their young charges, the limitations of his earlier work became more apparent, and as the basis of assumptions informing their thought was undermined by reality, they found themselves in need of a new theory, one capable of embracing the most basic aspects of enculturation.

Alienating and disorientating as their initial encounters with the children were, what the Baumgarten educators were able to accomplish was nonetheless considerable, Bernfeld argued – “after a half year every trace of waywardness had been wiped away from them; they were not *gebildet*, and they were still not *erzogen*, but they were capable and willing to undergo *Bildung* and *Erziehung*.” The pedagogical ethos that the Baumgarten educators adopted was one Bernfeld characterized as socialist, by which he meant that it was orientated towards the masses and it embraced the economic foundation of the school – in Bernfeld’s words, the entirety of the technical and administrative apparatus of the *Kinderheim* had to be ancillary in its operations to the pedagogical direction. Yet the impulse to organize the entire institution according to uniform logic only exacerbated the friction between the idealistic cohort of young educators and the management appointed by the JDC to oversee and administer the *Kinderheim*, consisting as it did predominately of mainstream, bourgeois Zionists. In Bernfeld’s account, the “countless disturbances” generated by this misalliance ultimately made the position of the educators untenable, leading to their collective resignation in April of 1920, only eight months after the *Kinderheim* had opened.<sup>61</sup>

What brought about this disillusioning outcome, as Bernfeld contended in the opening pages of his report, was the “passive resistance” of the financial backers of the experiment, a resistance expressive more of an “instinctive and dull” repudiation of the work of the young educators than a reflective, considered rejection of their ideas. On a more fundamental level,

---

<sup>61</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 41, 29, 10.

however, what the conflict indicated for Bernfeld was the fact that the class struggle had thoroughly penetrated the Jewish *Gemeinde*. Having supplanted the liberal assimilationists, the establishment Zionists, who, with the financial backing of the JDC, were responsible for administering the *Kinderheim*, had only come to replicate the *bürgerliche* assumptions of the previously hegemonic Jewish liberals. As a consequence, the essential divide in the Jewish community, Bernfeld insisted, was no longer between assimilationists and Zionists but between different principles of Jewish life, namely the capitalist bourgeois and the socialist proletarian. The greater the pressure of the “proletarian masses” of “*ostjüdische* refugees,” the more the Jewish bourgeoisie – establishment Zionists and liberals alike – retreated into a conservative ideology of charity, Bernfeld argued. In a scathing condemnation, he concluded that only by wresting the work of youth welfare from the “sabotage of the Jewish bourgeoisie” could it become anything other than “an atrocious apparatus” that salvages “miniscule portions of the immiserated *Kindermassen* for an insecure existence as tradespeople and petty bourgeoisie.”<sup>62</sup>

The task of fashioning an anti-bourgeois form of youth welfare required the adoption of new mode of interaction between adults and children. Yet Bernfeld insisted that a description of explicit pedagogical methods would fail to capture the essence of this new approach, because what distinguished the new educator was above all the “primary affective relationship” to the child, one grounded in “unconditional love and respect.” Referring to the work of Maria Montessori, Berthold Otto, and Gustav Wyneken as inspirations, Bernfeld argued that the Baumgarten educators sought to bring the ideas and principles of these reform pedagogues into a “living synthesis.” The form this new education took was characterized much more by attentive inactivity (“observing, watching, living”) than by active intervention (“exhorting, punishing, teaching,

---

<sup>62</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 20, 17, 23, 17, 19.

demanding, forbidding”). We would have been hard pressed to explain “what we actually did,” Bernfeld acknowledged – “invariably, we would have far more to say about what the children did.”<sup>63</sup>

In the eyes of the Baumgarten educators, what was at stake in this new pedagogical ethos was a basic shift in the center of gravity within the educational relationship. What made this shift even more remarkable in the Baumgarten experiment, however, was the extraordinary risk it seemed to entail in the catastrophic postwar context. An “indescribable disorder,” in Bernfeld’s description, prevailed over the first days and weeks of the experiment’s existence – the entire *Kinderheim* was pervaded by the children’s uncontrolled, primitive desires and by simmering aggression that was discharged in a range of asocial behaviors. Traditional authoritarian measures, while they might have succeeded in imposing and enforcing an external order, would have prevented the teachers from being *with* the children, Bernfeld noted. Rather than standing over them, issuing threats and demands, during the chaotic mealtimes, the Baumgarten teachers ate scattered among the children, getting to know them but only amplifying the general commotion. Only very slowly did order and quiet arise in the mess hall, radiating from individual points – the places of the teachers – and drawing in ever-greater circles. The order that emerged, since it was an expression of a “progressive refinement of the social consciousness” rather than an artificial arrangement imposed and sustained by external violence, represented, in Bernfeld’s words, a genuine cultural advance.<sup>64</sup>

The paradox of the Baumgarten experiment was that a pedagogy premised on an “apparent *laissez aller, laissez faire*,” could achieve transformations of character on a scale far exceeding the capacities of traditional pedagogical techniques. Like the ideal educators he envisioned in his

---

<sup>63</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 50, 42, 50, 9, 43.

<sup>64</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 61, 44-5.

educational utopia of 1919, Bernfeld explained that the young Baumgarten teachers placed their faith in “the developmental laws of the child’s mind,” which they trusted to guide the process of creating psychic and social order from the anarchic turmoil of the first weeks and months of the experiment. Rather than attempting to quell or contain the disorder from without, the Baumgarten educators sought to shape it from within, or rather, to guide and facilitate the process of immanent self-formation that unfolded simultaneously on the social level of the *Kinderheim* and within the children’s psyches. The pedagogical habitus of the Baumgarten educators, premised as it was on a far-reaching self-restraint, thus paradoxically, opened onto a quasi-demiurgic conception of education as a process of creating order out of the psychosocial anarchy of the affect and drive life of the dissocial child.<sup>65</sup>

“Only so much was clear to us from the outset,” Bernfeld wrote, “that the children could not be the will-less objects of our power, the disenfranchised (*rechtlose*) victims of our educational techniques, that naturally *they* had to shape their own affairs themselves.” The combination of a liberal pedagogical ethos premised on attentive inactivity (on *möglichst wenig tun*) with far-reaching ambitions generated a tension that runs throughout Bernfeld’s report. While the teachers sought to avoid any interventions that might impede the supposedly natural unfolding of the children’s innate impulse to create order from chaos, they also aimed to comprehensively structure the social environment of the school in a manner conducive to the emergence of a particular social subjectivity. The tension inherent in this bifurcated sense of responsibilities was most apparent at the outset of the experiment when material deprivations and the hardships imposed by the primitive living conditions generated an incessant stream of complaints from the children. Faced with this frankly aggressive behavior, the young educators placed themselves “wholeheartedly on the side

---

<sup>65</sup> “Vor jeder Schöpfung war das Chaos, und es ist gewiss eine Begabungsprobe für den organisierenden Pädagogen, ob er den Mut zum Chaos hat oder nicht” (61). Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 60, 47, 47, 61, 59.

of the children,” acknowledging the validity of their grievances and their “full right to material happiness.” Yet they also recognized that the “spiteful, demanding” character of their complaints indicated that they fulfilled a deeper, psychological need. By complaining for weeks and months on end, Bernfeld explained, the children discharged the pathogenic affects that had accumulated over the preceding years of hardship. The compulsive airing of grievances was thus a necessary “detour,” and one that could not have been avoided without endangering the end result.<sup>66</sup>

This end result depended on far more than the liberal tolerance and sympathy of the educators, however – though they identified with the children and recognized that their incessant complaining had to be allowed to run its course, the young educators simultaneously set about fashioning the social forms intended to discipline manifestations of asocial behavior. For Bernfeld, the process of transforming “heaps” of “inconsiderate egoists” into social subjects was fundamentally a libidinal one: with the abreaction of their pent-up aggression, the way was cleared for the development of a new affect-life in which “considerable quantities of liberated libido” could be invested in the teachers and the home itself at the same time as it bound their ever-richer emotional lives to their companions. If the emphasis on libido suggested that the process of resocialization unfolded without compulsion, Bernfeld was under no illusions concerning the essential nature of education: “No pedagogy was capable of dissolving the antinomy between the justified will of the child and the justified will of the teacher; rather pedagogy consists in this antinomy.” It was, however, an essential difference, Bernfeld noted, whether the result of this confrontation was a one-sided subjugation or a psychological compromise in which portions of both oppositional standpoints were integrated in a fashion the child could freely accept. If education consisted at base in an irresolvable contradiction between two wills, the *Schulgemeinde*,

---

<sup>66</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 52-4

as “the organization of this pedagogical ethos of compromise,” functioned both as the point of convergence of these antagonistic wills and the space in which the resulting antinomy was contained and mediated.<sup>67</sup>

In situating contradiction at the heart of the *Schulgemeinde*, Bernfeld’s 1921 report diverged subtly but significantly from his earlier writings on *Jugendkultur*, in which the idea of the *Schulgemeinde* represented less an organization for mediating between divergent wills than an ideal superstructure reflecting and articulating the unified will of youth amid their manifold particularity. As Bernfeld noted, it took a considerable time until we realized that the Baumgarten *Kinderschulgemeinde* was something different from the collective assembly in the youth movement – what was the adequate expression and creative form for the former, would inevitably have had an alienating and confusing effect on the latter. In marked contrast to the idealistic expectations of the Baumgarten pedagogues, the *Schulgemeinde* that emerged in the first months of the children’s home was “arid, dull, and meager.”<sup>68</sup> The comparative youth of the majority of children, together with their culturally alien upbringing and the cumulative traumas of the past years, left the young educators without the most basic material for the realization of their vision of *Jugendkultur*. The absence of the necessary preconditions for the establishment of the Wynekian school community meant that the *Schulgemeinde* that emerged under Bernfeld’s stewardship in the first months of the experiment was formed less around the principle of the free self-determination of youth and more around the basic requirements of enforcing social discipline.

The Baumgarten *Schulgemeinde* thus had to assume a set of tasks that appeared mundane and primitive in relation to the idealistic objectives of its prewar analogue. Formerly an expression of the idealism of adolescence, the *Schulgemeinde* and the practice of communal self-governance

---

<sup>67</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 41, 90, 52, 63-4.

<sup>68</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 80

it implemented now appeared to be the most effective means of instilling the sense of moral responsibility that Bernfeld had formerly posited as the essential character of youth. The rudimentary nature of its priorities demanded a more pragmatic approach to the question of student self-government, a necessity that led Bernfeld to anchor the *Schulgemeinde*, as a collective assembly of the youth, within a range of student-run groups and institutions that served to mediate the individual child's identification with the totality while upholding social order. The *Schulgemeinde* itself, Bernfeld contended, was "too large, too diverse, too heterogeneous" to allow, at the outset, for the child's uniform identification with its manifold parts, and it was here that the smaller groups grounded in intimate friendships helped to facilitate a nascent identification with the social totality.<sup>69</sup>

While expanding and deepening libidinal bonds served to draw the children into the collective, the latter, in turn, came to exert a disciplinary influence and one that initially came as a shock to the children. Recalling the first session of the student-run court-of-law, which occurred several days after the initial meeting of the *Schulgemeinde* and in front of the entirety of the *Kinderheim*, Bernfeld noted that the first verdict transformed the prevailing mood of "joviality and irony" into one of disbelief and outrage. The instant the children grasped that the principle of youth community was not a "joke" accompanied by the "lovely speeches of the director, comical votes and elections, but rather that it would intervene into the life of each individual, that it placed demands," a small revolt broke out. While the convicted were peaceful and satisfied with their punishments, consisting mainly of temporary exclusion from collective activities, the onlookers saw only too vividly what lay before them and wanted no part of the student-court and the principle of youth self-government – renouncing both, Bernfeld wrote, they insisted that "the director and

---

<sup>69</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 92-3.

the teacher should create order and punish.” By channeling these expressions of discontent into a call for new elections, however, Bernfeld ensured that the first and only rebellion against the *Schulgemeinde* culminated ironically in a reinforcement of its authority: “They were in short thoroughly naturalized (*eingebürgert*) and assimilated [themselves] with astonishing rapidity to the new order.”<sup>70</sup>

A major reason that the Baumgarten court became “so deeply rooted in the mental lives of the children,” despite their initial outrage at the baseness (*Gemeinheit*) of being punished by their peers, was the essential role it came to play in the psychological and emotional development of the Baumgarten children.<sup>71</sup> For the younger children in particular, the court represented the internal counterpart of the *Schulgemeinde*, Bernfeld explained, creating order in their psychical lives the way the latter did in their social relations. Culminating as they did in an experience of profound catharsis, the court sessions were “genuine tragedy in the Greek sense,” Bernfeld wrote – “after every successful court session the atmosphere was purified as if by a pair of lightning strokes.” By satisfying an unconscious need for punishment, the student court served to bind the children to the *Kinderheim* while purging them of their asocial drives. Through its procedures, the masochistic desires that initially dominated the children’s relationship to the world of adults and the thoroughly sadistic impulses directed towards the other children were effectively displaced onto the *Schulgemeinde* itself, which offered a sublimated gratification of their primitive desires.<sup>72</sup>

The positive corollary of the purgative and disciplining function of the Baumgarten court was the emergence of a “well-organized *Schulgemeinde* pulsed through by love, friendship, and

---

<sup>70</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 70, 72-3.

<sup>71</sup> “Die während der Verhandlung immer mehr angewachsene Erregung suchte einen Ausdruck, man näherte sich den Ausschußmitgliedern sehr drohend: Das gibt es nicht! Wir haben einen Ausschuß, damit er uns hilft! *Das ist ein Gemeinheit! Wir lassen uns von Euch nicht bestrafen!*” Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 72-3 (emphasis added).

<sup>72</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 89, 93.

community.”<sup>73</sup> The collective existence of the children and youth gave rise to a new feeling of community and a new socialistic morality, Bernfeld explained, one that required the “elimination or sublimation” of all selfishness and avidity for power and that significantly furthered the establishment of external order in the *Kinderheim*.<sup>74</sup> While the first meetings of the *Schulgemeinde* were dominated by Bernfeld himself and consisted mainly in instruction in civic morals and democratic procedure, by the end of the first month, the children had seized the initiative within the assembly – from a standpoint of “observant, often distressed, but completely passive” spectators, who approved with few objections whatever proposals he put forward, the children began to participate actively and to feel, rightly, that they themselves made the laws. Though the children and youth began to take responsibility for arranging their social relations, the *Schulgemeinde* nonetheless remained, for a considerable time, unsatisfying from the perspective of the educators. Only once the children overcame the phase in which the *Schulgemeinde* served merely as a technical apparatus for imposing and maintaining external order and began to help the children control and restrain *themselves* – reflecting what Bernfeld described as a “strong desire to master the chaos within them” – did it enter into the final phase of its development. The establishment of external order “was taken up with new gravity,” Bernfeld contended, “and from then on far surpassed all results that could have been attained by other methods.”<sup>75</sup>

What the deeper psychosexual processes were behind the development of the *Schulgemeinde* was something that eluded the comprehension of the Baumgarten educators at the

---

<sup>73</sup> “Aus drei Haufen von Egoisten ist eine wohlorganisierte Schulgemeinschaft, durchpulst von Liebe, Freundschaft, Gemeinschaft, ja selbst von Aufopferung erwachsen.” Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 41.

<sup>74</sup> “Alleüberall wurden Ansätze und Anläufe bemerkbar, nach der technischen Ordnung auch die moralische herzustellen, nicht nur den Lärm, sondern sich selbst zu beherrschen und zu bändigen... [Was] die Kinder hier zu erleben und zu erfinden begannen, war der Sozialismus, war jenes neue Gemeinschaftsgefühl, das irgendeinmal als Terror alle Ichgeilheit, alle Macht- und Selbstgierigen auf Erden vernichten oder sublimieren wird. So hat sich all dies nur wenige Wochen lang entalten duerfen. Die aufkeimende Sittlichkeit hat zunächst die äussere Ordnung sehr gefördert.” Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 81.

<sup>75</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 74, 76, 81-2.

time. In his report, Bernfeld sought to reconstruct the underlying dynamics with the help of the Freudian theory of the drives, turning in particular, to the concept of narcissism that Freud had elaborated prior to the war. At the outset of the experiment, he wrote, the children were “all without parents in the psychological sense; they had developed no or only very weak and transient libidinal fixations to their parents, the prototypes of all later love objects.” In the absence of a loved caretaker the children’s libido remained on a narcissistic basis, Bernfeld explained, reinforcing their *Ichtriebe* and lending their natural egoism the entirety of the *Triebmacht* that otherwise would be apportioned between self and other. Although they had long outgrown the anal, sadomasochistic period of infancy, the partial drives that flourished during this phase of development remained only weakly repressed or not at all. The resulting impoverishment of their egos left little energy free for sublimation and the lack of stable attachments to objects (what he termed a capacity for libidinal transference) made the children impervious to educational interventions – as Bernfeld stated bluntly, “children of such constitutions are uneducable (*unerziehbar*).”<sup>76</sup>

Gradually, however, this situation was reversed and the dynamics of regression and anomic disintegration gave way to a more constructive psychosexual dialectic. The *Schulgemeinde*, Bernfeld explained, played a vital role in this process by furnishing a form of “collective-ego” (*Gesamt-Ich*) to which the children could channel their narcissistic energies. Equally important was the role of intimate friendships, grounded in homoeroticism, which served to loosen the entanglement of their libidinal and ego drives: “Evidently the path from I to you very often passes through the friend, in whom a good portion of one’s own ego is still loved,” Bernfeld wrote. This

---

<sup>76</sup> Kinder solcher Konstitution sind unerziehbar. Die Erziehbarkeit reicht gerade so weit, wie die Übertragung reicht, also so weit, wie die Außenwelt, insbesondere der Erzieher, libidinous besetzt wird.” Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 92-3.

“detour” to an “expanded self-love” (*Umweg der erweiterten Selbstliebe*) both established the psychosexual foundations for the children’s educability and allowed for a libidinal investment in the *Schulgemeinde* itself, a process that Bernfeld acknowledged had not progressed far enough at the time their experiment came to a close.<sup>77</sup>

The theory Bernfeld furnished of the libidinal dynamics underlying the development of the *Schulgemeinde* posed a paradox that exposed some of the limits of his attempt to fashion an anti-bourgeois education. Having contended in 1916 that the liberation of Jewish war orphans from the confines of the traditional family left them free for absorption into the totality of the nation, Bernfeld appeared to recognize in 1921 that the children’s deliverance had come at the expense of a catastrophic regression. Faced with such raw material, the task of the Baumgarten educators became, in the first instance, one of restoring the very personality structure – a product of *bourgeois* upbringing – on which the prewar *Jugendkulturbewegung* was founded.<sup>78</sup> And as much as Bernfeld railed against the retarding influence of the Jewish bourgeoisie on the Baumgarten experiment, it was clear that his own conception of his pedagogical work now overlapped substantially with their own. For Bernfeld, the educational methods deployed were perhaps more important than the aims pursued in distinguishing his socialistic pedagogy from the bourgeois education he subjected to such uncompromising critique, but what no amount of invective could conceal was the extent to which the imposition of social discipline had come to displace the earlier, prewar priority of youth liberation. What this strange convergence reflected was ultimately a

---

<sup>77</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 93, 97, 93, 100.

<sup>78</sup> As Daniel Barth argues in a wonderfully perceptive reading, Bernfeld was confronted by the paradox that his vision of a proletarian socialist education was realizable only by means of bourgeois culture, represented in this case, by fifty girls from a relatively assimilated, middle-class background who formed, Barth argues, the “Kern reifer Kinder” (Bernfeld) around which the *Schulgemeinde* developed: “Bernfeld sieht sich also vor dem Paradox, dass er seine Vision einer proletarisch-sozialistischen Erziehung nur mithilfe bürgerlich-assimilierter Kinder auf die Beine bringen kann, weil die wirklich proletarischen Kinder nicht die geringsten Voraussetzungen dazu mitbringen.” Barth, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 233-34.

disorienting confrontation with one of the most troubling phenomena of the post-war moment, that of youth waywardness.

### Wayward Youth and Surrogate Fathers

Youth delinquency was, of course, far from a new problem in the last years of the war and the first years of peace. As Maureen Healy has argued, the widespread and well-publicized panic about delinquency and degeneration that erupted in Austria and Germany in early 1916 “actually signaled a return to earlier debates on youth waywardness that had been in circulation since the late nineteenth century.”<sup>79</sup> Yet if the delinquency scare that broke out in the last years of the war marked a return to an older discourse – following a brief interlude in which many believed the war would have a salutary effect on youth – it was nonetheless a return marked by a significant difference. What had previously been viewed largely as a phenomenon on the margins of bourgeois society was now felt to be invading the social domains it had previously spared. The absence of domestic paternal authority in thousands of families as a result of military conscription, together with the widely held belief that mothers were incapable of enforcing discipline within the family, gave rise to anxieties of a general loss of social control. Where many observers greeted the outbreak of the war as an opportunity to create a more harmonious society, the collective impact of the conflict and the dissolution of social distinctions it yielded were increasingly viewed by anxious observers as ominous signs of impending proletarianization.<sup>80</sup> Viewed through the lens of the status-anxieties the war had generated, phenomena that had previously been read as

---

<sup>79</sup> Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 215.

<sup>80</sup> See, for instance, Eduard Golias’s discussion of a “Verproletarisierung des Mittelstands,” in his essay “Krieg und Jugendverwahrlosung” (Leipzig, 1919), at 10. A prominent educator and the editor of the *Zeitschrift für Kinderschutz und Jugendfürsorge*, Golias was well aware of the longer-term history of the contemporary discourse surrounding delinquency, but nonetheless, framed it as a “Begleiterscheinung des Krieges” (16). What was essentially novel about the wartime phenomenon of youth waywardness, he stressed, was that the condition of proletarian youth was increasingly becoming the norm across society (3).

indications of the beneficent effects of the war – like the increasing social proximity of unsupervised bourgeois youth to children and adolescents from the lower classes – now seemed to point unmistakably to the deleterious consequences of the war on the upbringing and disciplining of the young.<sup>81</sup>

One of the most ambitious responses to the social devastation of the war and the epidemic of youth waywardness that accompanied it was the establishment by the municipality of Vienna of a massive reformatory (*Besserungsanstalt*) for delinquent youth in an abandoned refugee camp at Oberhollabrunn in Lower Austria. Presided over by August Aichhorn, a former nursery educator who had entered the administration of the youth welfare office (*Jugendamt*) earlier that year, the institute opened its doors to roughly 1,100 children and adolescents in May of 1919. Like the hospital barracks that provided the infrastructural framework of the Baumgarten experiment, the space that Aichhorn and his colleagues occupied in late 1918 was in rather wretched shape – both totally infected and badly dilapidated (*verwahrloste*), as he later recalled.<sup>82</sup> In another parallel, Aichhorn's *Fürsorgeerziehungsanstalt* proved to be a short-lived experiment, deepening financial pressures leading to its closure in early 1921 and the release of the majority of its youth. A remainder of several hundred, however, was transported to a new site at St. Andrä also in Lower Austria, which Aichhorn supervised until its closure in early 1923. While Aichhorn was entrusted by the *Gemeinde* with the leadership of both undertakings the fact that he stemmed from a Christian Social milieu generated a fraught relationship with the new Social Democratic municipal authorities. In spite of his own political inactivity, the relationship only deteriorated as the Social

---

<sup>81</sup> The brutalizing effect of the war on male youth, as evidenced by the increasingly violent nature of their play and their apparent disregard for established authority, was closely connected, in the eyes of many observers, to the general physical degeneration caused by wartime scarcity and the desperation this material hardship created. See Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 250.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Thomas Aichhorn, *Wer war August Aichhorn. Briefe, Dokumente, unveröffentlichte Arbeiten* (Vienna, 1976), 33.

Democrats consolidated their control of the structures of municipal governance in the early 1920s. Recognizing that his position had become untenable, Aichhorn declined to put himself forward as a potential leader for the institute that the municipality established after the dissolution of the St. Andrä facility, opting instead to return to the *Jugendamt* and take up a less prominent position in the new network of child guidance clinics (*Erziehungsberatungsstellen*) created by the Social Democratic municipal government.<sup>83</sup>

Aichhorn's 1925 study, titled *Verwahrloste Jugend. Die Psychoanalyse in der Fürsorgeerziehung*, drew from both sets of experiences, his leadership of the Oberhollabrunn and St. Andrä institutes as well as his subsequent counseling work within the municipal clinics. Defying the imputation of conservatism, Aichhorn's work reflected the strongly progressive spirit of welfarist and pedagogical thought in the wake of the war. As he framed the broad postwar shift in the politics of youth welfare at the outset of *Verwahrloste Jugend*, his rhetoric bore an unmistakably Social Democratic valence: if earlier such assistance "originated in a charitable sensibility and was a voluntary act," Aichhorn wrote, "At present, it has become – out of an ever deeper social sensibility – a duty, a recognition of the right that the individual has from society."<sup>84</sup> Yet in contrast to Bernfeld and a number of Social Democratic theorists, the family constituted the framework within which Aichhorn's thought unfolded – one might say, its point of departure and return. Far from presenting an opportunity to replace familial authority with that of the collective, as Bernfeld and others desired, the upheavals of the preceding years pointed, for Aichhorn, to the

---

<sup>83</sup> Aichhorn's difficult relationship with the Social Democratic *Gemeinde* and, in particular, to the leader of the *Wohlfahrts- und Gesundheitswesen*, Julius Tandler, are discussed in Thomas Aichhorn, *Wer war August Aichhorn* and Renate Göllner, "Psychoanalytisch-pädagogische Praxis ohne Ideologie vom 'Schädling': August Aichhorns Erziehungsberatung zwischen Jugendamt und Psychoanalytischer Vereinigung," *Luzifer-Amor* 16 (2003): 8-36.

<sup>84</sup> "Gegenwärtig ist sie aus einem sich immer mehr vertiefenden sozialen Empfinden heraus zur Pflicht geworden, aus der Anerkennung des Rechtes, das der Einzelne an die Gesellschaft hat." Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 8-9. Significantly, these passages, which disclose the progressive spirit of the work, were excised from the English-language translation.

necessity of rehabilitating and reinstating the family as an effective agent of *Erziehung*. While the needs of the individual youth might often justify the intervention of external factors in the life of the family and even the deprivation of negligent or abusive fathers of their traditional authority, the aim for Aichhorn was the reintegration of the delinquent into the social and familial life against which he or she had rebelled.<sup>85</sup> Where Bernfeld aspired to fashion an alternative group identity in his experiment, Aichhorn's work remained focused on the objective of resocialization (*wieder-sozial-werden*): though he insisted that "*Erziehung* in the welfare education institute is and remains a *Massenerziehung*," group dynamics were significant only insofar as they assisted in the rehabilitation of the individual for social life.<sup>86</sup>

Yet in spite of these limits, the experiments in mass education that Aichhorn led, experiences he revisited in a series of lectures before the publication of *Wayward Youth*, were radically novel undertakings. Expanding on a theme he had first sounded in these earlier lectures, Aichhorn drew a glaring contrast in chapter seven of *Wayward Youth* between the modern *Fürsorgeerziehungsanstalt* that he and his colleagues had realized at Oberhollabrunn and the antiquated *Besserungsanstalten* that it sought to replace. What strikes one first in institutions of the latter type, Aichhorn wrote, is "the withdrawn, sullen character of the youth": "everywhere only timid, hate-filled glances upwards. Nowhere do the youth look you freely and openly in the eye." A "mortifying order" prevails throughout, only deepening the dissocial youth's alienation from society and contributing to the pent-up rage that had accumulated within them: "One cannot suppress a shudder at the quantity of hate that has accumulated in such young people, and that rather than being resolved is only concentrated to be discharged later onto society." Rather than

---

<sup>85</sup> On the necessity of such a far-reaching intervention see Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 9. See also the essays later collected in the volume *Psychoanalyse und Erziehungsberatung* (Munich, 1970).

<sup>86</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 183.

reconciling delinquent and society, the old reformatories protected the latter by imprisoning the former. The youth it contains were unable to bear the “compulsion of social life,” Aichhorn noted, “and yet it is through such institutional compulsion (*Anstaltszwang*) that they are supposed to be resocialized?”<sup>87</sup>

Having painted such a bleak and unsettling picture, Aichhorn led his fictional visitor on a tour of the modern *Fürsorgeerziehungsanstalt*. By comparison with the strictly regimented and hierarchically ordered world of the old institute, the modern version resembled a world turned upside down. In his droll description, boisterous but good-natured youth spilled out from the institute into the surrounding countryside, angering local residents who in turn brought their complaints to Aichhorn himself. Where the old reformatories had contained and suppressed delinquency, the new institute paradoxically figured as the point of irradiation for youthful exuberance – having burst from the claustrophobic and oppressively regimented confines of the old institute, the very youth that society had attempted to sequester now poured out into the unbounded landscape of the new, democratic era. The dismantling of barriers signaled nothing less than an epochal transition, one that was equally evident in the transformation of the leader of the institute in Aichhorn’s description. Rather than holding himself aloof from the delinquents under him in the style of the old reformatory directors, the new leader was situated squarely in the midst of the expanding disorder. The somewhat beleaguered, if nonetheless calm and forbearing figure of the modern educator, furnished a glaring contrast to the alternatively negligent and abusive authorities that previously dominated the lives of the delinquent youth.<sup>88</sup>

Where strict discipline and physical violence were considered essential to establishing and

---

<sup>87</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 189-90. Aichhorn had broached similar themes (often using the same language) in his 1922 lecture for admission to the *WPV* “Über die Erziehung in Besserungsanstalten,” *Imago. Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse* 9/2 (1923): 189-221.

<sup>88</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 190-91.

maintaining order in the old reformatories, Aichhorn and his followers renounced all brutal techniques from the outset. Echoing Simmel's critique of the prevailing methods for treating the war neuroses (chapter two), Aichhorn contended that the older procedures for managing waywardness had only sufficed to suppress its manifestations, in the process increasing a latent associability that threatened to resurface, with renewed violence, once the external discipline was relaxed. If delinquency was to be actually cured then no alternative remained, he insisted, then to be responsive to the needs of the dissocial youth, even if that meant that, "at the outset, things were a little rough-and-tumble (*ein wenig wüst zugeht*) and 'sensible people' shook their heads over the fact." This novel approach reflected a fundamentally new perspective on delinquency, one that like Bernfeld's therapeutic education and Reich's work with "impulsive characters" (chapter three) was grounded in empathic identification with dissocial youth. "From the very beginning, it was clear to us on a purely intuitive basis, that our main task was above all to bring pleasure" into the lives of the children and adolescents, Aichhorn contended:

To none of us would it have crossed our minds to see in them delinquents or criminals before whom society must be protected; for us they were people to whom life had brought too great a burden, whose negative attitude towards society was justified; hence for whom a milieu must be created in which they could feel at ease.

Yet if Aichhorn and his colleagues placed themselves unequivocally on the side of the wayward youth, they did so not simply on the basis of their identification with their charges but also because of the practical necessity of grasping how life appeared to him or her. As Aichhorn specified, the statement *er hat recht* meant simply that the delinquent must have reasons for his actions, ones that the *Fürsorgeerzieher* was tasked with discovering.<sup>89</sup>

A disciplinary procedure would all but foreclose the possibility of identifying these causes, Aichhorn specified. Even worse, since it would conform to the delinquent's prior experience, it

---

<sup>89</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 186, 192, 101.

would prevent the institutional milieu from providing the corrective emotional experience that the dissocial youth required. Almost without exception it was possible to ascertain that the wayward youth in question came from a “devastated, unhinged, or unharmonious family milieu,” Aichhorn asserted. Deprived by this disruption of the private sphere of the point of rest (*Ruhepunkt*) that normally allowed the individual to bear the shocks of social life, the delinquent was incapable of keeping his “drive life” within socially acceptable bounds. The figure of the *Fürsorgeerzieher* – together with the containing environment of the institutional milieu – thus had to restore the delinquent’s shattered equilibrium by providing the equanimous center around which the chaos could take form. Yet the fact that the majority of delinquents stemmed from a disrupted and brutal familial milieu meant that the new milieu also had to perform what Aichhorn called a “practical psychology of reconciliation.” The gross deficiencies of their upbringing, and above all, the failure of reality to meet even their most basic needs for tenderness (*Zärtlichkeitsbedürfniss*) in childhood, had prevented the delinquent youth from making a “timely compromise between pleasure and reality” and thus left them in thrall to their most primitive desires. Despite having acquired a basic capacity to survive and compete in the harsh reality they inhabited, on the level of cultural development (*Kulturfähigkeit*) the delinquent youth remained at an infantile stage – “it appeared,” Aichhorn wrote, “as if the wayward youth had been forced to leap without transition from unconscious pleasure-world of the child into the raw reality” of adulthood.<sup>90</sup>

The truth of this diagnosis was born out in exemplary fashion by a specific group of youth that Aichhorn labeled simply “the aggressive.” Following the advice of a psychiatric assistant, Erwin Lazar, Aichhorn and his colleagues divided the institute’s youth into groups according to temperament and the form of dissociality they exhibited. Doing so, it was believed, would not

---

<sup>90</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 199, 219, 193, 196, 194, 249.

only ease the educator's task, since the same pedagogical measures could be applied to the entire group, but would also enable the group itself, on account of its relative homogeneity, to exert a moderating, stabilizing influence on the individual. After the initial process of dividing the children, however, a dozen youth were left over, ones whose flagrant incompatibility made them intolerable to the members of the other groups. Making a virtue of necessity, Aichhorn and his colleagues created a special group out of this unassimilable remainder.<sup>91</sup>

For each of the children placed in this group the libidinal dialectic of *Erziehung* – in which the child came to realize that a greater sum of pleasure was obtainable through socially acceptable rather than through primitive, perverse means – had tragically never really begun. Confronted with a vicious, implacable reality – “all had been horribly beaten,” Aichhorn noted – each of the children had developed an attitude of profound mistrust towards social authority and of hatred towards their environments. In individual cases, they had displaced their love entirely from humans onto animals, Aichhorn explained: “They spoke, for example, of their rabbits with the utmost tenderness only immediately thereafter to violently threaten their companions.” Like the initial weeks of the Baumgarten experiment, only in a more concentrated and thus volatile fashion, the first months after the group's formation were dominated by a pervasive anomic violence. As in the Baumgarten experiment, it was mealtimes that offered the most vivid illustration of the prevailing disorder: after several days marked by constant tumult, the lunch table finally remained unoccupied, each child having sought out a corner of the room in which to cower while devouring his food. “Screaming and howling could be heard from a distance,” Aichhorn wrote, “and the barracks looked as if they housed a band of lunatics.”<sup>92</sup>

Far from diminishing, however, the children's aggression only intensified in the face of the

---

<sup>91</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 184-5, 213-15.

<sup>92</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 217-19.

benign impassivity of the educators. If the absence of brutal punishment led the children to initially view the educators as weaklings, the sense of impunity this generated quickly gave way to one of desperation: the failure of their aggression to provoke the expected punitive response from the representatives of social authority called into question the children's entire orientation towards life, in the process, both exposing and exacerbating an unconscious desire for physical punishment. As it became increasingly clear to the children that this masochistic desire – a reflection of a longing for a return of the old fathers and for a restoration of the world as they understood it – would go unfulfilled, a dramatic shift occurred in the psychological dynamics behind their eruptions. As Aichhorn explained, their outbreaks of rage came to take on the character of a pseudo or merely apparent aggression (*Scheinaggression*), a pattern of behavior to be played out in front of the personnel but lacking in inner conviction.<sup>93</sup>

The children's deepening despair ultimately led to an emotional collapse – in each of the children, aggressive provocation suddenly gave way to a phase of bitter weeping (*Wutweinen*), a shift that in turn opened onto a period of marked lability. The weeks following this collapse were dominated by fluctuations between intervals of good behavior and agreeableness, on the one hand, and sudden fits of ill temper, on the other, with the latter gradually losing their earlier intensity. The children's growing attachments to both their educators and their companions over this period paradoxically gave rise to new problems, however. As Aichhorn explained, the process of becoming emotionally dependent on the adults around them dramatically exacerbated the children's sensitivities, generating antagonisms that repeatedly obstructed the emergence of a stable collective. With the abandonment of the old, devastated barracks and the transition to a new, completely refurbished one, however, the “dead point” that Aichhorn and his colleagues had

---

<sup>93</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 220-21.

arrived at following the weeping epidemic was effectively overcome – the children had been welded together into a “homogenous mass” and one that now posed no greater difficulties than any other group.<sup>94</sup>

In many respects, the aggressive group was the exception that proved the rule for Aichhorn, not only because it revealed most clearly the challenges confronted by the institutional educator but also because it represented the most powerful confirmation of his resolute renunciation of violence. The essential precondition for a successful treatment was the development of a positive affective attachment (transference) between the child and the educator, Aichhorn contended.<sup>95</sup> From the outset, however, the child’s aggression, whether directed at its parents or at the environment in general, represented an enormous obstacle to the emergence of the affectionate, trusting relationship necessary for the child’s resocialization through therapeutic re-education. The element of surprise was thus essential to Aichhorn’s work: in order to overcome the child’s well-founded suspicion of social authority and the hostility that accompanied it, the educator had to disrupt its expectations, even going so far as to acknowledge that in the child’s place he (the educator) would have done no differently.<sup>96</sup>

As Bernfeld had written four years earlier, the absence of any punitive exercise of authority on the part of the educators left the Baumgarten children with an uncanny feeling of having lost touch with reality: as the thunderclouds repeatedly failed to open up following their transgressions, their worldview fragmented and eventually fell to pieces.<sup>97</sup> In a fundamentally similar vein, Aichhorn’s work sought to displace the delinquent youth into an unfamiliar and disconcerting

---

<sup>94</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 221-25. “Nach der Zeit des Wutweins kam die der starken Labilität. Zeitweilig waren die Kinder brav, sehr brav sogar, untereinander so verträglich, daß man an ihrer Aufführung Freude haben konnte, dann plötzlich trat wieder ein Umschwung mit Wutausbrüchen und erhöhten Führungsschwierigkeiten ein. Die Zornanfalle erreichten aber nach und nach nicht mehr die frühere Intensität” (221).

<sup>95</sup> On the importance of the transference see Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 155, 288.

<sup>96</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 159.

<sup>97</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 48.

situation. As he described it, this involved meeting the child's desire for punitive authority halfway by taking on the role of a surrogate father, and yet, refusing to satisfy the need that was thus awakened.<sup>98</sup> The combination of frustration and disorientation this created in the child gave rise to a welter of conflicting emotions that in turn produced an overwhelming need for catharsis. Just as it had in the opening weeks of the Baumgarten experiment, the discharge of the children's pent-up aggression diminished their sadomasochistic impulses towards the educators and cleared the way for the emergence of tender feelings. What followed was a process of fashioning a "homogenous mass" of youth on the basis of their common attachment to the father-leader, an attachment anchored in a new psychical representative of social authority.<sup>99</sup> In the final chapter of *Wayward Youth*, Aichhorn explained that the overcoming of youth waywardness consisted in a correction of the delinquent's character through an alteration of his or her ego ideal (*Ichideal*). Through his function as an *Ersatz-Vater*, the *Fürsorgeerzieher* represented "the principal object" in this process, one whose incorporation as a model into the child's psyche would ensure the latter's reintegration into social life.<sup>100</sup>

"The rectification of delinquency is, in the final instance, always a libidinal problem," Aichhorn explained.<sup>101</sup> If his account lent the impression that the clearing away of aggression left the way open for the construction of a social bond grounded in positive, libidinal attachments, it nonetheless skirted a number of other problems, ones that were inherent in the very authority – simultaneously psychic and social – that it sought to erect. Like Bernfeld's discussion of the

---

<sup>98</sup> "Der Fürsorgeerzieher wird der Vater, die Mutter sein und doch nicht ganz; er wird deren Forderungen vertreten und doch nicht so wie diese; er wird im richtigen Augenblicke dem Verwahrlosten zu erkennen geben, daß er ihn durchschaut hat und doch nicht dieselben Konsequenzen ziehen wie die Eltern; *er wird dem Strafbedürfnis entgegenkommen und es doch nicht ganz befriedigen.*" Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 159.

<sup>99</sup> "Diese intensive Objektbindung der einzelnen an die gleichen Führerpersonen bahnte im weiteren Verlauf eine Identifizierung dieser einzelnen untereinander an, rief also eine Gefühlsbindung der Zöglinge untereinander hervor." Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 223-24.

<sup>100</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 288.

<sup>101</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 197.

Baumgarten experiment, Aichhorn's 1925 text evaded the question of where and how aggression returns during this process: the simmering, anomic violence that dominated the earliest phase of both experiments seemed simply to vanish into the libidinal bonds of the new *Gemeinschaft*. "What played out before us," Aichhorn wrote, "was thus the drama of how a formerly isolated dissocial gradually began to integrate himself into a social organization (*Masse*) on the level of his affects."<sup>102</sup> Yet by leading their wayward charges through a dramatically intensified process of re-socialization, the Baumgarten and Oberhollabrunn experiments revealed dangers inherent in the dynamic construction of psychosocial authority. Since the same dangers would haunt the social psychology that Freud developed over these years, his study of the formation of social groups can help clarify what was at stake in the civilizing process that unfolded in the Oberhollabrunn and Baumgarten experiments.

#### Nursery Politics and the Problem of Aggression

Unlike Aichhorn, Bernfeld wrote his report on the Baumgarten experiment without the benefit of Freud's *Mass Psychology and Ego Analysis*, which appeared the same year.<sup>103</sup> The same limitation marked a study published the following year, *Vom Gemeinschaftsleben der Jugend*, a work that compiled contributions from several Baumgarten educators under Bernfeld's editorial supervision. In a prefatory note to the work, Bernfeld bemoaned the unfortunate coincidence of their studies with Freud's own, contending that it had significantly limited the authors' ability to analyze the collective psychosocial lives of adolescents.<sup>104</sup> More striking, however, is the extent to which Bernfeld's work from this period in fact anticipated many of the central ideas Freud would lay out

---

<sup>102</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 225.

<sup>103</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse," *GW XIII* (1921): 73-161.

<sup>104</sup> *Vom Gemeinschaftsleben der Jugend. Beiträge zur Jugendforschung*, ed. Siegfried Bernfeld (Leipzig, 1922).

in *Massenpsychologie*. In their eagerness to fashion new – post-traditional and anti-bourgeois – forms of collective education, Bernfeld and his followers were impelled to think through some of the basic dynamics of group psychology independently, arriving at a perspective remarkably similar to that which Freud developed in his study that same year.

While the established discourse of crowd psychology, a deeply conservative tradition that originated among political reactionaries in late nineteenth century France, was concerned almost exclusively with the provisional and highly volatile crowds that emerged at moments of social and political upheaval, both Freud and Bernfeld were primarily interested in more stable collective formations that Freud termed “artificial masses.”<sup>105</sup> Not the ephemeral mobs that so horrified bourgeois observers, but the so-called pillars of society that usually held them in check (e.g. the church and the army) were the main subject of Freud’s analysis, just as the organized collectivity of youth, the *Schulgemeinde*, was the privileged object of the practical mass psychology fashioned in the Baumgarten experiment. For the creators of the field of mass psychology, the psychological dynamics that prevailed in the mass were manifestations of irreducible social forces – a “group mind” or “herd instinct” – and ones that were fundamentally antagonistic to the individual as a singular, self-identical subject: with the emergence of a mass, in Le Bon’s description, the psychological distinctiveness of the individual fell away and in its place a primitive collective mind, a product of racial inheritance, came to the fore, leaving the individual exposed and vulnerable to the force of suggestion.<sup>106</sup>

While Freud accepted this traditional account as an accurate phenomenological description

---

<sup>105</sup> Freud, “Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse,” 101-8.

<sup>106</sup> See Freud, “Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse,” 74, 78-81. The tradition of crowd psychology inaugurated by Le Bon in late 19<sup>th</sup> century France had an enormous impact on the way Central European intellectuals made sense of mass phenomena over the first decades of the twentieth century. For an overview of this intellectual tradition in interwar Central Europe see Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy*. Freud’s contribution drew heavily not only from Le Bon’s 1895 *Psychologie des foules* but also from the British surgeon Wilfred Trotter’s 1916 *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* and the American psychologist William McDougall’s 1920 *The Group Mind*.

of the impact of the mass (*qua* crowd) on the individual subject, as a theory capable of explaining the phenomena it described, it appeared to him to be inadequate. By shifting the locus of investigation from revolutionary crowds to the organized mass formations at the base of social stability, Freud's theory sought to deconstruct the superficial antagonism between individual and mass that dominated traditional group psychology. "Individual psychology is from the outset on also simultaneously social psychology," he wrote.<sup>107</sup> No attempt to understand the genesis of the psychology of the individual could thus dispense with the comprehension of the social matrices within which it developed.

Bernfeld's concern throughout his *Baumgarten* experiment with fashioning social forms necessary for the emergence of both a well-regulated *Kinderheim* and of an organized *Tribleben* in the child itself reflected a fundamentally similar conception of the relationship between individual and social psychology, one characterized not by opposition but by complementarity. Where he and Freud diverged, ever so slightly, was in the position they accorded the leader within the mass formation. For Freud, what defined the organized mass and brought it into existence was the filial attachment of its members to a leader, a stand-in for the Oedipal father and the perceived representative of individual psychology as distinct from the collective consciousness of the mass. From the common libidinal bond to the leader emerged a reciprocal identification among the members of the mass themselves, and it was this, rather than a mystical *Massenseele*, a primary herd instinct, or the pure force of suggestion, that accounted for the strong bond of commonality (*Gemeinsamkeit*) that both generated and preserved the mass formation.<sup>108</sup>

For all his insistence on the importance of a *Führer und Meister* to the fulfillment of youth's cultural and political mission, Bernfeld was far less willing than Freud to trace the origins of the

---

<sup>107</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse," 73 (translation modified).

<sup>108</sup> See Freud, "Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse," 132, 135, 118.

community of youth – and the sentiments of solidarity and comradeship that animated it – back to the Oedipal configuration of earliest childhood. Though Freud recognized that every individual was a component of multiple masses and thus exclusively beholden to none and that the process of internalizing social authority could (paradoxically) grant the individual a relative independence from external, intersubjective domination – even allowing for the displacement of the figure of the leader with a shared ethical ideal – the logic of his *Mass Psychology* pointed inexorably back to the nursery as the locus for the emergence of social subjectivity and democratic sensibilities.<sup>109</sup> Far from reflecting an instinct for sociability or what Alfred Adler termed *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, the democratic ideal of equality so central to the inner workings of the mass was originally the product of sibling rivalry, Freud argued – out of the competition of youth for parental (and, above all, *paternal*) affection emerged a demand for equality of treatment and a willingness to relinquish claims and forgo privileges in the expectation that others would do likewise. In Freud's account, the child's sense of justice was thus a reaction formation, a transfiguration of an original envy, and one that never completely broke free of its infantile origins.<sup>110</sup>

Even as it offered a potential source of theoretical support for Bernfeld's thought, the infantilizing implications of Freud's mass psychology represented a challenge to his idealistic politics of youth autonomy. Where Freud's mass remained in thrall to its constituents' earliest dependencies and was filled with a longing for the father in the form of an authoritarian ruler (“Sie respektiert nur die Kraft...will beherrscht und unterdrückt werden...”), Bernfeld's writings on *Jugendkultur* envisioned a *Schulgemeinde* in which the attachment of youth to their leaders served to break the hold of infantile attachments and to preserve the inner liberation of youth from the

---

<sup>109</sup> Freud, “Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse,” 133-4.

<sup>110</sup> Freud, “Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse,” 134. On this subject see especially, John Forrester, “Justice, Envy, and Psychoanalysis,” in *Dispatches from the Freud Wars: Psychoanalysis and its Passions* (Cambridge, 1998), 13-43.

world of their fathers.<sup>111</sup> Not filial devotion, but adolescent reverence marked the relationship of the youth to their leaders in Bernfeld's ideal *Schulgemeinde*. Equally important, where Freud treated the horizontal bond between the members of the mass as derivative of an attachment to a shared leader, Bernfeld was equally (if ambivalently) inclined to conceive of the leader's position within the mass as the spontaneously generated by the spirit of the youth themselves. Far from reenacting an infantilizing submission to patriarchal authority, the selection of leaders by youth appeared essential to their emancipation from the oppressive world of bourgeois patriarchy.

Yet the Baumgarten experiment disrupted these expectations and confronted Bernfeld with a more disturbing reality. In the same way that Aichhorn's delinquents were motivated in their provocations by an unconscious desire for punishment – for the restoration of the world as they understood it – the war orphans that Bernfeld and his fellow educators encountered subverted their intentions and renounced the form of independence offered them.<sup>112</sup> Faced with youth who demanded a disciplining – indeed punitive – exercise of authority, both Aichhorn and Bernfeld were forced to struggle to uphold their pedagogical ideals. Albeit in different fashions, they both resolutely resisted assuming the kind of authority that Freud regarded as essential for the formation of the mass. Bernfeld's description, for instance, of the essential, distinguishing characteristics of the new pedagogue could hardly be further removed from Freud's conception of the primal father, the first true individual and the prototype of all later leaders. Where the primal father was an

---

<sup>111</sup> Freud, "Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse," 84.

<sup>112</sup> Bernfeld's discussion of the formal pedagogical methods adopted in the Baumgarten experiment, which of course was a school as well as a home, echoes his discussion of the children's responses to the student-run court. The attempts of the young educators to implement a form of instruction based on reform pedagogical principles (specifically those of the *neugegründeten deutsch-österreichischen Staatserziehungsanstalten*, on which see chapter five) was met with "open resistance" by the children themselves, who demanded the restoration of what they understood to be a "richtige Schule," i.e. the "strict" schools with which they were familiar. See *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 103-105. In the remainder of the section on "Instruction," Bernfeld explained how the educators sought to compromise between the children's demands and their own progressive principles, an attempt that he now believed reflected their inadequate insight into the psychosocial function of the children's demands for disciplinary authority.

absolute narcissist who terrorized his sons and potential rivals in order to preserve his unlimited authority (in particular, over the women), the essential criterion of the new educator for Bernfeld – in addition to “unconditional love and respect for the children” – was “ruthless inhibition of all craving for power, all vanity, all longing for authority, and all desire to educate (*Erziehungsgelüste*) in oneself.”<sup>113</sup>

Yet as both Bernfeld and Aichhorn recognized, some form of leadership was essential if a well-regulated youth community was going to emerge, and on this subject, the considerable overlap in their views could not mask some striking divergences. Over the course of Bernfeld’s narrative, the Baumgarten *Schulgemeinde* evolved from a quasi-authoritarian institution in which all suggestions and principles emanated from Bernfeld himself, to a technical apparatus that effectively established and preserved order through the children’s active participation, and finally to a moral agency, one that not only structured their social lives but that had taken root in the children’s psyches.<sup>114</sup> In the process, the collective reciprocal influence of the children and youth on one another came to displace the passive, subservient relationship to authority that prevailed in the first weeks of the experiment. Yet it did so only by integrating the ethico-political principles Bernfeld espoused into its inner workings: precisely by avoiding any form of indoctrination and even the temptation to lecture the children, the teachers succeeded in anchoring their principles firmly in both the nascent community and in the children’s developing psyches. Echoing what he wrote on the role of the Baumgarten teachers in establishing order during mealtimes, Bernfeld commented that it made a great impression on the youth that the teachers did not sit above the them during the collective assemblies.<sup>115</sup> The new authority they sought to fashion was not one

---

<sup>113</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 50.

<sup>114</sup> This tripartite schema of the evolution of the Baumgarten *Schulgemeinde* is laid out clearly in Daniel Barth, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 178-202.

<sup>115</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 67.

that was exercised from above and without, but rather one that took its place below and within the mass and, as it turned out, was all the more effective for eschewing the trappings of traditional authority.

In marked contrast to Bernfeld's method, Aichhorn placed his own personality at the center of the process of resocialization. The social authority that Bernfeld saw incarnated by the community as a whole, was for Aichhorn, embodied almost exclusively within the person of the educator – the emergence of social sensibilities among the youth serving merely to indicate the strength of their primary attachment to the leader. As a consequence, Aichhorn was forced to shoulder massive responsibilities that required an always uncertain negotiation between the countervailing imperatives of pedagogical resocialization. Where Bernfeld's emphasis on fashioning social forms capable of facilitating the libidinal development and social disciplining of youth went hand-in-hand with a theory of childhood and adolescence in which the process of socialization unfolded with a law-like necessity, Aichhorn's procedure, and the transference relationship it was premised upon, placed a premium on the educator's tact – on his or her intuitive ability to chart a proper course through the uncertainties of the pedagogical relationship. Navigating this unstable terrain – one in which not only the delinquent, but also the educator himself seemed in danger of losing his equilibrium – required the adoption of a flexible pedagogical procedure, one capable of making sudden adjustments and of tacking between extremes in order to radically alter the child's relationship to his or her surroundings.

Writing about the challenges of establishing a positive transference in youth deeply (and, in his view, justifiably) suspicious of adult authority, Aichhorn contended that the delinquent generally comes fairly quickly to regard him not as an “authority to be combatted” (*die zu bekämpfende Autorität*) but rather as an “understanding ally” (*verständnisvolle Verbündete*). Yet

such an outcome was far from straightforward, and Aichhorn's description of his initial encounter with the delinquent youth reveals another, strikingly different, dimension to this relationship. While the ultimate aim of the first meeting was to establish the basis for a positive transference, Aichhorn noted that their first confrontation in fact commenced a "struggle for dominance," one that could last only moments or prove stubbornly persistent and from which he did not always emerge victorious. As Aichhorn described, his initial bearing towards the delinquent conveyed a frankly ominous message: "My behavior let the wayward youth sense from the very outset a power in me superior to his own. The consequence was to confirm his expectation of being confronted by a danger."<sup>116</sup> Though Aichhorn sought then to undermine the delinquent's expectation by relating to him in a manner distinctly different than that of the social authorities with which he was familiar, the aggressive tenor of their initial encounter left behind a troubling remainder, one that cannot be fully reconciled with Aichhorn's subsequent emphasis on the affectionate ties that emerge between the delinquent and the educator.

In particular, Aichhorn's discussion of his first meetings with his delinquent charges poses the difficult question of what happens to the latent violence of these encounters. Having been awakened by the threatening figure of the educator only to be deflected away and replaced with a positive attachment, the youth's aggression was left in limbo, contributing to the uncanny feeling of unease that the children felt in the face of Aichhorn's impassivity. While Aichhorn implied that most of this aggression was simply discharged, whether through violence directed against their peers or through the experience of catharsis, his own description of the development of the psychical agency (ego-ideal or superego) responsible for ensuring the delinquent's adaptation to social demands suggested another outcome. As long as it was not guided by the demands of

---

<sup>116</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 166-7.

society, Aichhorn argued, the active ego remains leaderless (*führerlos*) – to be social, he wrote, means to have such an psychic agency and to subordinate oneself to it without objection (*konfliktlos unterordnen*).<sup>117</sup> Aichhorn’s description of the delinquent’s *wieder-sozial-werden* thus suggested that the positive transference established between educator and youth only paved the way for the recapitulation of the latter’s submission on a more intimate stage. Far from being discharged, the sadomasochistic impulses that dominated the delinquent youth’s behavior at the outset of the resocializing process may have been pivotal to the construction of the very psychical agency that anchored him within the social.

A remarkably benign conception of the psychic representative of social authority prevails in Aichhorn’s work. Where Freud had characterized the superego in 1923 as the locus of internalized aggression and as a brutal, punitive agency within the psyche, the internal authority constructed through the process of resocializing the delinquent was the product, for Aichhorn, only of a positive libidinal attachment to the educator himself.<sup>118</sup> Despite his recognition that many delinquents transgressed social strictures out of an unconscious sense of guilt and a need for punishment, Aichhorn never confronted the challenge that such “victims of their morals” (*Opfer ihrer Moral*) posed for his aim of resocializing wayward youth through the development of a socially adjusted *Ichideal*.<sup>119</sup> A constant tension between social adaptation and masochistic submission runs through Aichhorn’s study along with the unrecognized difficulty of ensuring that the new, more intimate moral authority would not prove as punitive as the old. It was a challenge compounded, however, by his own understanding of the limits of his educational and therapeutic

---

<sup>117</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 266.

<sup>118</sup> Freud, “Das Ich und das Es,” *GW XIII* (1923): especially, 277-89.

<sup>119</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 285. The emerging field of psychoanalytic criminology rested heavily on this insight. Seminal works in the field include Theodor Reik, *Geständniszwang und Strafbedürfnis. Probleme der Psychoanalyse und der Kriminologie* (Leipzig, 1925) and Franz Alexander and Hugo Staub, *The Criminal, the Judge, and the Public: A Psychological Analysis* (New York, 1931).

intervention, which sought to resocialize the delinquent without altering the context responsible for his or her maladaptive development, limits that dictated that the wayward youth had not only to be cured, but, in fact, made immune to the pathological effects of their unreconstructed social milieu.<sup>120</sup>

If Aichhorn's modesty with regard to social reform raised the stakes and compounded the difficulties of his individualizing intervention, Bernfeld's totalizing ambition to create a new social environment by fashioning new forms of youth community exposed a somewhat different problem, one that inhered in the dynamics of group formation. At the crux of this problem was once again aggression, albeit now manifested in social behavior rather than turned against the ego. In his discussion of the emergence of community through the expansion – by means of sublimated homosexuality – of the youth's original narcissism, Bernfeld described how the initial anarchic period of Baumgarten's existence opened onto a period of rivalry between groups and of what might be called a battle of the sexes, one in which the boys were “without exception, at least primarily, the more active, aggressive” party. Within the groups, individual youth were willing to make sacrifices for one another and “a sort of social ethic” prevailed; those outside, however, were “goys,” “barbarians” who stood beyond moral laws (*Sittengesetz*). Remarkably, Bernfeld interpreted such hostilities as indications of a salutary development: had the experiment been allowed to continue, “without a doubt,” the struggles between the sexes would have grown much stronger, he argued, and “would have had a very fruitful influence on the youths' affective development.” Rather than posing a problem for the civilizing process as it unfolded in the Baumgarten experiment, the hostilities that rent the *Kinderheim* were, for Bernfeld, signs that their educational undertaking was on the right track; the expansion of narcissistic libido had simply not

---

<sup>120</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 225.

progressed far enough from its origin – “it had not yet attained through sublimation to the generality of ‘human’ [*Mensch*], rather it remained still at the stage of the narcissistic-homoerotic cathexis” of the friend and comrade.<sup>121</sup>

“No other way leads from bestiality to humanity than that through nationality,” Bernfeld had written in 1918; the single decisive factor in such developments was that the groups “were proceeding along the path to humanity.”<sup>122</sup> The interpretive schema that Bernfeld brought to bear on the process of group formation and individual socialization that unfolded within the *Kinderheim* thus informed an interpretation in which the problem of violence all but vanished – in marked contrast to the critical and pessimistic strains that surface elsewhere in his report, Bernfeld’s treatment of group hostilities is uncharacteristically naïve. While the unarticulated theory at work in such passages implied that the children’s aggression would eventually give way to – that is, be absorbed by and extinguished within – an ethical and affective universalism, what is far more apparent in the disturbing trajectory Bernfeld describes is that the violence that had been strewn anarchically throughout the *Kinderheim* in its first few weeks had come to assume clear, meaningful direction. In place of an anomic aggression emerged organized antagonisms as the pervasive violence was subordinated to an overarching process of collective self-definition.

For both Aichhorn and Bernfeld positive libidinal attachments seemed to offer a means of containing the rampant aggression of their young charges – what the transferential relationship to a surrogate father accomplished for Aichhorn was, in Bernfeld’s view, primarily the function of a feeling of communal solidarity, one capable of indefinite expansion to the point of eventually encompassing all of humanity. The implication, in both cases, that the forms of socialization that unfolded within their experiments would effectively neutralize the aggression they confronted, ran

---

<sup>121</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 97, 100, 97, 100.

<sup>122</sup> Quoted in Dudek, ‘*Er war halt genialer als die anderen*’, 175.

markedly counter to the deeply entangled relationship between libido and aggression in Freud's own social theory. In a theme he would revisit in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), Freud contended in *Mass Psychology and Ego Analysis* that far from counteracting the violence of psychic life, the emergence of community generated new, more powerful antagonisms. While Bernfeld viewed the narcissistic cathexis of a friend and comrade as the first step on a fraught path to ethical universalism, for Freud, this entire trajectory appeared open to questions. "[Almost] every intimate emotional relationship between two people...contains a sediment of feelings of aversion and hostility, which only escapes perception as a result of repression," Freud wrote. Far from serving simply as a means of cementing social bonds, individual narcissism, in Freud's account, underlay the ambivalence generated by all social relations: "[in] the undisguised antipathies and aversions which people feel towards strangers with whom they have to do we may recognize the expression of self-love – of narcissism." The libidinal ties that bind the members of the group place a limit on the individual's narcissism, however, causing this intolerance of difference to "[vanish], temporarily or permanently, within" its bounds. Yet in doing so, it merely created the foundation for a collective narcissism, one in which the hostility that inevitably resulted from such libidinal ties and the unbearable intimacy they entail was projected outwards, often onto those whose similarity rendered them suitable targets for this externalized aggression and whose proximity posed a threat to the internal cohesion and identity of the group, a phenomenon that Freud would later term the narcissism of minor differences.<sup>123</sup> While his theory of the narcissistic constitution of community overlapped substantially with Bernfeld's description of the dynamics of socialization as a "detour to expanded self-love," the conclusions Freud derived from his analysis were anything but consoling – out of a situation of pervasive aversion towards alterity,

---

<sup>123</sup> Freud, "Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse," 110-12.

emerged organized, concentrated, and thus, all the more dangerous antipathies.

### Living with the Father's Ghost

Several decades after the Baumgarten experiment, Willi Hoffer, a collaborator in the undertaking and, from 1923, a member of the *WPV* himself, would offer a somewhat different perspective on the question of violence and group formation in the Baumgarten experiment. In an article on Bernfeld's engagement in the Zionist youth movement, Hoffer recalled an incident of youth rebellion that Bernfeld omitted to mention in his 1921 report. In early 1920, deteriorating health required Bernfeld to withdraw from the experiment, depriving the *Kinderheim* of its natural leader and leaving the pedagogical direction primarily in the hands of two "volunteer helpers," namely, Hoffer, himself, and Gerhard Fuchs. The "final explosion" that led to the withdrawal of the educators from the experiment occurred in Bernfeld's absence and, as Hoffer explained, it stemmed directly from the attempts of the mainstream Zionist administration to impose its authority on the home. Both the youth and the young pedagogues resented the increasingly heavy-handed tactics of the administration and especially the preferential treatment accorded by the management to esteemed visitors to the *Kinderheim*. If part of that resentment stemmed from the fact that such treatment covered over the shabby material reality the youth experienced, the greater portion reflected their sense that it constituted a violation of what was felt to be the very essence of the Baumgarten *Schulgemeinde* – its egalitarian and collectivist ethos. Anger at the superior provisions (including "bottles of genuine wine") reportedly being prepared for the members of the American mission of the JDC pushed a group of boys to proclaim open resistance and set about making preparations for burning down the dining hall. To defuse the incendiary situation, Hoffer and several other educators persuaded the administration to fill their rucksacks with food and

departed with the boys into the Wienerwald for the night. “That was all we could do,” Hoffer concluded, “and we took leave of the children and Baumgarten soon after”<sup>124</sup>

The episode posed a number of difficulties for Bernfeld’s understanding of the self-education of youth. Not only did it suggest that the youth’s socialization as it unfolded in the *Kinderheim* concentrated the pervasive, diffuse aggression of the first days of the experiment to a potentially explosive degree, it also challenged his earlier contentions that the ethical idealism of youth would effectively contain the violent potential of their revolutionary spirit. Where prior to the war, Bernfeld had chided adult commentators for their hyperbolic fears regarding the liberation of youth, now the very dangers he had dismissed in 1914 had emerged with startling force. Hoffer’s indication that the youth involved belonged to a group of boys responsible for imposing discipline within the *Kinderheim* and thus closely identified with the aims of the experiment added another dimension to the problem, or rather, amplified ones that Bernfeld had consistently glossed over in his writings both before and after the experiment. Just as he regarded ethno-cultural nationhood as a natural principle of integration on the way to a universal humanity, gender identity – conceived along strictly binaric lines – likewise figured as a natural and unproblematic means of fashioning coherent forms of youth community en route to a more encompassing collective identity. By reinforcing rather than disrupting the narcissistic basis of community, however, the absence of cross-gender identification in Bernfeld’s model of youth socialization only exacerbated the problem of violence in the *Kinderheim* while depriving him of the means to reflect adequately upon it.

While they assumed particularly glaring contours in his writings on *Jugendkultur* and the *Schulgemeinde*, such limitations were by no means unique to Bernfeld’s thought. For none of the

---

<sup>124</sup> Willi Hoffer, “Siegfried Bernfeld and Jerubbaal,” 165-66.

psychoanalytic theorists of the masses discussed over this chapter did it appear feasible that the leader could be anything other than a stand-in for the father, and thus, a man. Though they sought to displace traditional patriarchal authority in their experiments, the question of gender never emerged as a problem worthy of consideration for Aichhorn and Bernfeld. And for all the gender confusion that runs through Freud's *Massenpsychologie*, the historical drama at the heart of his theory was an Oedipal affair between fathers and sons with women either forced into the background or reduced to passive objects of exchange.<sup>125</sup>

Even as the dominant narrative of Oedipal conflict overshadowed and suppressed the problematic of gender difference, however, the gendered identity of the leader underwent a significant, yet overlooked, transformation. In the process of coming down from his exalted perch to take up residence within the mass of youth, the new leader assumed a more maternal character. Managing the explosive violence of adolescent idealism and popular envy in the wake of total war and revolution required renegotiating the gender identity of the leader and displacing a fundamentally disciplinary conception of authority – a model in which authority rests, in the last instance, on violence (the threat of castration) – with one that was more nurturing, empathic, and supportive. For Freud himself, what preserved the organized mass from the threat of dissolution was the illusion of its members that they were each loved equally by the leader.<sup>126</sup> In the context in which he wrote, however, the widespread and virulent demands for equality could not but alter the status of the individual responsible for upholding this illusion. In the postwar moment, the leaders tasked with preserving social cohesion resembled far less Freud's archetypal *Führer*, the primal father, than self-effacing representatives of the masses, ones concerned primarily with

---

<sup>125</sup> Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, "Saving Love: Is Sigmund Freud's Leader a Man," in *Sublime Surrender: Male Masochism at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Ithaca, 1998), 137.

<sup>126</sup> Freud, "Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse," 138.

upholding the rights and reinforcing the individuality of their dependents. From a position of absolute narcissism characterized by “love of the self as of no one,”<sup>127</sup> the leader was transformed in both the Baumgarten and Oberhollabrunn experiments into a self-abnegating distributor of love whose primary task consisted in regulating the just and equitable apportionment of libido throughout the group.

In both experiments it was around food that this new pedagogical politics crystallized, and its distribution was inseparable from the libidinal dynamics that preserved the group or threatened it with dissolution. Reflecting the near starvation conditions that prevailed in postwar Vienna, hunger figures as a pervasive – at times dominant – motif in both experiments: on account of his insatiable appetite for pleasure, Aichhorn contended, the delinquent cannot be grasped by ethical values, but only through his *Fresstrieb* (his animalistic drive to feed). More revealingly, however, both Aichhorn and Bernfeld recognized the necessity that the teachers consume precisely the same provisions as their young charges: “That his educator lives with him and is for him is impossible for the child to grasp,” Aichhorn contended, “when he receives polenta and the educator goulash.” While the Baumgarten experiment indicated just how explosive the resentment was that inequitable distribution of food could unleash, for Aichhorn, effacing distinctions was primarily a matter of warding off the inevitable consequence that the child’s displeasure would undermine his faith in the educators. Uniform fare, cooked on the same stoves and in the same pots, was thus a “basic pedagogical condition of the educational welfare institute.”<sup>128</sup>

The new educator that emerged in the Oberhollabrunn and Baumgarten experiments resembled (albeit in differing proportions) a combination of maternal care-giver, surrogate father, and equal comrade. With the deepening of the bonds of affection the youth felt for their educators,

---

<sup>127</sup> Stewart-Steinberg, “Saving Love,” 137.

<sup>128</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 195.

their originally sadomasochistic relation to authority gave way to a demand for equality rooted in a rudimentary, but nonetheless powerful, sense of social justice. As Bernfeld's experiment indicated, the pedagogues' decision to renounce traditional prerogatives and privileges generated a psychical structure within the children that worked to level differences and impose a degree of uniformity on their communal life. Yet while Bernfeld, at least, welcomed this development, both he and Aichhorn recognized that the collective context and the psychosocial dynamics involved posed a threat to the children's individuality. Writing on the milieu of the old institutes for remedial education, Aichhorn noted that the omnipresent uniformity that stemmed from the compulsory order within such institutions posed the grave danger of a stultification of the child's individual uniqueness.<sup>129</sup> Yet if the experiments they created did away with the authoritarian compulsion of the old institutions, the child's need for what Bernfeld called a "certain periodic isolation from the others" was equally important in the new *Erziehungsgemeinschaften*.<sup>130</sup> For each, it was essential that the child be provided with a space of its own, clearly demarcated and lockable, and within which it could arrange its life as it saw fit, free from the pressures of social authority.<sup>131</sup>

Both Bernfeld and Aichhorn thus recognized the child's need to retreat from collective life into the relative security of a private space of seclusion and intimacy. Faced by a profound and potentially violent leveling impulse, the child required defending against the very mass into which he or she was to be integrated. Reflecting the upheaval and brutality of the past years, the violence that psychoanalysts saw in collective life seemed closely bound up with the profound need for catharsis generated by recent traumas. An enormous reservoir of aggression had built up among

---

<sup>129</sup> Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 194.

<sup>130</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 37.

<sup>131</sup> Bernfeld, *Kinderheim Baumgarten*, 37. Aichhorn, *Verwahrloste Jugend*, 194.

youth, one that would prove integral to the dialectic of individual socialization and community formation that unfolded in both experiments. Just as the *Schulgemeinde* that emerged in Baumgarten experiment was pulsed through by sentiments of solidarity and love, so too was it traversed by aggression, an excess that shadowed the educators' efforts and one they struggled to contain and control.

Youth waywardness, as Edward Ross Dickinson has noted, was closely associated in postwar Germany with social turmoil and political revolution.<sup>132</sup> Yet male youth on the cusp of adulthood were also at the center of the waves of reactionary violence that contributed to the vicious suppression of the revolutionary insurrections in the wake of the war.<sup>133</sup> As they confronted the phenomenon of youth aggression, the danger that haunted both the Baumgarten and Oberhollabrunn experiments reflected the attempts to fashion fundamentally new modes of managing delinquency. By deconstructing traditional, repressive authority at the very moment that this aggression had overwhelmed the bonds that traditionally constrained it, Bernfeld and Aichhorn skirted catastrophe in their experiments, a fact that made their ultimate achievements with the children all the more remarkable in the eyes of many contemporaries.<sup>134</sup>

Among those most inspired by the two experiments was Anna Freud. Like August Aichhorn, Freud transitioned in the early 1920s from a career as a professional educator to that of a practicing psychoanalyst, albeit one – like Aichhorn, Bernfeld, and Hoffer – with a strong interest in the possibilities of developing a psychoanalytic pedagogy. Writing in 1966, Freud would

---

<sup>132</sup> Dickinson, *The Politics of German Child Welfare*, 115.

<sup>133</sup> See on this subject, Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 2 vols., trans. Stephen Conway (Minneapolis, 1987-89).

<sup>134</sup> As Tara Zahra has shown, the influence of both experiments spread beyond Vienna, serving to inspire nationalist educators in interwar Czechoslovakia. See Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, 2008), 146-55. Bernfeld's experiences would also serve as a point of departure for the experiment in collective education undertaken by the youth movement leaders Paul Lazarsfeld and Ludwig Wagner under the auspices of the Social Democratic *Kinderfreunde*, see Lazarsfeld and Wagner, "Gemeinschaftserziehung durch Erziehungsgemeinschaften. Bericht über ein Beitrag der Jugendbewegung zur Sozialpädagogik" (Leipzig, 1924).

identify her own pedagogical work – specifically the Jackson Nursery in late-1930s Vienna and the Hampstead Nurseries in London during the Second World War – as following in a “direct line” from the Baumgarten and Oberhollabrunn experiments.<sup>135</sup> What astonished Freud, aside from the bold unconventionality of the two undertakings, was the similarity of the solutions they developed for the problem of delinquency: as she wrote in 1924, despite departing from “entirely different” standpoints and traversing “entirely different paths,” Aichhorn and Bernfeld “always had the same aim before them, namely the communistic school colony.”<sup>136</sup> As much as their experiments emphasized equality of treatment and the development of social sentiments, however, they were simultaneously committed to upholding the individuality of the children and youth they embraced. Like the revisions of psychoanalytic therapy that sought to push beyond the classical setting in order to embrace the supposedly childlike masses, the experiments in psychoanalytic mass pedagogy that emerged in the wake of the war were engaged in a difficult balancing act as they sought to uphold liberal principles while fashioning new kinds of authority suitable to a mass, democratic age.

Yet even as their educational experiments served, through anti-authoritarian means, to bind and discipline the anarchic aggression of the wayward youth, they raised the disturbing possibility that this aggression had assumed new, potentially more dangerous, forms. The two works essentially dramatized the way that reconstituting community after the war generated new dangers in the very process of quelling old ones.<sup>137</sup> The search for a new kind of social bond to replace the

---

<sup>135</sup> Anna Freud, “A Short History of Child Analysis,” *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 21 (1966): 7-14, at 12.

<sup>136</sup> Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 12 November 1924, in ‘...als käm ich heim zu Vater und Schwester’: *Lou Andreas-Salomé – Anna Freud Briefwechsel 1919-1937*, vol. 1, ed. Daria A. Rothe and Inge Weber (Göttingen, 2001), 375.

<sup>137</sup> Bernfeld would return to many of the problems that haunted his pedagogical politics in the prewar *Jugendkulturbewegung* and the Zionist youth movement in his essay “Die Schulgemeinde und ihre Funktion im Klassenkampf.” His attempts in that essay to distinguish the role of the leader in the mainstream German youth movement from its function in the *Jugendkulturbewegung* bespoke a desire to preserve the ideals of his earlier activism while mitigating the dangers that he had rather naively glossed over in his earlier work. See Bernfeld, “Die

vertical ties of domination and submission that structured the old order would preoccupy both Social Democrats and psychoanalysts in interwar Vienna. Faced with youth suspended between hatred for the old, bad fathers and a masochistic desire to submit to new authorities, Aichhorn and Bernfeld were forced to develop a new kind of pedagogical habitus. Adapting education to a new, democratic era while managing the dangers of the postwar moment required an education that combined uncompromising boldness with disabused circumspection. In both experiments a passionate commitment to children and youth, as rights-bearing subjects, was joined to an ironic awareness of the psychosocial forces that impeded recovery, forces that seemed intimately bound up with the regressive longings of the immature constituents of the postwar mass democracies. The *Kind- und Jugendgemäße* society that progressive educational reformers envisioned in the wake of the war was paradoxically one that had to be protected against an ineradicable infantilism that haunted it.

---

Schulgemeinde und ihre Funktion im Klassenkampf,” in *Sozialistische Pädagogik und Schulkritik*, ed. Ulrich Hermann vol. 8 of *Werke* (Gießen, 2016), 75-186.

Thinking at the Limits of Education: Siegfried Bernfeld and Socialist Pedagogy in Red Vienna

In the wake of their experiments in collective education (the subject of the preceding chapter), August Aichhorn and Siegfried Bernfeld entered a small psychoanalytic working group devoted to the psychology of the child and its significance for education. The other two members of the study circle, which began to meet regularly in early 1924, were Willy Hoffer, a collaborator of Bernfeld's in the Baumgarten experiment, and Anna Freud, who hosted the gatherings in her parents' home at Berggasse 19. Herself a teacher by training, Freud had come to know and admire Bernfeld and Aichhorn over the preceding years, the former during the socialist-Zionist phase of preparation for the Baumgarten experiment and the latter in the context of his educational welfare institute (*Fürsorgeerziehungsanstalt*) at St. Andrä. Following an excursion to Aichhorn's institute for "wayward youth" in 1922, Freud enthusiastically reported her experiences to her mentor and confidant, Lou Andreas-Salomé: "Just now, in fact, I spent three days with Aichhorn's thieves, vagabonds, and cutters and have returned full to the brim with everything I've seen."<sup>1</sup> A few years later, after the closure of the institute and Aichhorn's relocation to the municipal educational counseling clinics, she added, "[Aichhorn] drags me to all the most remote regions of the city and shows me institutions and welfare arrangements... And that is a really very interesting, a special and very impressive world."<sup>2</sup>

The world of counseling clinics and welfare establishments that Anna Freud referenced was one that had taken shape over the preceding years in the Social Democratic metropolis.

---

<sup>1</sup> Anna Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 18 January 1922, in "...als käm ich heim zu Vater und Schwester." *Lou Andreas-Salomé – Anna Freud, Briefwechsel 1919-1937*, ed. Daria A. Rothe and Inge Weber (Göttingen: 2001), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 13 January 1924, in *Briefwechsel*, 270.

Recently detached from the state of Lower Austria, a provision of the constitution that provided the Social Democrats with an absolute majority in municipal elections until 1934, Vienna would serve as the political framework for an ambitious program of urban socialism over the interwar years. At the heart of this project was a ramified network of educational institutions and undertakings – e.g. child guidance clinics, nurseries, teacher training institutes, popular education initiatives, and a reformed school system – that remade Vienna into an inspirational example of progressive governance during the 1920s.<sup>3</sup> Red Vienna, as it came to be known, was fundamentally a pedagogical undertaking, an experimental civilization centered on the perceived needs of the young and premised on the construction of a particular working-class subject.<sup>4</sup> In their ambitious effort to refashion the very mechanisms of social reproduction through education, Social Democrats had recourse to psychological theory as a source of both guidance and legitimation for their pedagogical politics. Intensifying an already long-standing collaboration between psychology and the field of education – a hallmark of the central European reform pedagogy movement from the late-nineteenth century (see chapter one) – the Austrian Social Democrats expanded the horizon of possibility for both professions, opening up new terrain for the application of their specific disciplinary bodies of knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Numerous contemporary accounts by observers from Western Europe and America testify to the privileged place that the Social Democratic experiment held in the imagination of progressives at this time. Vienna was a mecca for educators and social reformers, who provided it with honorifics like “school-city Vienna” (*Schulstadt*) and “the capital city of the child” and lauded its ambition to embrace every aspect of the workers’ life “from cradle to grave.”

<sup>4</sup> Social Democracy in the First Republic was “gigantische Erziehungsbewegung,” in the words of literary scholar Alfred Pfabigan, *Max Adler. Eine Politische Biographie* (Frankfurt a. M., 1982), 198. The most comprehensive historical survey of the cultural and pedagogical politics of the Austrian Social Democrats between the wars is Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture, 1919-1934* (New York, 1991). See also Josef Weidenholzer, *Auf dem Weg zum ‘Neuen Menschen’. Bildungs- und Kulturarbeit der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik* (Vienna, 1981). Ernst Glaser, *Im Umfeld des Austromarxismus. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des österreichischen Sozialismus* (Vienna, 1981). Anson Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism: From Red Vienna to Civil War, 1927-1934* (Chicago, 1993). *The Austrian Socialist Experiment: Social Democracy and Austromarxism, 1918-1934*, ed. Anson Rabinbach (Boulder, 1985). Wolfgang Maderthaner, “Austro-Marxism: Mass Culture and Anticipatory Socialism,” *Austrian Studies* 14 (2006), 21-36.

<sup>5</sup> See on this subject, Gerhard Benetka’s excellent institutional history *Psychologie in Wien. Sozial- und Theoriegeschichte der Wiener Psychologischen Instituts, 1922-1938* (Vienna, 1995). For a broader overview of the

In spite of these promising circumstances, Freudians remained very much on the fringes of the massive pedagogical experiment undertaken by the Austrian Social Democrats – unlike Adlerian Individual Psychologists and the academic behaviorists Karl and Charlotte Bühler who oversaw the Psychological and Pedagogical Institute of the City of Vienna, psychoanalysts found relatively few inroads into the network of educational institutions created by the municipality.<sup>6</sup> Their influence on the thought of the education reformers within the party was correspondingly overshadowed by that of the more pragmatic, pedagogically-orientated Adlerians.<sup>7</sup> While their affiliation with the Social Democratic municipality was thus tenuous and, at times, fractious, psychoanalysts were nonetheless keen participants in the broader project of rethinking the means and ends of education with the help of psychological insight. Engaged at the time in their own turn to the child, Freudians drew from the same cultural and political currents that animated the Social Democratic reformist project and that lent reforming pedagogues across Central Europe a profound sense of mission in the wake of the war. Yet they added to this passionate investment in the child a cautious awareness of the difficulties of educating, of the unavoidable, at times insuperable, contradictions that beset the work of enculturation.<sup>8</sup> Straddling the boundary between enthusiastic (if occasionally critical) participants and skeptical (if sympathetic) observers, psychoanalysts found themselves in a paradoxical position of being simultaneously swept along

---

relationship between education reform and psychological research in the Central European reform pedagogy movement see Marjorie Lamberti, *The Politics of Education: Teachers and School Reform in Weimar Germany* (New York, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Aichhorn's work within the municipal education counseling clinics represented one of the few exceptions to this general exclusion. On the difficult relationship between Aichhorn and the *Gemeinde*, see Thomas Aichhorn, "Bausteine zu einer Biographie August Aichhorns," in *Die österreichische Reformpädagogik, 1918-1938. Symposiumsdokumentation*, ed. Erik Adam (Vienna, 1981), 33-52. Also see Renate Göllner, "Psychoanalytisch-pädagogische Praxis ohne Ideologie vom 'Schädling': August Aichhorns Erziehungsberatung zwischen Jugendamt und Psychoanalytischer Vereinigung," *Luzifer-Amor* 16 (2003): 8-36.

<sup>7</sup> The most extensive examination of the relationship between the pedagogical politics of interwar Social Democracy and Adlerian Individual Psychology is Lutz Wittenberg, *Geschichte der Individualpsychologische Versuchsschule in Wien. Eine Synthese aus Reformpädagogik und Individualpsychologie* (Vienna, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> See, on this subject, chapter one and Catherine Millot, *Freud antipédagogue* (Paris, 1997).

and standing apart, of being caught up in the broad current of pedagogical-political reformism and of assuming a self-consciously outsider perspective. Marked by its equivocal position both within and without, psychoanalytic pedagogy in interwar Vienna would fashion a uniquely self-reflective and circumspect discourse, one that offered a sophisticated commentary on the pedagogical politics of Red Vienna.

“Especially lovely was the last Saturday evening with Bernfeld and Aichhorn,” Anna Freud wrote Andreas-Salomé in November 1924. “Following the twists and turns of the conversation, both described the relationship between their political attitude and their pedagogical ethos.”<sup>9</sup> The relationship of pedagogy to politics and the intersection of both with psychology were themes of paramount importance in the social and cultural environment in which the study group convened its weekly meetings. A vaulting optimism in the capacity of education to reconstruct and renovate society, coupled with a vision of the child as a source of renewal, surged across German-speaking central Europe in the aftermath of the destruction of the war and the upheaval of the revolution. Occupying a central place within this cultural and political landscape, the pedagogical politics of Red Vienna spanned from pragmatic and reformist to the utopian and revolutionary, and was traversed by a strong vein of anti-capitalist and anti-clerical critique. While the official school reform program of the Social Democratic party adhered to a moderate agenda of bringing the school system into line with the democratic constitution of the state, this aim was set against a far-reaching project of creating new people through the construction of an alternate sphere of socialization. Red Vienna, in the eyes of its architects, represented both a vehicle for progressive social transformation and a concrete anticipation of the socialist utopia of the future, one anchored

---

<sup>9</sup> Anna Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 12 November 1924, *Briefwechsel*, 375.

in an all-encompassing set of institutions intended to remove the developing subject from the deleterious process of subject-formation as it unfolded in capitalist society.<sup>10</sup>

In the context of such far-reaching educational ambitions, the irony and circumspection of psychoanalytic thought struck a discordant note. “Our Saturday yesterday was again lovely,” Anna Freud reported to Andreas Salomé, “Bernfeld read to us from the draft of a new book, to be titled pessimistic thoughts on education or some such.”<sup>11</sup> The work that emerged the following year from Bernfeld’s thoughts, *Sisyphos, oder die Grenzen der Erziehung*, was, as its subtitle announced, an extended reflection on the limits of education.<sup>12</sup> Mirroring as it did some of the central objectives of his earlier pedagogical activism, the educational experiment unfolding around them in Red Vienna occupied a privileged place in Bernfeld’s thought. Bernfeld’s *Sisyphos* represents both a working-through of his own disappointment following the short-lived Baumgarten experiment and a polemical engagement with the pedagogical idealism that permeated his cultural and political environment.

The paradox of Bernfeld’s study was that it drew heavily from Austro-Marxist thought in the very process of exposing the illusions that he saw at the core of the pedagogical politics of Austrian Social Democracy. A pioneering synthesis of Marxism and Freudianism, *Sisyphos* offered a penetrating reflection on the contradictions that would plague, and eventually paralyze, Social Democratic politics in interwar Vienna.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps more than any other contemporary work

---

<sup>10</sup> Michael Scholing and Franz Walter have emphasized the role of municipal social reforms and party organizations in removing the individual from the “gemeinschaftsfeindlichen Menschenbildungsprozess” of capitalist society. See Scholing and Walter, “Der ‘Neue Mensch’. Sozialistische Lebensreform und Erziehung in der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung Deutschlands und Österreichs,” in *Solidargemeinschaft und Klassenkampf. Politische Konzeptionen der Sozialdemokratie zwischen den Weltkriegen*, ed. Richard Saage (Frankfurt a. M., 1986), at 255.

<sup>11</sup> Anna Freud to Andreas Salomé, 16 November 1924, in *Briefwechsel*, 379.

<sup>12</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, *Sisyphos, oder die Grenzen der Erziehung in Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung/Pädagogik und Psychoanalyse* ed. Ulrich Herrmann et. al., vol. 5 of *Siegfried Bernfeld. Werkausgabe* (Gießen, 2013 [1925]), 11-130.

<sup>13</sup> On the deepening paralysis of central European Social Democracy over the interwar years see (for the Austrian case) Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism* and (for the German) Hans Mommsen, “Social Democracy on the

– and with a prescience that set it apart – *Sisyphos* laid bare the tensions at the heart of Red Vienna. In so doing it opened onto a new form of critical pedagogical thought as a process of systematic disillusionment, one that would have a far-reaching impact on the emerging field of psychoanalytic pedagogy.

### School Reform and Class Struggle

Bernfeld's sustained critique of the educational idealism of the Social Democratic experiment in municipal socialism did little to disguise the substantial overlap between his own thought and the tradition of Social Democratic pedagogy. A similar perspective, one that identified the reality of class domination beneath the veneer of traditional educational ideals, bound Bernfeld to the critical discourse developed by Austrian socialists over the preceding decades. The rudiments of this discourse can be traced back to the activism of *Die Jungen*, a prewar Social Democratic teachers' association in which Karl Seitz, later the mayor of Red Vienna, and Otto Glöckel, later the municipal councilor for schools and education, were leading figures. As teachers in Vienna's *Volksschule* – the lowest rung in the school system, a de facto “poor school” – Seitz and Glöckel confronted harsh material realities that bore little correlation to the moralizing and sanitizing rhetoric of the conservative authorities who governed Vienna before 1918.<sup>14</sup> In their 1899 school program, *Die Jungen* coupled a critique of the established school system with a call for a more

---

Defensive: The Immobility of the SPD and the Rise of National Socialism,” in *From Weimar to Auschwitz: Essays in German History*, trans. Philip O'Connor (Princeton, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> On the politics of *Die Jungen* see John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: 1995), 46-52. Glöckel's description of the *Volksschule* as a school for the poor is from his wartime pamphlet “Das Tor der Zukunft,” in *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, ed. Erik Adam (Vienna: 1983 [1917]), 334-49 (at 338). For a description of Glöckel's prewar activism see Glöckel's 1939 *Selbstbiographie. Sein Lebenswerk: die Wiener Schulreform* reprinted (in abridged format) in *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik*, 324-330. In language that recalled Bernfeld's earlier critique, Glöckel would write in his autobiography, “So stand ich Tag für Tag vor hungernden Kindern, die von mir Brot erlangten und denen ich statt dessen die schwache Biegung des Hauptwortes servieren mußte. *Ich stieß on die Grenzen der Pädagogik*” (emphasis added, 326).

equitable distribution of the accumulated cultural and intellectual resources of the nation.<sup>15</sup> As the material product of collective social labor, knowledge (*Wissen*) and culture (*Bildung*) were rightly the shared possession of all, yet the established school system reserved both for a privileged elite while condemning the vast majority to lives of intellectual stagnation. For the activists in *Die Jungen*, the monopolization of *Bildung* by the propertied classes contributed significantly to exacerbating the social antagonisms endemic to modern capitalist society – by fashioning a school system dedicated to the principle of “equal *Bildung* for poor and rich” and committed to the distribution of knowledge according to the individual’s capacities, class conflicts could be mollified and the working class equipped to understand the conditions under which it suffered.<sup>16</sup>

School reform, in its dual capacity as a means of ameliorating social divisions and empowering the working class, was thus closely bound up with a Social Democratic vision of a gradual and peaceful transition to socialism.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, *Die Jungen* argued, the present school system served rather as a bulwark against social and political change. Where the children of the propertied classes were indoctrinated by moral, religious, and political opinions that effectively immunized them against other perspectives and left them incapable of comprehending the great economic and political questions of the day, the children of the lower classes readily grasped the antagonism between their natural interests and the official viewpoints offered and yet were deprived of the resources necessary for understanding their relation to the social totality.<sup>18</sup> In the *Verein Freie Schule*, an educational association founded by liberal and Social Democratic teachers

---

<sup>15</sup> The program of *Die Jungen* constituted the first part of “Thesen zu pädagogischen Themen,” reprinted in *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, ed. Erik Adam (Vienna: 1983 [1899]), 242-50 (at 243-44).

<sup>16</sup> *Die Jungen*, “Thesen zu pädagogischen Themen,” 244.

<sup>17</sup> By “bridging the gap between subject and society,” John Boyer writes, the educational reform envisioned by *Die Jungen* “would be of direct import for the present society and of revolutionary value for the coming society.” Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> *Die Jungen*, “Thesen zu pädagogischen Themen,” 243.

in 1905, Seitz and Glöckel pursued the political objective of developing the child's capacity for rational comprehension through combatting clerical influence and experimenting with more child-centered pedagogical methods.<sup>19</sup>

The pedagogical activism of the two teachers' associations, *Die Jungen* and *Verein Freie Schule* were integral parts of an evolving Social Democratic politics, one in which the education of children loomed ever larger. Initially a private (non-political) association, albeit one closely aligned with Social Democratic objectives, the founding in 1908 of the *Kinderfreunde*, an organization dedicated to improving the "intellectual and physical wellbeing" of proletarian children, inaugurated a new stage in the pedagogical politics of the Austrian socialists.<sup>20</sup> Behind this increasing focus on the child in prewar Social Democracy, however, was a longstanding emphasis on "the 'active' and 'ethical' preparation of the working-class for its historical role," in Anson Rabinbach's words.<sup>21</sup> Even before the Hainfeld *Parteitag* of 1888-89 that witnessed the formal establishment of the party, the elevation of the working class out its state of perceived intellectual atrophy was a primary objective of the socialist working class movement in Austria.<sup>22</sup> A strong civilizing ethos animated this enlightening mission, one in which the cultural betterment of the working classes was inseparable from the formation of disciplined socialists: "If winning voters was useful and necessary, educating Social Democrats was both more useful and more necessary," wrote the leader of the party, Victor Adler, in 1907.<sup>23</sup> Delivered in the inaugural issue

---

<sup>19</sup> On the *Verein Freie Schule* see Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, 170-86 and Glöckel, *Selbstbiographie*, 328-30.

<sup>20</sup> Both the *Kinderfreunde* and the *Verein Freie Schule* would be formally subsumed into the party apparatus in 1921, two years before they officially merged to form a single association. On the Austrian *Kinderfreunde* see Helmut Uitz, *Die österreichischen Kinderfreunde und roten Falken 1908-1938. Beiträge zur sozialistischen Erziehung* (Vienna, 1975).

<sup>21</sup> Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism*, 61.

<sup>22</sup> For Adam Wandruszka, the fact that the socialist movement in Austria began with an *Arbeiterbildungsverein* was consistent with its subsequent character as a cultural, as well as a political, social, and economic, movement. Wandruszka, "Österreichs politische Struktur. Die Entwicklung der Parteien und politischen Bewegungen" in *Geschichte der Republik Österreich* ed. Heinrich Benedikt (Munich, 1954): 456-7

<sup>23</sup> Viktor Adler, "Neue Aufgaben," *Der Kampf. Sozialdemokratische Monatsheft* 1 (1907): 8.

of what would become the party's theoretical mouthpiece, *Der Kampf*, Adler's call for a rejuvenation of the "intensive *Kleinarbeit* of Social Democratic schooling" resonated with the priorities of the younger generation of critical social, economic, and legal theorists who filled the journal's pages. In this new current of thought, named Austro-Marxism, empirical investigation of economic forces was combined with a Kantian emphasis on the mental conditions of social life: being may have determined consciousness, but consciousness appeared essential to either realizing or obstructing the possibilities inherent in the prevailing socioeconomic conditions.<sup>24</sup>

The cataclysm of the war and the inception of a new political order dramatically amplified the importance of education in Austrian Social Democracy. From the "distant future prospect" (*ferne Zukunftsperspektive*) that it had been prior to the war, socialism had become a "practical task of this age," as Otto Bauer wrote in 1923.<sup>25</sup> Yet the bracing shift in temporal perspective at the close of the war seemed to many observers to disclose an inner crisis of socialism – in the eyes of a number of influential Marxist theorists, the fact that the revolutions that swept central Europe in the wake of the war had failed to bring about a transition to socialism indicated the inadequacy of the class-consciousness of the proletariat. For the Austro-Marxist theorist and pedagogue Max Adler, the upheavals of the postwar era exposed a fateful disjuncture between the ripeness of economic conditions and the psychological and moral maturity of the proletariat. At precisely the moment when the conjunction of political and economic circumstances appeared to open onto the possibility of far-reaching social transformation, the "degeneration of the proletarian spirit," the displacement of its revolutionary aims by individual egotism, in the form of an exclusive concern for the momentary improvement of living conditions, exercised a conservative, retarding impulse

---

<sup>24</sup> Editorial Introduction to *Der Kampf* 1 (1907): 5. See also Tom Bottomore, Introduction to *Austro-Marxism*, ed. Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode (Oxford, 1978), 1-44.

<sup>25</sup> Otto Bauer, "Schulreform und Klassenkampf. Ein Vortrag über die Funktionen der Schule in der Gesellschaft," reprinted in *Otto Bauer. Werkausgabe* vol. 2 (Vienna, 1976 [1921]), 405-426 (at 424).

on the forces impelling for revolutionary change.<sup>26</sup> The gulf – verging in Adler’s eyes on a chasm – between economic conditions and the subjective preparedness of the masses indicated the need for a comprehensive educational intervention, an idea that resonated throughout Social Democratic periodicals in the wake of the war. As the young socialist educator Otto Felix Kanitz wrote in 1920, the antagonism that prior to the war had been felt to exist between *Kampf* and *Erziehung* among party members had all but vanished in its wake. Socialism, he wrote, demands of the individual “perpetual engagement in the service of one’s cultural advancement...inexhaustible struggle to acquire more knowledge.”<sup>27</sup> As socialism loomed on the horizon, “the decisive factor” (*das Entscheidende*), in Otto Bauer’s words, had become “the improvement of the individual” through “the melioration of the mind.”<sup>28</sup>

The focal point of this struggle for the education of the masses was the reform of the public school system.<sup>29</sup> The old school as it existed under the Habsburg monarchy was one that both reflected and reinforced the manifest injustices of the capitalist social order and of the authoritarian political structure that emerged within it – “the division of the body of the nation in the monarchy into ruling strata and subjects,” wrote Viktor Fadrus, one of Otto Glöckel’s most prominent collaborators, “corresponded to the dualistic organization of the school.” Different conceptions of the ends of education prevailed in each, Fadrus noted, with the lower schools emphasizing the transmission of carefully selected positive knowledge and the higher schools the cultivation of

---

<sup>26</sup> Max Adler, “Sozialismus und Erziehung,” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 1 (1921): 2-3. See also Adler’s essay “Erziehung als Beruf,” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 2 (1922): 236-45.

<sup>27</sup> Otto Felix Kanitz, “Kampf and Bildung” (Vienna, 1920), 3, 7. See also Kanitz’s emphatic statement, “Kampf heißt also heute nicht mehr in erster Linie Demonstration oder Streik, Kampf heißt heute in erster Linie Aufklärung und Bildung” (4) and his assertion slightly later that the present struggle demands of the socialist something “weit Schwierigeres” than “einen Augenblick kühner Tatkraft oder begeisterten Sturmes,” namely “die Umgestaltung seiner Persönlichkeit in sozialistischem Sinne” (6).

<sup>28</sup> Bauer, “Schulreform und Klassenkampf,” 419.

<sup>29</sup> On this subject see Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesen. Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs*, vol. 5, *Von 1918 bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1988) and Michael J. Zeps, *Education and the Crisis of the First Republic* (Boulder, 1987).

skepticism and doubt through inquiry into the foundations of knowledge.<sup>30</sup> Yet a form of didactic materialism, premised on what education reformers termed the *Stoffprinzip*, dominated the instructional methodology and strictly delimited the educational work of both types of schooling. Across the established school system, with its otherwise glaring divisions, a one-sided emphasis on the intellect and on rote memorization was accompanied by a neglect of the personality of the child and adolescent. Echoing the critical strains of prewar progressive educators throughout central Europe, Social Democrats bemoaned the fact that the existing school system was incapable of educating in the broader sense conveyed by *Erziehung* of forming character and developing the individual's personality. At most the established school system appeared capable of enforcing an external, authoritarian discipline through the taming and training of its young charges.<sup>31</sup> By dividing the classes into separate and markedly different institutions; by stultifying the pupil's critical intellect through its didactic methods; and by inculcating an acceptance of authority in all of its students, the traditional school system left the *Volk* in a state of permanent immaturity in the eyes of its Social Democratic critics.<sup>32</sup>

If the critiques of prewar reform pedagogues emerged in tandem with the broad social changes and the limited democratization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the social and political upheavals of the years after 1914 dramatically galvanized the reform pedagogy movement. "Democracy has dissolved the bounds" that hitherto restrained the evolution of the school system, Otto Glöckel wrote in 1920.<sup>33</sup> In several respects, the experience of total war functioned as an incubator for the wave of democratization that subsequently swept away the

---

<sup>30</sup> Viktor Fadrus, "Zehn Jahre Schulreform und Schul-Politik in Österreich. Rückblick und Ausblick," in *Zehn Jahre Schulreform in Österreich*, ed. Viktor Fadrus (Vienna, 1929), 9-59 (at 9-11).

<sup>31</sup> Viktor Fadrus, "Zehn Jahre Schulreform," 15, 17. See also Otto Glöckel, "Das Tor der Zukunft," 344-46.

<sup>32</sup> On this critique see Herbert Dachs, *Schule und Politik: Die politische Erziehung an den österreichischen Schule 1918 bis 1938* (Vienna, 1982), 57-8.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Fadrus, "Zehn Jahre Schulreform," 26.

constraints that had earlier impeded the work of reforming educators. The so-called unity school (*Einheitsschule*), a comprehensive school system that would embrace the entirety of the nation's youth for the first years of schooling, is a case in point – a staple of the prewar programs of progressive educators, the idea of the unity school gained enormously in salience as a result of the spirit of social reconciliation that accompanied the outbreak of the war and the collective nature of the sacrifices experienced.<sup>34</sup> The *Einheitsschule*, as Glöckel wrote in his 1916 pamphlet “Das Tor der Zukunft,” would not only allow for the realization of the “inalienable right to *Bildung*” championed by *Die Jungen* prior to the war but would also serve to advance the “long desired inner unity of the nation” in the words of the German pedagogue Paul Natorp.<sup>35</sup> By “open[ing] the path to all who are capable,” the *Einheitsschule* would allow each individual to obtain as much education as his or her capacities dictated.<sup>36</sup> In the meritocratic school system envisioned by progressive and Social Democratic reformers decisions regarding the child's future would be made on the basis of his or her inclinations and capabilities, rather than the social standing of the parents, and at an age when those dispositions had had the opportunity to reveal themselves. The existing school system, which forced parents to determine “which capacities slumber in the child or should be formed [in him],” had an inhibiting effect on the intellectual development of the younger generation.<sup>37</sup> In place of this organization, whose irrationality mirrored that of the existing social order, reformers argued for a school system whose internally differentiated structure was embedded within a strongly unified organization embracing the entirety of the nation's youth.

---

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 2010), 27, 72.

<sup>35</sup> Glöckel, “Das Tor der Zukunft,” 339-40.

<sup>36</sup> A wartime and postwar motto of progressive educators, “open the path to all who are capable” was originally the subtitle of Johannes's Tew's 1916 pamphlet *Die deutsche Einheitsschule*. On the work of Johannes Tews see Lamberti, *The Politics of Education*, 107-118.

<sup>37</sup> Glöckel, “Das Tor der Zukunft,” 338.

If the democratic transformation of the preceding years had swept away the barriers to the child's "developmental freedom in the school system," as Glöckel wrote in 1920, school reform was, in turn, a precondition for both the viability of a democratic order and for the realization of the inner promise of democracy.<sup>38</sup> Fundamental to this process – alongside the comprehensive refashioning of the school system itself – was the reform of the educational methods implemented within the classroom. In place of the drill and deadening routine that "stamped out everything valuable in the young life," in Glöckel's words, a new pedagogy centered on the child's developing capacities and its subjective experiences was pivotal to the reforms the Social Democrats sought to implement.<sup>39</sup> Echoing the programmatic aims of earlier reformers (discussed in chapter one), Fadrus described the transformation of the school in the wake of the war as a process of displacing a mechanical and materialistic conception of learning with a dynamic and organic one: the path of reform, in his description, was marked by epochal transition from what he termed the "book" or "learning" school (the school of passive "receptivity"), to the "life," "work," and "experience" school, site of "spontaneity," of "social dedication" and genuine community.<sup>40</sup> In the wake of the war, the tenets of the prewar reform pedagogy movement, such as *Erziehung vom Kinde aus*, Berthold Otto's iconic phrase for education that takes the child as its point of departure, and learning as an activity of the self, the guiding principle of Georg Kerschensteiner's model of the *Arbeitsschule*, resonated across the cultural landscape of Central Europe.<sup>41</sup> Coupled with a vision of the child as a savior, a source of renewal for a devastated society, the notion of *Erziehung vom*

---

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Fadrus, "Zehn Jahre Schulreform," 26.

<sup>39</sup> Glöckel, "Das Tor der Zukunft," 344.

<sup>40</sup> Fadrus, "Zehn Jahre Schulreform," 32.

<sup>41</sup> As one reforming pedagogue, Johannes Gläser, contended in 1920, "Wenn der Ruf nach einer kopernikanischen Umwälzung, nach einer Auf-den-Kopf-Stellung der Anschauungen vom Kinde und seiner Erziehung heute unsere trümmerbesäte Welt erfüllt, so kann das Wort 'vom Kinde aus' als ein kurzer antreibender Ausdruck fuer diese Not gelten." Quoted in Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogik*, 55.

*Kinde aus* lent itself, in the thought of many reformers, to utopian ideas of the new education as a means of salvation for the nation.

The Social Democratic school reform movement that coalesced around Otto Glöckel drew from and overlapped significantly with the broader reform pedagogy movement that emerged in the years prior to the war and crested in its wake.<sup>42</sup> Yet unlike the progressive liberals whose programs and ideals they embraced, Social Democrats tended to view reform of public education less as a direct means of bringing about cultural and social change than as a mechanism for safeguarding the achievements of the revolution by bringing the school system into line with the current social and political configuration. The unwillingness of Social Democratic reformers to go beyond liberal educational principles in their official school reform program was bound up with a critical Marxist perspective that viewed “the advance of pedagogical theory and practice,” in Bauer’s words, as a “mirror image and epiphenomenon of revolutions” that unfolded “in the economic, social, and political structures of society”: “every school reform is nothing other than the adaptation of the school to new social requirements or ones that have become newly conscious,” he contended.<sup>43</sup> The inability of the Social Democrats to fundamentally alter the prevailing socioeconomic conditions, as Erik Adam has argued, made the ambition to reform the school system along more radical, socialistic lines appear utopian.<sup>44</sup> Far from advancing a socialist agenda (from “preaching socialism in the schools” in Bauer’s words),<sup>45</sup> the official Social Democratic program for school reform thus adhered to an ostensibly “neutral” standpoint, one elevated above classes and parties and orientated towards social and national integration – like the

---

<sup>42</sup> “Fast auf keinem Gebiet der geistigen Kultur ist nämlich die Verschmelzung von sozialistischen Ideen mit Absichten, die sich von anderswo herleiten lassen, so deutlich.” Glaser, *Im Umfeld des Austromarxismus. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des österreichischen Sozialismus* (Vienna, 1981), 301.

<sup>43</sup> Bauer, “Schulreform und Klassenkampf,” 409.

<sup>44</sup> Adam, “Austromarxismus und Schulreform,” in *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 286.

<sup>45</sup> Bauer, “Schulreform und Klassenkampf,” 425.

program of *Die Jungen*, the politics of school reform advanced by Social Democrats in the wake of the war emphasized not class conflict but rather social harmony as part of an overarching conception of a democratic and evolutionary path to socialism.

In its paramount aim of forming citizens for a democratic order, school reform was in the first instance a “means of defense” for the young republic against reactionary, anti-democratic forces.<sup>46</sup> Yet the same task that the Social Democrats saw as vital to securing the accomplishments of the revolution – the task of fashioning a generation of rational, autonomous individuals, liberated from the bonds of tradition – was simultaneously understood as a means of clearing away a fundamental obstacle to the eventual attainment of socialism. By continuing the work of the best representatives of bourgeois liberalism, Social Democrats saw themselves as contributing to the realization of the socialist society of the future.<sup>47</sup>

The optimism implicit in this evolutionary vision of historical development sat, however, in stark contrast to their conviction that the tumult of war and revolution had exposed an inner crisis of socialism, one that demanded an ambitious pedagogical response. If the official program for school reform adopted by the party replaced Viktor Adler’s dictum that the main task confronting the party was *Sozial Demokraten zu erziehen* with the more neutral, and thus more inclusive, objective of educating republicans, the more modest formulation was articulated against a backdrop of far-reaching pedagogical ambition.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the bourgeois pedagogical reformers whose aspirations they echoed, the Social Democratic agenda for school reform was integrated within a comprehensive plan of social assistance and welfarist provision for the child.

---

<sup>46</sup> Bauer, “Schulreform und Klassenkampf,” 413.

<sup>47</sup> The understanding of Social Democracy as the inheritor of the legacy of bourgeois liberalism was a central component of Austro-Marxist thought. The indebtedness of Social Democracy to German liberalism is discussed in Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism*, 11, 15-6.

<sup>48</sup> On the role of the reformed school in educating republicans see Bauer, “Schulreform und Klassenkampf,” 410.

At the heart of this plan was the ambition to fashion a new socialist individual, one whose inner resources and subjective dispositions were understood to be essential in the struggle to overcome capitalism.

### The Pedagogical Construction of the New Person

The call for “new people” (*neue Menschen*) that reverberated throughout Social Democratic discourse across the interwar years was initially representative of a reaction on the part of a radical segment of working-class youth to the perceived inner crisis of socialism. The disruptions of the war played a crucial role in the emergence of this more radical political consciousness: by preventing large portions of proletarian youth from being integrated into the traditional party structure, the social upheavals of the war contributed to an alienation of the generations and raised the frightening specter among the party leaders of a collapse of authority and a loss of control. In the wake of the Bolshevik revolution and in the midst of the catastrophe of the war, the evolutionary Marxism of Austrian and German Social Democracy came to appear increasingly suspect to many socialists. Disillusioned with the orthodox Marxist view that held that the new socialist order would develop as a result of the necessary self-unfolding of sociohistorical laws independent of individual activity and subjective ethical identification, socialist youth came to embrace a much more voluntaristic ethos in the aftermath of the war. In this context, the long-standing Austro-Marxist insistence on the importance of forming socialist subjects took on a more radical valence as many youth argued for the necessity of an inward liberation from capitalism. Drawing heavily from the idealism and elitism of the Central European youth movements, a new generation of socialist youth emerged that viewed itself as a vanguard in the process of revolutionary transformation. Through the formation of new modes of collective life and the

cultivation of a new subjective habitus, socialism was to be constructed in the here-and-now rather than displaced into the future.<sup>49</sup>

The ideology of the new socialist person was most thoroughly worked-out in the context of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft sozialistische Erzieher*, a group that emerged from an earlier circle, the so-called *Schönbrunner Kreis*, that formed at a massive postwar educational experiment at the former imperial summer palace of Schönbrunn. Both a *Kinderheim* for several hundred children and a *Lehrerschule* for future educators in the Social Democratic *Kinderfreundebewegung*, the Schönbrunn experiment, like the Baumgarten and Oberhollabrunn undertakings, was both a response to the dire exigencies produced by the war and part of a broader search for new forms of sociality and collectivity in its wake. Among the adolescents and young adults in the *Lehrerschule* a conviction that they were living at the open threshold of a new era lent an urgency and earnestness to their search for new modes of social interaction. A vehement rejection of everything “bourgeois” (one it shared with the Baumgarten experiment) was closely bound up with the conviction that the new world they felt to be taking shape around them required fundamentally new people<sup>50</sup>

Over the three years of its existence, the Schönbrunn experiment figured as a point of attraction for a host of prominent educators, psychologists, and social theorists – among them, Alfred Adler, the economist Rudolf Goldschied, and the sociologist and philosopher Wilhelm Jerusalem. The leading figure in the experiment, however, was the socialist educator, Otto Felix Kanitz, fittingly much younger than his better-known collaborators and, like Bernfeld, a student

---

<sup>49</sup> See on this subject, Scholing and Walter, “Der ‘Neue Mensch’.” See also the critical engagement with this impulse at the outset of Otto Neurath, *Lebengestaltung und Klassenkampf in Gesammelte philosophische und methodologische Schriften*, vol. 1, ed. Rudolf Haller et. al. (Vienna, 1981), 227-93.

<sup>50</sup> Henriette Kotlan-Werner, *Otto Felix Kanitz und der Schönbrunner Kreis. Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft Sozialistischer Erzieher 1923-1934* (Vienna, 1982). See also Heinz Weiss, *Das rote Schönbrunn. Der Schönbrunner Kreis und die Reformpädagogik der Schönbrunner Schule* (Vienna, 2008).

of Jerusalem's at the University of Vienna. Together with the sociologist Max Adler, a prominent Austro-Marxist theorist in the years prior to the war, Kanitz was centrally responsible for articulating the programmatic aims and political rationale behind the educational work of the *Kinderfreunde*.<sup>51</sup> To both Kanitz and Adler, the educational activity of the *Kinderfreunde* had appeared at risk, over the preceding years of material hardship and social upheaval, of forfeiting its vital political mission and being reduced to mere welfarist provision. In response, they argued for a radical politicization of the organization's educational activity, one that reached well beyond the intentions of the prewar leaders of the *Kinderfreunde*. Critical of this older generation of organizers and activists in the *Kinderfreunde*, whose work had distanced the education of children in Social Democratic organizations from the political mission of the party, Kanitz and Adler agitated for a more firmly Marxist conception of its work.<sup>52</sup>

In his immensely popular book, *Neue Menschen* (1924), part of an eponymous book series he edited, Adler described the aims of *sozialistische Erziehung* as an attempt to convert education from a “means of class domination in the hands of the bourgeoisie to a means of self-assistance”

---

<sup>51</sup> Within the Schönbrunn experiment, Kanitz was responsible for overseeing the educator's school while the children's home was under the supervision of Anton Tesarek, later a prominent supporter of psychoanalysis in the *Gemeinde*. In 1921, Kanitz would found the journal *Die sozialistische Erziehung*, which he would edit until 1934. Despite its explicit political orientation, *Die sozialistische Erziehung* offered a vibrant forum for debates within the party, with contributors occasionally taking issue with Kanitz's own, more idealistic positions (e.g. Marianne Pollack, “Ein Argument für die sozialistische Erziehung” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 3 [1922]: 219). The journal Kanitz edited was one of a number of Social Democratic or left-leaning periodicals in interwar Vienna dedicated to education, the other two prominent journals being *Bildungsarbeit* (1909-1934) and *Die Quelle* (1922-1934). Of the three, the journal under Kanitz's editorial stewardship dealt predominantly with the education of children and adolescents within party organizations and institutions, while *Bildungsarbeit* focused more on the broader educational mission of the party, as the organization responsible for forming and enlightening the working-class, and *Die Quelle* addressed a broader audience of professional pedagogues sympathetic to the cause of education reform. Beyond these three periodicals, educational questions ranging from the reform of the school system to the rearing of children within the family frequently appeared in the pages of Social Democratic *Zeitungen* and *Zeitschriften* such as *Die Arbeiter-Zeitung*, *Der Kampf*, *Die Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung/Die Frau*, and *Die Unzufriedene*.

<sup>52</sup> For an overview of this current of thought, see especially Sabine Andresen, *Sozialistische Kindheitskonzepte. Politische Einflüsse auf die Erziehung* (Munich, 2006) and Peter Schneck, “Sozialistische Erziehung im Austromarxismus. Der Beitrag der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie zur Pädagogik in den Jahren 1918-1938,” (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1975).

in the hands of the proletariat.<sup>53</sup> The project of socialist education as it took shape in Adler's and Kanitz's writings was an undertaking suspended between the utopian aspiration to create new people through education and the critical awareness of the profound challenges confronting any attempt to overcome the limits placed on education by the established social and political order. For all the idealism inherent in their pedagogical aspirations, both Kanitz and Adler saw the constructive work of creating *neue Menschen* as premised on the critique of the existing social and educational order and a negative stripping away of utopian illusions. As a constitutive part of the existing social order, education was always already bound up with class struggle, Adler argued: the notion of a neutral education rested on the misconception that education unfolded in a space outside the social. Support for the idea of a politically neutral education, he continued, thus concealed either a "thoughtless traditionalism" or a "disguised, yet very decisive, support (*Parteinahme*) for particular social institutions."<sup>54</sup> So fundamentally did capitalism determine the conditions in which *Erziehung* operated that any attempt to uphold a politically or socially neutral education inevitably handed the work of education over to the social forces sustaining bourgeois capitalism.<sup>55</sup>

If capitalist relations of production conditioned education, they were themselves continually reproduced in and through the social process of *Erziehung*. In the thought of socialist pedagogues, the integration of *Erziehung* into these broader dynamics entailed an expansion of the critical purview beyond the confines of the classroom and school. In Kanitz's *Das proletarische*

---

<sup>53</sup> Max Adler, *Neue Menschen. Gedanken über sozialistische Erziehung* (Berlin, 1926 [1924]), 26. It was under the auspices of the book series *Neue Menschen*, which ran only three years (1926-1928), that Bernfeld would later publish his *Die Schulgemeinde und ihre Funktion im Klassenkampf* (discussed below and in the preceding chapter). Other titles in this series included Neurath's, *Lebensgestaltung und Klassenkampf* (Berlin, 1928), Richard Wagner, *Der Klassenkampf um den Menschen* (Berlin, 1927), and Angelica Balabanoff, *Erziehung der Massen zum Marxismus* (Berlin, 1927).

<sup>54</sup> Adler, *Neue Menschen*, 31.

<sup>55</sup> See on this point Schneek, "Sozialistische Erziehung im Austromarxismus," 73.

*Kind in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (1925), for instance, this took the form of an extended critique of the proletarian family, which figured, along with the school, as a crucial matrix for the reproduction of capitalism. The very term “proletarian family” contained a fundamental contradiction, Kanitz argued: “for the same social process that gave rise to the proletariat” simultaneously “led to the dissolution of the family” as a site of production and as a source of meaning and security.<sup>56</sup> Deprived of this safeguarding function and left exposed to social forces beyond its control, the proletarian family was permeated by the ideology of bourgeois capitalism. The essential agent in this process, for Kanitz, was the proletarian father. Subjected to the tyranny of capitalism in his economic life, the proletarian father, in turn, became a tyrant the moment he returned home. Drawing from Adlerian Individual Psychology, Kanitz explained how the child, reared in this “atmosphere of suppression,” developed a capitalistic “life-plan” directed towards the attainment of a position of unchallenged superiority. The withering of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* in the proletarian family transformed it into the “most unfavorable ground imaginable for education,” Kanitz contended: “in neither a psychological nor a sociological respect” was the proletarian family capable of forming ““new people.””<sup>57</sup>

The capitalist system was the “direct continuation of the school and the proletarian family” in their current form, Kanitz wrote.<sup>58</sup> By forming children who, having “inwardly broken with the capitalist world,” could “think and feel only socialistically,” in Adler’s words, socialist education aimed to sever the continuity between these agencies of socialization and the capitalist world in which they were embedded.<sup>59</sup> Orthodox Marxism, Adler contended, with its rigid base-

---

<sup>56</sup> Otto Felix Kanitz, *Das proletarische Kind in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Vienna, 1925), 36.

<sup>57</sup> Kanitz, *Das proletarische Kind*, 52, 42. See also Otto Felix Kanitz, “Alfred Adler und die sozialistische Erziehung,” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 10 (1930): 49-51. For an overview of this critique see Andresen, *Sozialistische Kindheitskonzepte*, 38-47.

<sup>58</sup> Kanitz, *Das proletarische Kind*, 54.

<sup>59</sup> Adler, *Neue Menschen*, 86, 81.

superstructure model, had neglected the role of what Marx had termed “revolutionary (*umwälzende*) praxis,” a praxis that addressed the individual (“the acting ego”) as the producer (*Umformer und Umgestalter*) as well as the product of the social world.<sup>60</sup> Yet Marxism, Adler noted, simultaneously offered a powerful corrective to the utopianism of earlier (“bourgeois”) pedagogues for whom the education of new people figured as a “magical formula” through which a new society could be conjured up. In place of this ungrounded overestimation of *Erziehung* as the “sole and unerring path to salvation,” Marxism pointed to the foundation of socioeconomic determination undergirding education. This new critical perspective redirected attention towards the underlying problem: “if one wants new people,” Adler wrote, “then the old forms and conditions of life must first be abolished. The new humanity will only emerge from a new society.”<sup>61</sup>

The socialist project of creating new people was effectively tasked with synthesizing the critical insights of Marxism with the idealistic aspirations of the great pedagogues of earlier ages and thus with charting a course between economic fatalism and educational utopianism. If the upheavals of the preceding years had revealed with unprecedented starkness the necessity of forming socialist subjects, the Marxist theory of society nonetheless pointed to the impossibility of fundamentally altering the conditions of socialization without the prior transformation of the economic base that determined them. The “socialist education of the masses” that Adler described

---

<sup>60</sup> Adler, *Neue Menschen*, 25-6.

<sup>61</sup> Adler, *Neue Menschen*, 23-4. A more equivocal statement of the same viewpoint would be offered by Neurath four years later: “Das gerade vermag jeder Proletarier bald aus der marxistischen Lehre zu entnehmen, daß *ohne revolutionäre Umgestaltung der Wirtschaftsordnung*, ohne Durchorganisation des Proletariats alles persönliche Bemühen um sozialistisches Denken, Fühlen und Leben, alles Bemühen um sozialistische Demokratie ohne entscheidendes Ergebnis bleiben muß, daß aber auch Vorstöße auf einzelnen Lebensgebieten größeren Erfolg erzielen können, weil die spätkapitalistische Umgestaltung, die den Sozialismus vorbereitet, bereits in vollem Gange ist.” Neurath, *Lebensgestaltung und Klassenkampf*, 233.

as a “vital question” (*Lebensfrage*) for socialism, thus appeared to be simultaneously conditional upon and a prerequisite for the overcoming of bourgeois capitalism.<sup>62</sup>

The result of this paradox was a split within the pedagogical politics of Social Democracy: where the school reform movement relied on a Marxist theory of “the balance of class forces,” in Bauer’s words, to justify a modest adaptation of the school system to the existing social and political order, the same perception of political deadlock and of powerlessness in the face of entrenched social forces validated a “revolution of the soul,” that is, an attempt to galvanize the socialist project through the transformation of consciousness and sensibility.<sup>63</sup> The latter project – the production of the new socialist person – was something fundamentally different from what normally goes by the name of school reform, Adler noted.<sup>64</sup> Where school reform merely stripped away obstacles to the future development of socialism, the education that unfolded in the organizations of the Social Democratic Party was conceived as contributing directly to the construction of a new social order. For the theorists of *sozialistische Erziehung*, education was a total social process, and thus, the creation of the new person entailed the construction of alternate spaces of socialization, ones that would remove the individual from the process of subject formation as it unfolded under capitalism. The new person would thus emerge in tandem with the new society with each serving to further the other in a gradual, yet inexorable, transition to socialism.

The ambition to construct a new socialist person through refashioning the proletariat’s total social and cultural environment was at the heart of the pedagogical-political undertaking of Red

---

<sup>62</sup> Adler, *Neue Menschen*, 29.

<sup>63</sup> Otto Bauer, *Die österreichische Revolution* reprinted in *Werkausgabe*, vol. 2, ed. Hugo Pepper et. al. (Vienna, 1976 [1923]), 489-866 (at 743 ff.). The phrase “revolution of the soul” is attributed to Bauer in Gruber, *Red Vienna*, 38.

<sup>64</sup> Adler, *Neue Menschen*, 52. See also, Kanitz, “Erziehung, Schule, Klassenkampf,” in *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 3 (1923): 48-51.

Vienna. In its complex and interlocking network of educational associations, in its ambitious efforts to bring *Bildung* and *Kultur* to the masses, and not least, in the massive housing blocks constructed by the party over the interwar years, Austro-Marxism aimed to provide the working class with a “foretaste of the socialist utopia of the future” at the same time as it molded the collective subject that would eventually bring about the transition to socialism.<sup>65</sup> The politicization of the everyday – and particularly of the features of quotidian life that impacted the developing consciousness of the child – was central to this process of uprooting the norms and behaviors that consolidated the social and cultural order of bourgeois capitalism. A “new civilization in the making,” in the words of Julius Braunthal, Red Vienna was marked by the far-reaching ambition to create a new socialized humanity through the comprehensive renovation of the conditions in and through which it was formed.<sup>66</sup>

While the party’s political dominance in the new federal state of Vienna provided the framework for this ambitious pedagogical project, its inability to fundamentally alter the balance of economic and political power on the national and international stages – an inability party leaders readily acknowledge – generated a number of problems. In the aftermath of the war, it appeared to many leftists that an unprecedented opportunity had opened up for bringing about a peaceful transition to a more socialistic economic and political order. The total mobilization of society during the war, the increasing integration of the state and the economy in the service of the war effort, and the willingness of the warring state, engaged in a draining war of materiel, to jettison the tenets of liberal economics, all seemed to signal the advent of an era when the laws of capitalism might be transcended in the interest of the collective good. The profound discrediting of the established social and political order in the wake of the catastrophic military collapse

---

<sup>65</sup> Gruber, *Red Vienna*, 5.

<sup>66</sup> Julius Braunthal quoted in Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism*, 63.

dramatically galvanized the impulse to refashion social and economic relations. Both developments – the emergence of what some observers termed “war socialism” and the experience of military defeat and social collapse – spurred intensive discussion of the possibility of the socialization of critical sectors of the economy through their subordination to centralized government management.<sup>67</sup>

The window of opportunity closed quickly, however, and despite passing significant social reforms in the course of the revolution, the Social Democrats were unable to substantively alter the relations of production that their own guiding theory situated at the foundation of the social and political order. Electoral defeat in 1920 and the punitive reimposition of liberal economic imperatives that followed spelled the end of the postwar hopes for far-reaching economic transformation. Yet the more the one horizon of possibility receded, the more education beckoned as a way out of the impasse, a means of overcoming a deepening political impotence. “At present,” Kanitz wrote in 1923, “the proletariat has been forced onto the defensive in the economic and political realm. There is, however, one area,” he continued, “where we can conquer new terrain: that is the area of revolutionary socialist education.”<sup>68</sup> As the impulse to socialize the economy faltered, the socialization of the child loomed ever larger in Social Democratic thought.

---

<sup>67</sup> The socialization debate in Germany and Austria generated an enormous literature that reached well beyond the ranks of Social Democrats. Especially significant is the overlap between the contributors to the debates surrounding socialization and those on educational subjects. Perhaps the most notable example is Otto Neurath, later a prominent logical positivist, who was especially prolific on the subject of socialization and some of whose publications on education are touched on below. See Neurath, *Durch die Kriegswirtschaft zur Naturalwirtschaft* (Munich, 1919) and *Vollsozialisierung* (Jena, 1920). Other examples include Otto Bauer, “Der Weg zum Sozialismus,” (Vienna, 1919) and Käthe Leichter, “Erfahrungen des österreichischen Sozialisierungsversuchs,” in *Käthe Leichter. Leben und Werk* ed. Herbert Steiner (Vienna, 1973), 386-428. For historical overviews of the socialization debates in Austria see Rudolf Gerlich, *Die gescheiterte Alternative. Sozialisierung in Österreich nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 1980) and Erwin Weissel, *Die Ohnmacht des Sieges. Arbeiterschaft und Sozialisierung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg in Österreich* (Vienna, 1976).

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Weidenholzer, *Auf dem Weg zum “Neuen Menschen”*, 64.

Paradoxically, if the official Social Democratic school reform movement had followed orthodox Marxist determinism in adhering to a moderate agenda, one that sought to adapt the school system to the liberal democratic achievements of the “bourgeois” revolution that followed the war, the revolutionary socialist ambitions that attended the project of constructing new people brought Austro-Marxist pedagogy back into an awkward proximity to the utopianism of the very bourgeois educators they criticized.<sup>69</sup> For all of the conviction of individual educators, a basic confusion surrounded the question of what constituted a truly progressive politics of education. This confusion reflected both the postwar sociopolitical conjuncture, marked as it was by an uncertain and instable “balance of class forces,” and the intellectual heritage of Austrian Social Democracy itself. From its inception, Austro-Marxism had sought to supplement Marxist social theory and the aim of revolutionary social transformation with Kantian ethics and epistemology. While Kant had declared the task of education to be the preparation of the child for the society of the future, orthodox Marxism challenged the notion that consciousness could be liberated from the economic conditions that structured and constrained it.<sup>70</sup> With its ambitious system of welfare arrangements and educational institutions, Red Vienna represented something of a synthesis of the two positions: an attempt to fashion the “bearers of the coming society” through remaking the concrete, material conditions under which they were socialized.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> See Andresen, *Sozialistische Kindheitskonzepte*, 48.

<sup>70</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Über Pädagogik*, (Königsberg, 1803). While the mechanistic interpretation of the base-superstructure model suggested that attempts to directly mold consciousness without first refashioning economic relations were doomed to failure, in “Das kommunistische Manifest,” Marx himself envisioned a communist politics of education in anything but passive terms: “Die Kommunisten erfinden nicht die Einwirkung der Gesellschaft auf die Erziehung, sie verändern nur ihren Charakter, sie entreißen die Erziehung dem Einfluss der herrschenden Klasse.” Marx, “Das kommunistische Manifest,” (Berlin, 1891 [1848]), 25.

<sup>71</sup> *Das Kind als Träger der werdenden Gesellschaft* was the oft-invoked title of a work by the German socialist pedagogue, Kurt Kerlów-Löwenstein (Vienna, 1924).

It was into this constellation of ideas that Bernfeld issued his study of the limits of education. A slender work divided into three sections, *Sisyphos, oder die Grenzen der Erziehung* announced its intentions in its title: by invoking the mythical figure condemned to roll a boulder up a slope for eternity and thus equating the work of education to a futile struggle against insurmountable limits, Bernfeld offered a sardonic rebuke to the educational idealism of the era. While he drew heavily from Austro-Marxist theory in articulating his critique of contemporary educational thought, Bernfeld simultaneously departed from and turned against it, subjecting the idealistic pretensions of Social Democratic educators – and indeed the entire project of Red Vienna – to a fundamental critique. What set Bernfeld’s work apart from the body of thought that served as a foundation for his own was a characteristically Freudian gesture, namely, its refusal of any consolation. While the sense of deadlock on the political and economic fronts increasingly encouraged Social Democrats to direct their energies towards what Marxist thought designated as the superstructure, Bernfeld insisted, with implacable force, on the impotence of pedagogical politics (and, by extension, culture) in the face of the limits imposed by the socioeconomic realities in which it operated. Along with this basic insistence on the priority of the mode of production and the organization of the social, however, was a new perspective on the psychological (or psychosexual) factors that constrained educational practice. Combining these two forms of critical materialism – the socioeconomic and what he termed the biopsychic – Bernfeld fashioned a perspective on education that exposed and explored the paradoxes underlying the pedagogical politics of interwar Social Democracy.

#### On Pedagogy and Pedagogues

Three years after the initial publication of *Sisyphos*, in a forward to the second edition, Bernfeld offered the reader a glimpse into the ambitions that had led him to compose his book: his hope, he wrote, was to say “untimely things...to sow some doubt, and to shock lazy idealists” through exaggeration. What had sounded “heretical” at the time – namely his insistence on the limits of education – had since become an “oft-used catchphrase” (*vielgebrauchtes Schlagwort*) in contemporary writing on education, he noted.<sup>72</sup> In this sense, Bernfeld’s thoughts were anything but untimely and, in fact, fit squarely within the more circumspect and critical tenor of educational theory in the mid-to-late 1920s. As Peter Dudek has noted, the theme of the limits of education had long been an established part of educational theory, shadowing the optimism of the reform pedagogy movement over the preceding decades, yet the years over which Bernfeld developed his critique witnessed an astonishing expansion of the so-called *Grenzendiskurs*.<sup>73</sup> What distinguished *Sisyphos* from the flood of works dedicated to the investigating the *Grenzen der Erziehung*, however, was where it situated these limits. While the vast majority of such works focused on the educability (*Erziehbarkeit*) of the child – whether understood as a product of its particular genetic inheritance or of its specific sociocultural milieu – and the educational competence (*Erzieherfähigkeit*) of the teacher, Bernfeld’s work was the first and foremost concerned with limits that derived from the impersonal forces of social organization and universal biogenetic endowment and that afflicted the entire pedagogical apparatus of a given society. In contrast to the idealizing and individualizing perspective of *geisteswissenschaftlichen Pädagogik* (the “only

---

<sup>72</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 11. Disclaiming responsibility for the more pessimistic turn in educational thought, Bernfeld pointed to a number of other pedagogues (none of them socialists) whose writings over the mid-1920s on the “limits of education” were the real “stimulators and supporters” of this cultural shift – e.g. Kurt Zeidler, Eberhard Grisebach, Ernst Krieck, and Theodor Litt. Distinguishing his own critical method from what he saw as their vague and muddled reflections, Bernfeld wrote, “Was in ihm [d.h. *Sisyphos*] als Grenze der Erziehung ausführlich dargelegt wird, erscheint meinen sehr geschätzten Nachbarn nach wie vor als unendliche Weltenflur, in der man pädagogisch nach Belieben lustwandeln kann.” (12).

<sup>73</sup> Peter Dudek, *Grenzen der Erziehung im 20. Jahrhundert*, 81 (on the earlier discussion of limits within Central European pedagogy see 55 ff.).

recognized” tradition in educational theory), Bernfeld described his perspective as a materialist one, constructed on a dual foundation of natural science and sociology.<sup>74</sup>

The emergence of this broad current of critical writing on education had to be understood, following Bernfeld’s own suggestions, as a reaction to the widespread enthusiasm for education that emerged in the wake of the war. Few maxims meet with such general agreement, Bernfeld wrote in section one of *Sisyphos* (titled “Von der Pädagogik”), as the conviction that “the countless grievances (*Misstände*) of the present... can only be altered through education (*Erziehung*).”<sup>75</sup> In the midst of a period of extraordinary upheaval and disorientation, questions of education appeared to possess unique significance as means of rethinking the most basic processes of social reproduction. Yet the considerable interest in education generated by the postwar sociopolitical conjuncture could not disguise the fact, Bernfeld contended, that this interest had not consolidated into a higher estimation of pedagogy. If anything, indications of “exhaustion” and “disappointment” could already be discerned, he wrote, ones traceable to the fact that pedagogical theory had failed to live up to the expectations invested in it.<sup>76</sup>

Within this brief postwar moment was reflected, for Bernfeld, the entire history of education, a history marked not by linear progress but by oscillation, by pendulating swings from one pole, characterized by vaulting optimism, to another, marked by exasperation, disillusionment, embitterment, and resignation. Yet beneath these dramatic fluctuations was a more or less constant fundament of skepticism that attended the aspirations of educators and the theories of education – the pedagogy – they produced.<sup>77</sup> Lacking in educational theory, Bernfeld argued, was the

---

<sup>74</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 13.

<sup>75</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 15-6.

<sup>76</sup> “Denn die Pädagogik hält nicht, was man sich von ihr verspricht.” Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 16.

<sup>77</sup> “Nachsichtigkeit gegenüber ihren Idealen – es wäre schön – und entschiedener kalter Unglaube gegenüber ihren Programmen, Mitteln, Versprechungen: das ist die Haltung aller, der Gedankenlosen wie der Nachdenklichen, zur Pädagogik. Ausgenommen sind im wesentlichen nur die Pädagogen selbst.” Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 15.

foundation in empiricism that would furnish it with the kind of legitimate and authoritative criteria that could compel recognition across ideological divides.<sup>78</sup> Despite the flood of literature devoted to pedagogical questions, the process of rationalization that Bernfeld, following Max Weber, identified as a telos of modernity, remained at an embryonic phase in the field of educational theory. A pervasive unwillingness to think about educational matters in scientific terms hampered the development of the rational reflection that constituted “the meaning and function of pedagogy,” Bernfeld argued.<sup>79</sup> Rather than confronting its subject with a sober simplicity, pedagogy resorted to ideological adornment and lofty, ungrounded assertions. An exemplary illustration of this tendency, Bernfeld contended, was the demand, one that reverberated throughout writings of reform pedagogues, that the teacher not only transmit knowledge but also – and, indeed, above all – form the pupil’s character – that is, that he or she educate in the sense of *Erziehung*. How the teacher was to fulfill this inflated responsibility and what defined as person as *erzogen*, however, were questions that educational theory was incapable of answering.<sup>80</sup>

Where the process of rationalization had made some progress within educational thought was in the delimited sphere of the theory of instruction (*Didaktik*), whose aim, Bernfeld contended, again following Weber, was to think through the instructional work of the individual teacher from the perspective of instrumental rationality (*zweckrational zu denken*). Yet here too a sense of irreality permeated the theoretical edifice: missing from the extensive literature on instructional technique was any sense of complexity of reality and thus of the limitations imposed on methods of instruction. In particular, the educational function of the school *as an institution* fell entirely

---

<sup>78</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 19.

<sup>79</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 21.

<sup>80</sup> “Die Pädagogik gibt sich äußerste Mühe, diese nüchterne Einfachheit ideologisch zu verziern, diese harte Klarheit armselig zu vernebeln. Sie verlangt z.B., der Lehrer solle nicht nur unterrichten, sondern auch vor allem: erziehen.” Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 26.

beyond the artificial purview of *Didaktik*. A product of the economic conditions of the time, and of the ideological and cultural demands and valuations that emerged from them, the school existed not only *prior to and independent of* the aims of *Didaktik*, but to a large degree *in opposition to* them, Bernfeld insisted.<sup>81</sup> In diverting its attention from this reality, the literature on instructional technique found itself enmeshed in a “bitter paradox,” a laughable situation in which its own limited, instrumental (means-end) rationality was continually undermined and perverted by the overarching irrationality of the school system itself and of the educational influence that, as an institution, it exercised.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, instructional theory, by diverting attention away from the role of the school system, played the reprehensible role of preserving the existing order, Bernfeld contended – like pedagogy, didactic theory appeared to hinder the very future it promised precisely by foreclosing consideration of the social limits within which it operated.<sup>83</sup>

Both pedagogy and instructional theory confronted another set of limits in the child itself, however. Just as *Didaktik*, in its effort to rationalize instructional technique, overlooked the institutional framework within which it was embedded, the same impulse led it to neglect the child’s drives, wishes, and ideals and thus to mistake a part of the child – its psychological surface – for the whole.<sup>84</sup> While the writings of the great pedagogues of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Fröbel) offered richer and deeper pictures of the developing subject than the literature on instructional technique, the image of the child they presented was

---

<sup>81</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 29-30.

<sup>82</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 31.

<sup>83</sup> “Die Möglichkeit zeigt sich an: die Pädagogik verhindert vielleicht die Zukunft, die sie verspricht.” Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 18. “Zugleich aber – und das ist das Verwerfliche – erhält sie das Bestehende, indem sie, selbst abgelenkt und abseitig tätig, Aller Aufmerksamkeit vom Feinde ablenkt. Aller Arbeitskraft nutzlos vergeudet. Nein, nicht erfolglos. Dient es doch dem gesicherten Bestand des Bestehenden” (31). The limitations of didactic theory prompted Bernfeld to call for the establishment of a discipline concerned with the institutional analysis of the school system as a whole, a discipline he termed *Instituetik* (30).

<sup>84</sup> As the felicitous English translation reads, “The subject of its investigation was the product of its own foreshortened vision.” Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 32.

grounded in little more than intuition, detached as it was from any basis in empiricism.<sup>85</sup> Inevitably, the results of this pure introspection were highly tendentious, Bernfeld noted. Anticipating a line of argument he would take up more fully in the third and final section of *Sisyphos*, Bernfeld averred that one's own childhood inevitably colored one's reflections on childhood and youth in general. Warped and distorted as it was by repression, the image of oneself as a child was both fragmentary and disfigured. While the educational system adhered to a naïve conception of childhood that feigned ignorance of deeper psychological processes, at the heart of the pedagogical system, Bernfeld contended, was an "unconscious, unknowable, and uncontrollable intrusion of affects" stemming from the unsublimated desires and unresolved conflicts of childhood.<sup>86</sup>

The image of the child in educational theory was above all a means to a theological, ethical, or political end, Bernfeld argued. Yet between the lofty aims pedagogues professed and the educational methods they employed loomed a yawning chasm that cast doubt on their programs.<sup>87</sup> Whether they advocated pedagogical eros or "strict discipline," instruction through words or by example, "active conduct" or "patient waiting," "living out of childish impulses or their suppression," no new methods were conceivable and every imaginable combination had already been attempted, Bernfeld maintained. Contrary to the assertions of educators, the transformative power to realize the ideals they championed was in no way inherent in the "suspiciously simple and banal" methods they advocated.<sup>88</sup> Like the image of the child at the center of their programs, the success of these pedagogical methods was left entirely up to the intuition of the individual

---

<sup>85</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 36.

<sup>86</sup> "Der naïve Kindheitsbegriff ist von geheimer Tendenz durchtränkt, Tendenz des jungen Ichideals gegen seine kindliche Vergangenheit, Tendenz des erwachsenen Ich gegen die nicht erledigten, sondern bloß verdrängten infantile Triebe, Tendenz des Denkenden gegen seine Objekte, die Kinder und ihre Erzieher." Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 34-6.

<sup>87</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 38.

<sup>88</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 41.

pedagogue. “Who decides, who tests, who seriously questions” whether the results are to be attributed to the method or to the personality of the educator, Bernfeld queried rhetorically.<sup>89</sup> A pervasive uncertainty thus haunted efforts at educational reform. While to the expanding public of pedagogically interested individuals it might appear that the historical era “stood on the cusp of a new epoch of education,” this threshold was not so lightly traversed, Bernfeld cautioned: in fact, the most that could be hoped for, he wrote, was that “having stumbled over [this threshold] and bleeding from nose and mouth, we might take cognizance of it...Following our arrogance comes modest insight, and in between lies our fall.”<sup>90</sup>

Immersed in self-delusions, Bernfeld’s pedagogue was one who constructed castles in the sky (*Luftgebäude*) while tripping repeatedly over the limits, barriers, and boundaries (*die Grenzen*) at his feet.<sup>91</sup> Both the complexity of psychic life and the intractability of the social, economic, and political realities confronted by education were completely absent from pedagogical theory. “Too timid and delicate” to address these determining factors and confront “the engine of social change,” pedagogues took refuge in a flattering self-image, one that dramatically inflated the social and political importance of their work. In the face of the limits and impediments that hampered and undermined their work, however, assertions that *Erziehung* was the only means of salvation for the nation appeared to Bernfeld little more than “cowardly self-reassurance.”<sup>92</sup> The world as it appeared in the works of the great pedagogues was an inverted, idealist image of the conditions under which they worked, a world turned upside down, in which the philosophy of education (*Pädagogik*) guided its practice (*Erziehung*), which in turn, dictated the evolution of the social,

---

<sup>89</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 43.

<sup>90</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 44-5.

<sup>91</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 45.

<sup>92</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 105-6. Bernfeld’s example of such an assertion was a statement by Pestalozzi, “Es ist für den sittlich, geistig und bürgerlich gesunkenen Welttheil keine Rettung möglich als durch die Erziehung...’”

political, and cultural world. The laws that governed social development were by no means so pliable, however, and significantly they offered none of the consolations that saturated the idealism of educational theory. Distilling the thesis of his book into a series of pointed formulations, Bernfeld wrote in his 1928 forward,

Pedagogy is not responsible for building the educational system, rather politics is. The aims of education are not determined by ethics and philosophy, but rather by the ruling class. Education does not bring about the realization of mankind's ideal of humanity rather it is the transformation of the present society that creates the space for a higher type of human. An education that does not recognize its social limits or that shrouds the ugly reality with a lovely web of ideals only serves to perpetuate the very type of humanity (*Menschheitsschlag*) that the philosophy of education curses as uneducated, uncultivated, as inhuman.<sup>93</sup>

As he turned his attention to the investigation of these limits, a process that simultaneously involved a closer specification (together with the reframing and reformulation) of the social function of education, Bernfeld fashioned a radically new perspective on the problems that troubled the education reformers in his midst.

#### Limits Without and Limits Within

“The sum total of the reactions of a given society to the facts of individual development” constitutes education (*Erziehung*), Bernfeld wrote in the second section of *Sisyphos*.<sup>94</sup> As a number of commentators have noted, Bernfeld's definition of *Erziehung* bore a marked similarity to that of Emile Durkheim.<sup>95</sup> The Durkheimian conception of education as socialization that

---

<sup>93</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 12.

<sup>94</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 48.

<sup>95</sup> Dudek, “*Er war halt genialer als die anderen*”. *Biografische Annäherungen an Siegfried Bernfeld* (Gießen, 2012), 337. As Dudek notes, however, there is no way of knowing for certain whether or not Bernfeld encountered Durkheim's writings during his university studies under Wilhelm Jerusalem. Such a perspective on education resonated as well, however, with Social Democratic pedagogue who, like Bernfeld, adopted a broader conception of *Erziehung* in order to criticize the idealizing tendencies of *geisteswissenschaftliche* (or *kulturphilosophische*) pedagogy. See for instance Kurt Kerlów-Löwenstein's critique of the “ideologische Verklärung gegebener Machverhältnisse” in bourgeois educational theory: “Aus all dem ergibt sich, daß Erziehungswissenschaft niemals eine konstruktive und speculative Wissenschaft sein kann, sondern daß sie ihre Ansatzpunkte und Zielsetzungen aus

Bernfeld knowingly or unknowingly adopted significantly expanded the scope of phenomena relevant to the process of education – not merely the work of the teacher in the formal classroom setting, but the “entire present-day society” participated in the education of the child.<sup>96</sup> Like the seat of rationality and conscious deliberation within the psyche, the delimited range of activities normally designated as education was thus set against a backdrop of innumerable *erzieherische* activities that generally transpired beneath the threshold of conscious, deliberate selection. What passed for education in pedagogical literature was not only a special case within this broader process but a comparatively recent historical addition, a consequence of an underlying change in the reaction of society to the facts of development. The manifest historical variations in these social reactions to ontogeny – variations that included the very emergence of formal education – could only be explained, Bernfeld argued, with reference to the “forces that formed and transformed society,” and in the last instance, to the “form and tendency of the process of economic production.”<sup>97</sup>

Yet beneath the historically variable aspect of *Erziehung* was a constant dimension, one that persisted, in Bernfeld’s view, in the midst of the changes to the economic structure and the forms of socialization it gave rise to.<sup>98</sup> At this point in his argument, Bernfeld’s analysis underwent a pivot from a consideration of the socioeconomic and political factors that conditioned education to an investigation of what he termed its biopsychic dimension. It was in the more intimate setting of the pedagogical pair relationship that the constant dimension of education asserted itself with

---

der Tatsache empfängt, daß an und in dem gesellschaftlichen Lebensprozeß Menschen zu lebendigen Trägern dieses Prozess heranwachsen. Erziehung is überhaupt nicht anderes als dieses Heranwachsen des Menschen im gesellschaftlichen Lebensprozeß.” Kerlöw-Löwenstein, “Schulreform und Klassenkampf,” *Die Sozialistische Erziehung* 3 (1923), 57-61, reprinted in reprinted in *Sozialistische Pädagogik und Schulkritik*, ed. Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 8 of *Siegfried Bernfeld. Werkausgabe* (Gießen, 2016), 298-99.

<sup>96</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 111.

<sup>97</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 50.

<sup>98</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 50-1.

especial transparency. The weakness of cultural inhibitions within the pair relationship meant that the educational dynamic that prevailed within it was dominated by an ever-present possibility of conflict. Without any reason to fear the child and comparatively isolated from social sanctions, the adult was free to indulge his or her affects, and in particular, the aggression that inevitably accompanied the adult's attempt to overcome the child's will. As soon as "ideological and moral considerations" penetrated the adult-child relationship, "the pair group no longer existed in its pure form," Bernfeld explained. Yet even in the face of such inhibitions, "substitutive motivations" could do little to permanently restrain the adult's indulgence of his or her affects – in the case of love as well as that of aggression "the affect would run its course," Bernfeld insisted, regardless of how poorly suited it was to the socially authorized ends of the educational relationship.<sup>99</sup> While the inculcation of civilizing restraints over the broad epochs of historical development had both moderated the discharge of aggression and inhibited the expression of love common within the pair group, the "humanization of the means corresponded to an extension of their duration," Bernfeld wrote.<sup>100</sup> At base, the educational dynamic remained the same with a defenseless child handed over to the arbitrary, impulsive, and irrational exercise of educational authority.

The penetration of the educational pair group by social and cultural inhibitions obscured the constant dimension of education that unfolded within it, distorting its basic features with subsequent accretions. Recapitulating a standard psychoanalytic epistemological procedure, Bernfeld attempted to isolate and clarify the constant factors of education by turning to the supposedly more rudimentary socialization processes among "primitive" peoples. Without specifying the "primitive" peoples whose methods of child rearing provided his model of

---

<sup>99</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 51-2. "Der Mensch ist Sklave der seelischen Abläufe in ihm, aus denen er schließlich besteht" (52).

<sup>100</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 58.

elementary socialization and taking the male child's developmental trajectory as the unacknowledged norm, Bernfeld pointed to the initiation rites of aboriginal tribes as examples of the constant dimension of education in its purest form.<sup>101</sup> At a certain age, Bernfeld wrote, the male child was removed from the exclusive company of women where he spent roughly the first decade of his life and subjected to a "completely different form of treatment." Preceded by a period of fasting, physical tortures, and instruction, the initiation rites that marked his transition into the male community consisted essentially in a solemn act, invariably accompanied by cruelty, in which the fathers symbolically killed their sons and reawakened them to a new life as men. Far from being "sadistic aberrations" of particular, exotic peoples, such rites were "general educational institutions" of "typical and commonly recurring...features," a fact that suggested that they were a necessary part of social orders structured according to age groups. The brutal rites of aboriginal peoples are the "oldest collective educational measures known to us," Bernfeld averred. The unsettling conclusion that followed from this contention was that "at the origin of organized education stood an orgy of sadism" towards the young.<sup>102</sup>

The abrupt transition in the life of the aboriginal child from the nurturing intimacy of the maternal fold to the harshness of the masculine collective indicated that the constant dimension of education consisted of two *Urreaktionen*, which Bernfeld mapped onto an essentialist gender binary. Where the female reaction consisted in the impulse to abolish the corporeal separation opened-up by the experience of childbirth ("the mother loves the child as a part of her own body from which she has been separated only temporarily"), the male reaction stemmed from the unconscious imperative to kill the (male) child.<sup>103</sup> The *Urreaktionen* never operated in a pure

---

<sup>101</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 56.

<sup>102</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 56-8.

<sup>103</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 62-4.

form, however, and the dialectical interplay between the unconscious impulses characteristic of the paternal and maternal reactions transformed each into functional – if still radically divergent – educational methods. Rather than killing the child, the masculine reaction – once diverted from its original goal – served to break up the mother-infant dyad and, by impressing the gravity of incest and parricide on the budding Oedipus, to foreclose the possibility of a regressive development, a return to security of the maternal fold. The nurturing intimacy of the modified maternal reaction, by contrast, provided the child with what Bernfeld described as an education through love, one in which the primary libidinal attachment to the mother facilitated the child’s identification with its milieu. While the maternal reaction drew the child into the social and cultural world, the masculine education that followed ensured that the years of maturity would not consist in a “turning back” but rather in an “eternal turning away from the mother.”<sup>104</sup>

The two *Urreaktionen* thus complemented one another, with the harsh instruction of the fathers completing the maternal education by libidinal identification by abolishing the original attachment to the mother and violently expelling the child from its original nurturing matrix. From the shadow of the ancient violence of aboriginal initiation rites emerged the institution of formal schooling, Bernfeld argued, and “a piece of the *uralten Sadismus*, a shimmer of that orgy of aggression still transfigures it today.”<sup>105</sup> In developing this argument, Bernfeld was taking up and radically deepening a line of critique that had been central to reform pedagogical thought since the late-nineteenth century. The child’s suffering in the institution of the school and at the hands of brutal educators was a theme that echoed through the modernist literature of the period and underpinned a broader critique of the violence of child rearing in a patriarchal society.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 68-71.

<sup>105</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 70.

<sup>106</sup> The classic statement of this critique was Ellen Key’s *Das Jahrhundert des Kindes*, originally published in Swedish in 1900 and translated into German two years later. Her work, which included a chapter titled “Die Seelenmorde in

Galvanized by the heightened generational conflict of the postwar moment, the conviction that youth (adolescents in particular) were being sacrificed to an insensitive, morally bankrupt adult world animated both the politics of the radical youth movement and the sensibility of what was known as literary and artistic expressionism.

In the period of his intellectual and political development that culminated in the Baumgarten experiment, Bernfeld's youth politics reinforced these cultural currents, stridently condemning the effects of the world of the fathers on the idealism of adolescence and advocating the emancipation of youth from the constraints of bourgeois society (see chapter four). Following the disillusionment of his Baumgarten experiment and in the midst of a broader cultural shift from the overheated pathos and outrage of expressionism to the cooler, more restrained sensibility of the so-called "new objectivity" (*neue Sachlichkeit*), however, Bernfeld's youth politics underwent a noticeable modulation.<sup>107</sup> Above all, the idealism of his earlier writings on education, which situated pedagogical reform at the vanguard of cultural and political transformation, had given way to a disabused insistence on the implacability of a harsh reality and the corresponding ineluctability of repression. "The school does not have it easy," he wrote in 1925, "It has to work against all the inherited drives of the children, against their spontaneous wishes and interests" and to "represent the hardness and complexity of social reality."<sup>108</sup> Precisely by stripping away the idealism of this

---

den Schulen" and argued passionately for the rights of children and youth, was joined by a broad current of literature that gave expression to a sense of youth martyrdom at the hands of an insensitive and brutal adult society. Important works in this strain of social criticism were Frank Wedekind's "Frühlings Erwachen" (1891), Heinrich Mann's *Professor Unrat* (1905), Robert Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törless* (1906), and Hermann Hesse's *Unterm Rad* (1906). On this subject see Wolfgang Scheibe, *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung, 1900-1932* (Weinheim, 1969) and Jürgen Oelkers, *Reformpädagogik. Eine kritische Dogmengeschichte* (Weinheim, 1996).

<sup>107</sup> On this cultural shift see especially, Helmut Lethen, *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte. Lebensversuche zwischen den Kriegen* (Frankfurt a. M., 1994).

<sup>108</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 70. To be sure, Bernfeld had already contended in his 1921 report that education consisted essentially in the antagonistic confrontation of two equally justified wills (i.e. that of the child and that of the educator), yet a strong idealizing tendency nonetheless coursed through the pedagogical politics he elaborated in his Baumgarten report. In particular, the means of mediating between these wills that Bernfeld proposed – namely the *Schulgemeinde* – figured in his thought as both a new cultural fact and as a vector of emancipatory sociopolitical transformation. See on this subject Rainer Treptow, "'Schaffung kultureller Tatsachen'. Siegfried Bernfelds Beitrag zur pädagogischen

earlier phase, however, Bernfeld's critique of education in present-day society reached much further than even the most radical Austro-Marxists. Where Kanitz followed Adlerian Individual Psychology in suggesting that it was the proletarian father's impotence in the capitalist social order that transformed him into a tyrant in the home – his frustrated desire for power (and consequent feelings of inferiority) accounting for his aggression – Bernfeld pointed to an ineradicable element of sadism that lay at the base of all education.<sup>109</sup> To Bernfeld, contemporary education appeared to be haunted by the uncanny presence of ancient sadism that reached back to the brutality of the primal horde.

Yet if the violent curtailment of the child's innate drives and desires was an inevitable part of *Erziehung*, what was far less transparent was the extent to which this repression served to reproduce the established social order and the extent to which it was an essential condition for cultural development at all, what Herbert Marcuse would later describe as the relationship between surplus and necessary repression.<sup>110</sup> Anticipating Claude Lévi-Strauss's famous argument, Bernfeld contended that the imposition of the incest taboo and the consequent guilt – the essential achievements of masculine education – marked the transition from the natural to the cultural – that is, they represented inventions of “absolute originality,” without any analogue in the organic or psychic realm,” he wrote.<sup>111</sup> The function of masculine education was the attainment and perpetuation of the cultural increment through which the biopsychic sphere transcends itself – more concretely, it aimed to form a psychic structure that would prevent the regressive return to

---

Struktur- und Prozessreflexivität,” in *Welten der Bildung in der Pädagogik der frühen Kindheit und in der Sozialpädagogik*, ed. Ludwig Liegle et. al. (Freiburg, 2002), 167-80.

<sup>109</sup> See Kanitz, *Das proletarische Kind*, 46-8, 53.

<sup>110</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston, 1955).

<sup>111</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 72-3. For Lévi-Strauss's theory that the incest taboo marked the precise point at which the natural transcended itself and passed over into the cultural see his *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, trans. James Harle Bell and John Richard von Sturmer (Beacon Press, 1969 [1949]).

the mother and thus “conserve adult society from the generation of youth reared within it.”<sup>112</sup> The complexity of the attained social structure and particularly the “unnaturalness” of the established economic order added another degree of difficulty to this endeavor, resulting in a prolongation of childhood and in the emergence of new more elaborate forms of organized education.<sup>113</sup> Our education “is geared to the economy from birth on,” Bernfeld averred, and the cultural increment secured by masculine education served ultimately to safeguard power of ruling class.<sup>114</sup>

In an argument that foreshadowed what would become a major current of Freudo-Marxist critical theory, Bernfeld argued that the essential aspect of this process was the entwining of the child’s developing libidinal economy with the established economic order.<sup>115</sup> Like the Austro-Marxist educational theorists, Bernfeld contended that education represented a “respectable means” of waging class struggle in the hands of the ruling strata – at base, education was a means for securing the social power of the bourgeoisie.<sup>116</sup> In a lengthy passage in which he imagined a speech by a class-conscious, bourgeois minister of education named (in a parodic vein, and thus, without a trace of subtlety) Machiavelli, Bernfeld formulated the aim of education in capitalist society quite simply: “children must learn to love the bourgeoisie.”<sup>117</sup> As Bernfeld explained through the mouthpiece of minister Machiavelli, the beginning of formal schooling in the immediate aftermath of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex offered the child new objects for his now unbound love since just like the family, the school has a father, a mother, and siblings.

---

<sup>112</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 74-5.

<sup>113</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 76-7 (on the prolongation of education) and 80 (on the unnaturalness of the established economic order).

<sup>114</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 82.

<sup>115</sup> “Kein Wirtschaftszug, der nicht mit – und wäre es unkenbar fein sublimierter – Sexualität gefärbt wäre, keine Regung der Biopsyche, die nicht eingeengt wäre in die konkreten Bedingungen einer Wirtschaft.” Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 78

<sup>116</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 83-4. Compare, for instance, to Otto Glöckel’s assertion in a 1919 pamphlet, “Die ganze bisherige Schulorganisation ist auf dem Gedanken aufgebaut, möglichst früh die proletarische Jugend von den Kindern der Besitzenden zu trennen...” “Schulreform und Volksbildung in der Republik,” (Vienna, 1919), 1.

<sup>117</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 84.

By encouraging the child to experience the new community as a continuation of the original family romance, whose traumatic denouement the child was unable to fully accept, the institution of the school created a template for his later misperception of the state and the nation as enlarged families. As the web of social relationships into which the developing subject was drawn became overlaid with these earlier emotional attachments, the same combination of libidinal identification and anxious inhibition of aggression that characterized the child's Oedipal attachment to the father came to permeate his attitude towards his superiors – as aggressive and rebellious as they might appear, Machiavelli reassured his listeners, the “overwhelming majority” would “be paralyzed by the memory of their infantile catastrophe.”<sup>118</sup>

“The socialists will have considerable difficulty,” Machiavelli insisted, making the exploited majority see the power of the bourgeois class – let alone the laws of capitalism – behind the individual embodiment of the paternal imago.<sup>119</sup> Resuming his own voice, Bernfeld contended that deficient courage and a combination of “guilt and anxiety” – together with an inability to conceive of a differently structured society – had likely prevented the workers from carrying out a socialist revolution in 1918.<sup>120</sup> Yet the attempt to create new people capable of finishing the work of the revolution was misguided: “education is conservative,” he contended, “its organization is particularly so. Never is it a preparation for a structural transformation of the social.” Echoing Bauer he asserted that progress in education consisted merely in its “overcoming, to some minor degree, its own backwardness.”<sup>121</sup> Not only did its organization pose an “insurmountable limit” to the aspirations of reforming pedagogues, the fact that formal education rested on a foundation of early educational relationship (the far more significant attachment to the parents) dimmed the

---

<sup>118</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 89-91.

<sup>119</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 91.

<sup>120</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 93-4

<sup>121</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 101-103.

prospects of changing society through education reform. No less important, however, was the fact that the “new” educator himself was a product of the old society – forced to rely on individuals formed within the very “opaque totality” (*undurchsichtigen Ganzen*) they hoped to transform, the search for new educators capable of forming new people was trapped within a “fairy ring” (*Hexenring*) and one from which there was “no means of salvation,” Bernfeld wrote.<sup>122</sup>

The question that posed itself for Bernfeld was why such reflections were disillusioning at all – why pedagogues stubbornly insisted on tasking education with the realization of a “virtual orgy of ultimate ideals” (*geradezu ausschweifenden Endgültigkeitsorgie*).<sup>123</sup> The explanation lay in a dissatisfaction “anchored deeply” in the educational relationship itself, Bernfeld argued. “The pedagogical pair-relationship was by its nature unsatisfying for the adult,” relying as it did on a love that was deflected from its original aim of sexual gratification. This sublimated (aim-inhibited) love was by itself inadequate, however, and had to be supplemented by a libido which, while “apparently sublime,” is actually undeflected from and frustrated in its original aim – were it to attain its end, however, the satisfaction would be accompanied by feelings of guilt, Bernfeld explained.<sup>124</sup> The conventional dissolution of the Oedipus complex led to a splitting-off of childish wishes, experiences, and drives as a repressed unconscious, which then exercised a hidden power on the thought, activity, and above all, love of the ego. No less than the child, the educator pursued the forbidden aim of reproducing the Oedipal situation: following the repetition compulsion emanating from his or her own unconscious, the educator met the child’s need for substitute love objects halfway by assuming the authority of the parents and continuing their work.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 103, 111.

<sup>123</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 112.

<sup>124</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 113-16.

<sup>125</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 117.

Yet at the same time as the educator took on the authority of the parents, he faced an inner child whose aims were diametrically opposed to those of his mature ego and his professional responsibilities. Between the child repressed within him and the child to be educated before him emerged what Bernfeld described as a harmony of love. While both children want to re-experience the libidinal attachments of the Oedipal situation, the ego of the educator – made anxious by his unconscious complicity with the child – sought to repeat its destruction, Bernfeld explained. Seeing his own desires reflected in the child before him, the educator inevitably treats the latter as it experiences the former, avenging itself on its own repressed unconscious by punishing the innocent child. “Having forfeited the child’s love, the educator laid claim to the love of mankind,” Bernfeld claimed, and in the process, the pedagogical brutality that served to silence his own guilt was transfigured into a path for the “transformation and salvation of humanity.”<sup>126</sup>

Traversed by these countervailing currents of desire, the educational relationship was engulfed within a “vortex of affects” within which all hope of finding “rational and purposive guidelines” appeared to vanish.<sup>127</sup> The image of a vortex that Bernfeld invoked in his discussion of the psychosexual dynamics of the pedagogical relationship resonated with a motif of circularity that ran throughout his book. Beyond its titular invocation of the mythical figure of Sisyphus, Bernfeld’s book teemed with figures culled from classical mythology, all of which seemed to gesture to an ineluctable force of repetition that perpetually perverted the conscious aims of educators and resisted assimilation to common-sense rationality. From Kronos devouring each subsequent generation of sons, to Circe transforming pedagogical idealism into swinish philistinism, the mythological undercurrent of Bernfeld’s *Sisyphos* pointed to a sort of dead point

---

<sup>126</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 117-19. The psychology of the educator was a subject that Bernfeld tackled in a number of subsequent papers, namely “Der Erzieher,” “Der Irrtum des Pestalozzi,” and “Sankt Pestalozzi” in *Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung*, 131-154; 191-200; 200-208.

<sup>127</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 118

at the heart of education, one that required new approaches on the level of both practice and theory.<sup>128</sup>

Only a pedagogical theory and an educational practice that rested firmly on a collective basis was capable of overcoming the maelstrom of affects that emerged in the educational pair relationship, Bernfeld argued. While a fundamental uncertainty afflicted all pedagogical questions that dealt with individuals, a collectively orientated and empirically grounded pedagogy could formulate aims and prognoses with an adequate degree of certainty.<sup>129</sup> Yet such an approach to education was anathema to the mentality that prevailed under current socioeconomic conditions: directing all its attention to the individual student while remaining indifferent to the fate of millions, bourgeois individualizing pedagogy served merely to repeat the creation and destruction of the Oedipus complex that lay at the base of the capitalist social order. “Whatever social order it serves, education would always concern itself with the fate of the individual,” Bernfeld wrote. Yet while bourgeois society neglected the masses, socialist pedagogy would develop its aims on the basis of an expectation of general as opposed to particular success – only by doing so could educational theory be rationalized.<sup>130</sup> While a collectively orientated pedagogy could only be realized in a post-capitalist society (socialism representing the political order in which pedagogy could become a science) the socialist political parties already possessed the power to promote such an approach, Bernfeld contended. Imprisoned as they were in a bourgeois conception of education, however, the socialists generally failed to recognize this possibility, their own (still “very meager,” *sehr ärmlichen*) contributions to pedagogical theory merely reinforcing the presuppositions of established pedagogical practice.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 62, 97.

<sup>129</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 123.

<sup>130</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 124-5

<sup>131</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 125-27, 104.

## A Pedagogical Politics of Disillusionment

Envisioning a post-bourgeois education was a challenge that had accompanied Bernfeld's pedagogical activism for over a decade prior to the publication of *Sisyphos*. From his prewar engagement in the *Jugendkulturbewegung* through his postwar experiment in the new education, a central objective of Bernfeld's pedagogical thought and practice had been the attempt to fashion forms of socialization that pushed beyond the artificial limits imposed by bourgeois society. By the time he came to write *Sisyphos*, however, Bernfeld's pedagogical thought had taken on a harder, more stridently illiberal and anti-humanist edge, a development that culminated in his 1927 article "Das Massenproblem in der sozialistischen Pädagogik." In place of a bourgeois individualizing education modeled on the family, a form of education reserved for a "parasitical minority," Bernfeld envisioned a *Massenpädagogik* modeled on the political party and movement. Through a hierarchical organization, one stratified between leaders, educators, and masses, socialist pedagogy could exercise an immediate educational influence on masses of individual children. By relying on impersonal patterns of libidinal identification and the "coercive force" of the mass itself on its constituents, a form of education could be constructed that overcame the limits of bourgeois education and worked as if through a "psychical short-circuit" to implant a common ideal in numerous children at once, transforming each according to the will and aim of the mass (*des Massenwillens, Massenzieles*).<sup>132</sup>

As was the case with a number of essays Bernfeld wrote over the ensuing years on subjects like the psychology of the educator and the influence of the social environment on the developing

---

<sup>132</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, "Das Massenproblem in der sozialistischen Pädagogik," *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 7 (1927): 5-7, 33-36, 122-25, reprinted in *Sozialistische Pädagogik und Schulkritik*, 29-42 (at 32, 35, 39-40).

subject,<sup>133</sup> Bernfeld's article on mass pedagogy merely fleshed out ideas that had figured prominently in his 1925 book. Beyond its extraordinary richness, *Sisyphos* was a seminal departure in the budding critical tradition of psychoanalytic social theory. One of the first works of an explicitly Freudo-Marxist theoretical orientation and one that overlapped significantly with contemporary sociology as well, Bernfeld recognized that *Sisyphos* was likely to alienate many readers – whether Freudians who eschewed Marxist social theory, Marxists who rejected psychoanalysis, or more traditional pedagogues who held both in low esteem. Both psychoanalysis and Marxism were recognized without qualification in *Sisyphos* as the twin fundamentals of a future science of education, Bernfeld wrote: the danger of falling between these two foundational pillars into the “abyss of slurry at their base” (*grundlosen Baugrundschlamm*) could be avoided only by building a bridge between them, one that would provide the educator with a broad perspective over the extensive landscape of education.”<sup>134</sup> The bridge that Bernfeld fashioned between Marxism and Freudianism drew the latter out of the relative isolation of the nuclear family into the social world created by capitalism while simultaneously exposing the psychosexual dynamics beneath the processes that reproduced capitalist society. Along with the libidinal identification cultivated by the bourgeoisie, the deep reservoir of guilt phylogenetically transmitted by the biopsychic structure and ontogenetically nurtured in the Oedipal situation furnished the seedbed for the “unnatural” economic relations of contemporary society.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> For the former see note 126 above. For the latter see Bernfeld's “Die männliche Großstadtjugend” (1928), “Der soziale Ort und seine Bedeutung für Neurose, Verwahrlosung und Pädagogik” (1929), and “Die Tantalus-Situation. Bemerkungen zum ‘kriminellen Über-Ich’” (1931), in *Sozialpädagogik*, ed. Daniel Barth and Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 4 of *Siegfried Bernfeld. Werkausgabe* (Gießen, 2012), 227-238; 255-272; 303-321.

<sup>134</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 60. See also 79: “Nicht die Marxisten und die Freudianer [haben recht] sondern Marx und Freud.”

<sup>135</sup> “Kein Wirtschaftszug, der nicht mit – und wäre es unkenntbar fein sublimierter – Sexualität gefärbt wäre, keine Regung der Biopsyché, die nicht eingeeengt wäre in die konkreten Bedingungen einer Wirtschaft.” “Es ist, als wäre die Wirtschaftsform eine Art materialer Gestaltung und Rechtfertigung des Gesellschaftsunbewußten; eine Art Ideologie des Schuldgefühls.” Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 78-9.

In pursuing this line of inquiry, Bernfeld was contributing to a broad – if still largely inchoate – current of Marxist thought that emerged in the wake of the war. For many socialists, the fact that the postwar revolution, despite the apparently optimal conditions for a far-reaching social transformation, had become stuck at a “bourgeois preliminary phase,” in the words of the socialist pedagogue Otto Rühle, indicated the need not only for a new pedagogy but also for a deeper understanding of individual psychology.<sup>136</sup> The Marxist working-class movement alone was responsible for the fact that the bourgeoisie had not fully succeeded in deceiving the proletariat and diverting its aggression onto pseudo-enemies, Bernfeld contended, and yet, Marxism was itself inadequate for grasping the obstacles to revolutionary transformation.<sup>137</sup> Only a failed revolution has need of psychology, Paul Lazarsfeld, an adherent of Adlerian Individual Psychology between the wars and a follower of Bernfeld’s within the youth movement, would argue several decades later.<sup>138</sup> A sustained reflection on failure, Bernfeld’s *Sisyphos* bound the general disillusionment that followed the postwar upheaval to the more personal disappointment of the Baumgarten experiment. “It is wonderfully easy” to effect even “the most astonishing changes” in children through education, Bernfeld argued, and it is possible to accomplish anything for a given period in a given space. The *Grenzen* of education, however, asserted themselves all the more brutally at the temporal and spatial limits of such undertakings. In a statement that distilled the basic lesson he derived from the Baumgarten experiment, Bernfeld wrote, “education requires money, and the bourgeoisie has the money” – “there is no end to such pompous banalities,” he added.<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>136</sup> Quoted in Weidenholzer, *Auf dem Weg zum neuen Menschen*, 65.

<sup>137</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 83.

<sup>138</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “Eine Episode in der Geschichte der empirischen Sozialforschung: Erinnerungen,” in *Soziologie autobiographisch*, ed. Talcott Parsons et. al. (Stuttgart, 1975), 149.

<sup>139</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 128, 100.

Perhaps surprisingly given the current of pedagogical optimism into which it was issued and the sardonic edge that marked his critique, Bernfeld's book was greeted enthusiastically at the time of its publication. While a number of reviewers bemoaned the fact that its abstruse, allusive style would limit its potential readership, the majority praised the work as a penetrating and ingenious critique.<sup>140</sup> Writing in *Der Kampf*, Hans Fischl lauded Bernfeld's "dazzling wit" before offering an insightful glimpse into the ambivalence of Social Democratic education reformers towards psychoanalysis: taking issue specifically with the prehistoric, mythological, and cultural-philosophical dimension of Bernfeld's analysis, Fischl wrote,

we have not done away with the Babylonian-Jewish-Christian myth of Eve, the snake, and the apple in order to take on the psychoanalytic fantasy of incest, patricide, and infanticide in the primal horde. The belief in the 'Oedipus complex' appears to us to be no more valuable as a theoretical foundation for scientific pedagogy than 'original sin'.<sup>141</sup>

In a similar vein, the Adlerian psychologist Sophie Lazarsfeld (mother of Paul) praised *Sisyphos* as an "extraordinary book" before contending that only the "far less pessimistic vision (*Zukunftsbild*)" of Adlerian Individual Psychology could furnish an adequate foundation for socialist *Massenerziehung*.<sup>142</sup> What troubled both reviewers, namely Bernfeld's pessimistic emphasis on the insurmountable dead weight of the past in the pedagogical relationship, proved enormously compelling to others. Seldom one to admit mistakes, Wilhelm Reich wrote to Bernfeld begging the latter's forgiveness for having previously maligned his views on the education of children: at the time, Reich wrote, "I saw...nothing other than a perhaps all-too forced

---

<sup>140</sup> The socialist pedagogue, Alois Jalkotzy, for instance, declared "ich halte dieses Buch für ein ausgezeichnetes Buch, ja vielleicht sogar für das wichtigste, das mir bis jetzt als Auseinandersetzung über Sozialismus und Erziehung untergekommen ist," before bemoaning that the weakness of his "psychoanalytisches Rüstzeug" rendered large swaths of the work incomprehensible. Jalkotzy, "Referat," *Die sozialistische Erziehung*, 5 (1925), 283-87, reprinted in *Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung*, 473-480.

<sup>141</sup> Hans Fischl, "Die Lebenslüge der wissenschaftlichen Pädagogik," *Der Kampf* 19 (1926): 280-85, reprinted in *Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung*, 497-506 (at 498, 500).

<sup>142</sup> Sophie Lazarsfeld, "Referat," *Vorwärts. Sozialdemokratische Zeitung*, October 2, 1927, reprinted in *Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung*, 511-13 (at 513).

skepticism in matters of educational *Realpolitik*. Now I understand your *Realpolitik*, and declare myself converted.”<sup>143</sup>

Several weeks after the publication of *Sisyphos* in September of 1925, Bernfeld left Vienna for Berlin, a decision that stemmed, in part, from his inability to secure employment within the *Gemeinde*. Initially anticipating a sojourn of only several months, Bernfeld would remain in Berlin for almost seven years, returning to Vienna only in 1932 as the political situation in Germany darkened. What contributed to the decision to prolong his stay was the untimely death of Karl Abraham, the leader of the *Berliner Psychoanalytische Vereinigung (BPV)*, five weeks after Bernfeld’s arrival. In the wake of Abraham’s death, Bernfeld was drawn into the Berlin association’s inner workings, assuming some of the former’s responsibilities on the teaching committee of the *BPV* and leading a regular seminar over the following years introducing educators to psychoanalytic thought.

While Bernfeld’s departure from Vienna spelled the end of the pedagogical study group that had met over the preceding years, it came in the midst of a larger transition for the field of psychoanalytic pedagogy as a whole, which moved over the following years from liminal, relatively secluded spaces like that of the reading group to places of greater prominence within the broader central European public sphere (far less so, however, within official institutions; see chapter six). Together with Aichhorn’s *Verwahrloste Jugend*, published earlier the same year, Bernfeld’s *Sisyphos* signaled a period of burgeoning for psychoanalytic pedagogy: “None of the applications of psycho-analysis has excited so much interest and aroused so many hopes, and none, consequently, has attracted so many capable workers, as its use in the theory and practice of education,” wrote Sigmund Freud in his preface to Aichhorn’s work.<sup>144</sup> Over the coming years,

---

<sup>143</sup> Wilhelm Reich to Siegfried Bernfeld, 14 September 1925, reprinted in *Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung*, 515.

<sup>144</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort zu *Verwahrloste Jugend*,” in *GW XIV* (1925): 565-67 (at 565).

psychoanalytic pedagogy would develop into a full-scale movement with a journal, *Die Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* (founded 1926), and “capable workers” dispersed across the European continent, whether concentrated in major metropolises (especially Vienna, Berlin, London, and Budapest) or scattered in a number of smaller centers, in particular, in southern Germany and Switzerland.

While *Sisyphos* and *Verwahrloste Jugend* marked the threshold of a new period of flourishing for psychoanalytic pedagogy, in other respects, the differences between them laid bare fissures that divided the pedagogical *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. Despite a common commitment to identifying the effects of social life on psychic development, a commitment that bound them to the progressive culture of Red Vienna and that was articulated against the technique of child analysis developed in Budapest, Berlin, and finally, London by Melanie Klein (see chapter seven), Bernfeld’s radical politics and his insistence on the limits of education separated him from both Aichhorn and Anna Freud. Where this emerged most clearly was in Bernfeld’s analysis of the pedagogical pair relationship, a configuration so fraught with unconscious conflicts that it inevitably frustrated any efforts to fashion a progressive education. The individualizing orientation of mainstream pedagogy thus represented one of chief limits to the rationalization of education and one that ensured that *Erziehung* merely recapitulated the Oedipal relations that underpinned the bourgeois capitalist order. By contrast, for Aichhorn, the task of the *Fürsorgerzieher* was to place himself in the position of the child’s father – the model for his or her ego ideal – in order to facilitate the latter’s (re)adaptation to society: as a surrogate father, Aichhorn became the object for the very Oedipal transferences and identifications that Bernfeld viewed as retarding influences in education.

The fact that an anti-individualizing, post-bourgeois education was impossible to implement in contemporary society with any substantial number of children (or for any significant length of time) meant that Bernfeld's pedagogical politics were limited to criticizing existing forms of education and to imagining educational arrangements that the contemporary social and political reality foreclosed. Much as she admired his brilliance, for Anna Freud, Bernfeld's disillusionment in the Baumgarten experiment had transformed him into an unreliable pessimist.<sup>145</sup> Yet Bernfeld's cynicism was merely the obverse of the utopian idealism that resurfaces time and again in his work. While his pedagogical thought fluctuated between extremes, Freud and Aichhorn were far more willing to labor within the parameters placed on their work by the prevailing social and political order and thus to focus their efforts on the treatment and education of individual children.

Even psychoanalysis figured as a source of pedagogical illusions in Bernfeld's view – the eagerness of a number of pedagogues to place their faith in Freudian theory was based on a misunderstanding, he wrote, since psychoanalysis was capable only of illuminating past reactions and, where individualizing pedagogy was concerned, could do little to predict future ones with any certainty.<sup>146</sup> At the same time as he questioned the attempts of educators to develop pedagogical methods from psychoanalytic insights however, Bernfeld's critique rehabilitated a strain of thought that had been central to prewar psychoanalytic reflection on education. As chapter one explored in detail, psychoanalysts were suspended in the prewar years between the enthusiastic conviction that their insights into the psychosexual development of the child were of indispensable value for education and a disabused recognition that analytic theory offered no secure foundation for the formulation of educational precepts. The same combination of optimism and circumspection would mark Sigmund Freud's preface to Aichhorn's book – even as he pointed to

---

<sup>145</sup> Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 100.

<sup>146</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 122-23.

the education of the child as most promising field for the application of analytic thought, he insisted that, like healing and governing, it was an “impossible calling,” one of those professions, as he wrote years later, in which one is assured in advance of disappointment.”<sup>147</sup> For Bernfeld, the disappointment and disillusionment that attended educational practice was primarily a reflection of the socioeconomic and political conditions under which it operated, and thus, the real task for psychoanalytic pedagogy was not to develop positive educational precepts that could be implemented within the established reality but to reveal the limits that marked educational practice and, if possible, to think beyond them. “One does well,” he wrote, “to exaggerate the social limits [*die soziale Grenze übertrieben scharf zu zeichnen*]. One is safe from any danger of overestimating them.”<sup>148</sup>

Yet Bernfeld’s work was not as uniformly pessimistic as such statements suggested, and more than a trace of pedagogical idealism surfaced in the course of his analysis. Echoing the Austro-Marxists theorists he both borrowed from and criticized, Bernfeld framed the deficiencies of the working class as a political subject in intellectual terms: while conditioned by the guilt and anxiety inculcated by the prevailing social order, it was ultimately a lack of insight (into their exploited condition) and a failure of imagination (with regard to the possibility for fundamental social change) that forestalled the triumph of socialism in 1918. Had it been able to take hold of the entire working class at the end of the war, Bernfeld was in no doubt that socialism would have been victorious.<sup>149</sup> Beyond its discordant emphasis on the intellect, Bernfeld’s assessment of the postwar moment reflected a particular analysis of the prevailing social and political conditions that was itself strangely out of tune with rest of *Sisyphos* – echoing Bauer’s description of the postwar

---

<sup>147</sup> Freud, *Geleitwort*, 565, and Freud, “Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse,” *GW* XVI (1937): 94.

<sup>148</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 107.

<sup>149</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 93.

era as determined by the balance of class forces, Bernfeld wrote, “We have long since ceased to live in a period of stable bourgeois domination...socialism has become a power affecting, among other things, education.” Even if it had yet to break the power of the capitalist class, socialism had greatly restricted it, effectively forcing the ruling class into “detours, secret paths, and compromises.”<sup>150</sup> When Bernfeld shifted from the ahistorical perspective that pervaded his analysis (reaching back as it did to human prehistory) to an examination of the specific historical moment in which he wrote, the contours of his own critique seemed to lose some of their clarity. Far from diminishing into irrelevance in the face of the limits imposed by politics and society, education appeared to loom out as a task of paramount political significance – albeit one that, given the limits with which it was confronted, remained fundamentally “impossible.”

The open-endedness of the historical epoch was thus reflected in the paradoxicality that marked Bernfeld’s intervention. The interwar period was for many observers an interregnum, a *Zwischenreich*, and as it did in the thought of so many other psychoanalysts, the uncertainty that marked the historical moment generated an undecidability at the level of theory and practice, one that manifested in a deep-seated ambivalence and in a thought style marked by irony and paradox. In Bernfeld’s case, perhaps the greatest paradox was that a work that emphasized the limits of education was itself (as a text to be read and thought about) a form of pedagogical politics, albeit one that sought to correct the educational aims of the socialist experiment around him. In place of the positive educational project of creating new people and fashioning republican citizens, Bernfeld sought to introduce an educational politics grounded in disillusionment.<sup>151</sup> For Bernfeld, the need for a disabusing education was especially important given the uncertainty and instability of the times, factors that contributed significantly to the ideological obfuscation surrounding

---

<sup>150</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 93.

<sup>151</sup> This despite Bernfeld’s own strenuous denials of the fact. See *Sisyphos*, 112.

questions of *Erziehung* – given competing systems of varying stability and significance, he explained, ideology and social bias were bound to attain exceptional importance for education.<sup>152</sup>

The immediate context of Red Vienna goes even further to account for the critical impulse of Bernfeld's book – the urgency animating Bernfeld's attempt to dispel the illusions surrounding education only makes sense amid the educational enthusiasm of interwar Austrian Social Democracy. While his thought overlapped substantially with that of Austro-Marxist educators and social theorists, Bernfeld perceived a danger at the core of Social Democratic politics in interwar Vienna, one that consisted in a potentially fatal overestimation of the political value of education. For both contemporary critics and subsequent historians of Red Vienna, the faith placed in the educational institutions of the party increasingly ran the risk of merely disavowing the objective forces aligned against it. Confronted after 1927 with its own "fatalistic attrition" in the face of reactionary political forces and the economic devastation of the depression, what Anson Rabinbach describes as the party's "fetishistic clinging to the institutionalism of the 'enclave' of Red Vienna" served to prevent a clear-sighted assessment of its deteriorating political position.<sup>153</sup>

Written several years before these reversals in the party's fortunes, Bernfeld's work anticipated the dangers inherent in this overvaluation of pedagogy and the exaggerated, compensatory politics of the preparatory that underpinned it.<sup>154</sup> By emphasizing the insurmountable social limits that constrained the educational politics of interwar Social Democracy, Bernfeld sought to counter the idealistic inclination to treat education a potential vehicle of social transformation and thus to regard pedagogy as a surrogate politics. The corollary of this critique was exposing the extent to which education – far from being a self-enclosed, self-

---

<sup>152</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 93.

<sup>153</sup> Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism*, 79.

<sup>154</sup> See Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism*, 63.

sufficient activity – was determined by the prevailing relations of political and economic power. In mainstream Social Democratic thought, the institutional structure of Red Vienna not only isolated the individual from the deleterious process of subject formation under capitalism, embracing her life “from cradle to grave” in the manner of a citywide pedagogical *Schonungsraum*, but likewise served to safeguard the political movement from the reactionary forces in its environment.

As the following chapter will explore in detail, a similar overconfidence in human reason – and, by extension, the rational course of history – would mark the enlightening politics of interwar Austrian socialists, serving, in the process, to protect their optimistic expectations from a disabusing confrontation with reality. The education qua disillusionment that Bernfeld’s *Sisyphos* placed at the heart of Freudian pedagogical thought would become increasingly central to the work of psychoanalytic educators. As an attempt to deepen and strengthen the educational mission of Social Democracy by questioning its presuppositions, Bernfeld’s reflections, like so many currents of interwar Freudian thought, represented a form of what Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg terms “impious fidelity.”<sup>155</sup> “There is no escape from the ambivalence and doubt,” he wrote in the concluding passage of *Sisyphos*, “The scientist is not embarrassed by them. Rather he exaggerates them in the hope that, in the future, they may be overcome.”<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity: Anna Freud, Psychoanalysis, Politics* (Ithaca, 2012).

<sup>156</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos*, 130.

Psychoanalytic Pedagogy and the Politics of Enlightenment in the Interwar Austrian

*Kulturkampf*

In 1925, Paul Federn received a belated response to his postwar essay “Zur Psychologie der Revolution. Die vaterlose Gesellschaft” in the form of a long letter from Hans Zulliger, a young Swiss educator who had been drawn to Freudian psychoanalysis and Adlerian Individual Psychology during the war. For Federn, the revolutionary council movement that emerged at the close of the war furnished the matrix for the creation of a new fraternal principle of social organization, one capable of replacing the vertical ties characteristic of *Vater-Staat* with horizontal, solidaristic social bonds.<sup>1</sup> In his essay, the emergence of the councils signaled the possibility of a liberation from filial dependency, yet Zulliger was far more skeptical – “I marvel at the beautiful optimism in your writing and wish I could hope as you do,” he wrote. Organized according to the principle of equality, the fatherless *Sohn-Staat* was vulnerable to continual disruptions, Zulliger argued, since any form of individual preeminence was intolerable to the others. Pervasive envy and an unwillingness to subordinate ran throughout the society of equals, perpetuating a state of chronic social disorder and preventing the true flourishing of culture.<sup>2</sup>

Given the vulnerability of the fraternal principle to social envy, willing subordination to the select (*Auserlesen*) was preferable to egalitarian democracy, Zulliger averred. In articulating such political views, Zulliger was both drawing from Freud’s 1921 *Mass Psychology and Ego Analysis* and adopting a stance markedly similar to the conservative liberalism that formed the

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Federn, “Zur Psychologie der Revolution. Die vaterlose Gesellschaft,” 5. This essay, a seminal work of psychoanalytic social psychology, is discussed in more detail in chapter four.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Zulliger to Paul Federn, 16 January 1925, Paul Federn Papers, File 18, Library of Congress.

rightward pole of Freud's labile politics between the wars. Despite its circumspection, however, Zulliger's letter offered a sliver of hope for the advocates of political equality, one that he saw as intimately bound up with his own profession: since "only very free and almost perfect natures" were capable of sustaining the fraternal sentiments necessary for egalitarian democracy, the "brother society would perhaps be possible if one could analyze all of the brothers," he wrote, "but even then only perhaps."<sup>3</sup>

Zulliger's conviction that the possibility for a stable democratic social order hinged on the expansion of analytic therapy was one with which many analysts would have agreed in the decade following the war. Yet the Swiss educator's attempt to ground his conservative skepticism towards the *Sohn-Staat* in the limitations of analytic practice – that is, the fact that the formal psychoanalytic treatment of each and every citizen was clearly beyond the realm of possibility – strikes an oddly discordant note in this context. When read against his own body of work over these years the statement appears even more incongruous: in its one-sided emphasis on the limits of psychoanalysis, it overlooked a collective project in which Zulliger himself was a vital participant, one that he would later describe as a mission to bring the "blessing of psychoanalysis" to an ever-great number of suffering individuals.<sup>4</sup>

Over the decade following the war, the psychoanalytic movement experienced remarkable growth across a wide range of fronts. By 1925, Freud's vision of making analytic therapy accessible to the wide masses (chapter two) had assumed concrete form with the founding of a number of outpatient clinics – first in Berlin and then Vienna, London, and Budapest – dedicated to providing treatment to lower class neurotics. Two years later, the first psychoanalytic sanatorium – intended as a site for the research and treatment of severe mental disorders – was

---

<sup>3</sup> Zulliger to Federn, 16 January 1925.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Zulliger, *Gelöste Fesseln. Studien, Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen* (Dresden, 1927), 222.

established under the direction of Ernst Simmel in the outskirts of Berlin. While the Tegel sanatorium would prove to be a short-lived experiment, closing as a consequence of economic constraints in 1931, the same period also witnessed a number of other attempts to expand the purview of Freudian theory and practice. For many analysts, the utopian vision elaborated in Sándor Ferenczi and Otto Rank's 1924 *Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse* (chapter three), in which Freudian thought (working "from the family outwards") would come to exercise an "undreamt of influence on society," served as practical orientation for their efforts.<sup>5</sup> The year following Zulliger's epistolary critique, for instance, witnessed the publication of both *Das psychoanalytische Volksbuch*, a compendium of practical psychoanalytic knowledge compiled by Federn and the German analyst Heinrich Meng,<sup>6</sup> and the inaugural issue of the *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* under the editorial supervision of Meng and the Swiss educator Ernst Schneider.<sup>7</sup> Reflecting the commitments of the psychoanalytic community, Meng and Schneider outlined the journal's mission in decidedly democratic terms: focusing on the areas of psychoanalytic knowledge of importance to educators (e.g. child psychology, characterology, psychopathology, educational methodology, and the psychology of groups), the *Zeitschrift*, they insisted, would aim to avoid polemics and work positively in order to make psychoanalytic knowledge accessible to the uninitiated (*wenig Eingeweihten*).<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Sandor Ferenczi and Otto Rank, *Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse. Zur Wechselbeziehung von Theorie und Praxis* (Leipzig, 1924), 64.

<sup>6</sup> Meng, a founding member of the *südwestdeutschen Psychoanalytischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft* and a director (along with Karl Landauer) of the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute would pioneer the application of psychoanalysis to social problems under the auspices of the mental hygiene movement. On Meng see Tomas Plänklers, "Mit Kupfer zu legieren: Zur Erinnerung an Heinrich Meng," *Luzifer-Armor: Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Psychoanalyse* 6 (1990): 87-130 and Elisabeth Zimmermann, "Heinrich Meng (1887-1972): Psychohygiene und Pädagogik" (PhD diss., University of Zürich, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> Like Zulliger, Schneider had been drawn to psychoanalysis through the influence of the Swiss pastor Oskar Pfister, whom Freud credited with creating the field that would come to be known as psychoanalytic pedagogy (on Pfister, see chapters one and three). On Schneider see Kaspar Weber, "*Es geht ein mächtiges Sehnen durch unsere Zeit*": *Reformbestrebungen der Jahrhundertwende und Rezeption der Psychoanalyse am Beispiel der Biografie von Ernst Schneider, 1878-1957* (Bern, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> Heinrich Meng and Ernst Schneider, "Zur Einführung," *ZfpP* 1 (1926): 1-2.

In the coming years, these publications would be supplemented by a growing number of popular psychoanalytic monographs, lectures, and articles intended for teachers and parents and by a range of seminars designed to introduce professional educators to psychoanalytic theory.<sup>9</sup> For almost all of the analysts engaged in this work of popular dissemination, Freud's dictum, as he contemplated the mass application of analytic therapy in 1918 (chapter two), that "we shall need to look for the simplest and most easily intelligible ways of expressing our theoretical doctrines" was self-evident.<sup>10</sup> More essential was the fact that at a historical moment when, in Federn's words, "the mental disturbances of the individual were connected to the disruption and psychical dysfunction of society,"<sup>11</sup> the possibility for a stable democratic future seemed to a growing number of educators and analysts to be intimately tied to the fate of psychoanalysis itself.

As psychoanalytic pedagogy was formed into a movement, Vienna would emerge as its privileged center. By 1931, the (much enlarged) editorial board of the *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* was dominated by Viennese Freudians and a total of six courses for pedagogues (equal to the number of those intended for regular psychoanalytic trainees) appeared

---

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the best known of these examples are two lecture series given by Anna Freud (see chapter seven) which were later published as *Einführung in die Technik der Kinderanalyse* (1927) and *Einführung in die Psychoanalyse für Pädagogen* (1930). Hans Zulliger was perhaps the most active popularizer among the psychoanalytic educators, publishing four separate monographs between 1927 and 1935 on educational themes (*Aus dem unbewussten Seelenleben unserer Schuljugend*, 1927; *Gelöste Fesseln*, 1927; *Adler, Freud und der Schullehrer*, 1931; *Schwierige Schüler*, 1935). In addition to the *Volksbuch*, which appeared in four separate editions between 1926 and 1939, and a wide array of essays and articles, Heinrich Meng would publish *Strafen und Erziehen* in 1935. In his 1933 *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, Sigmund Freud himself would devote a substantial part of his lecture "Aufklärungen, Anwendung, und Orientierung" to the work of his followers in the field of education.

<sup>10</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie," 193. As Anna Freud wrote (almost certainly) to Paul Federn in 1930, "Es scheint mir ein zu grosses Armutzeugnis für die Psychoanalyse, dass man ein ganzes Vokabular braucht, um sie [d.h. Psychoanalyse] zu verstehen. Dem ungebildeten Leser wird sie nichts nutzen. Wer sich schon durch analytische Literatur durchgelesen hat, erwirbt sich das Verstaendnis allmaehlich fuer die Fachausdrück. Die Aufsätze in der *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* selbst aber sollten doch so geschrieben sein, dass jeder sie verstehen kann" (1930). Of all the Freudians involved in education, perhaps the only one who resisted the imperative of simplifying psychoanalytic thought for the purposes of popularization was Siegfried Bernfeld, whose work was criticized by reviewers for its abstruse, allusive style (see chapter five).

<sup>11</sup> In Federn's typically chaotic drafting process the entire paragraph in which the quoted passage occurs is, in fact, crossed out. Nonetheless, the statement is consistent with the mode of psychosocial reflection that Federn himself pioneered in his 1919 "Zur Psychologie der Revolution." Federn, "Vorschläge für den Kongress für Mental Hygiene in Paris" (undated, likely 1937). Paul Federn Papers, File 20, Library of Congress.

on the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society's (*WPV*) winter curriculum alone.<sup>12</sup> As previous chapters have illustrated, the turn to education that psychoanalysts undertook over these years reflected the impact of a confluence of social and cultural currents, all of which had emerged in some form before the war but were galvanized by its catastrophic impact. While the overarching ambition of the broad central European reform pedagogy movement to fashion an education that took the child as its point of departure was the single most important influence, it was itself nourished by an eclectic range of reformist impulses and ambitions.<sup>13</sup> What was decisive, however, for the emergence of Vienna as the center of the expanding psychoanalytic pedagogy movement was the proximity of the Social Democratic educational experiment that was reshaping the urban landscape in which Freudians worked.<sup>14</sup> Itself a unique fusion of the same array of cultural-political impulses that gave rise to *Reformpädagogik*, Red Vienna played a vital role in both stimulating and shaping the aspirations of the Viennese analysts who would assume leading roles in the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement.

---

<sup>12</sup> George Makari, *Revolution in Mind*, 437-8. In 1931, Meng and Schneider were joined on the editorial board by three Viennese Freudians, Paul Federn, Anna Freud, and the journalist and lawyer Adolf J. Storfer, at that time, the director of the psychoanalytic publishing house, which assumed control of the journal from the independent Hippokrates Verlag that had overseen its previous issues. While Storfer would serve only for two years, in his place the Viennese educator August Aichhorn and the Swiss Zulliger would assume editorial responsibilities in 1933. The following year, Willi Hoffer, one of Anna Freud's closest collaborators in Vienna, would be added as *Schriftleiter*. While the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 helps account for the consolidation of editorial responsibility by Viennese analysts, the absence of any Berlin or Budapest psychoanalysts on the editorial staff over the preceding years is a striking testament to the predominance of Vienna within the transnational movement. (Meng, who remained on the journal's editorial board through its last issue in 1937, would relocate from Frankfurt a. M. to Basel following the *Machtergreifung*; Schneider would remain in Stuttgart until 1946 and be relieved of his editorial responsibilities at the end of 1936). The history of the journal is discussed in Ernst Federn, *Witnessing Psychoanalysis: From Vienna Back to Vienna via Buchenwald and the USA* (London, 1990), 255-57.

<sup>13</sup> Some of the most important included the aspirations of the various branches of the youth movement to fashion *jugendgemäße* (youth appropriate) forms of adolescent socialization, the pursuit of anti-traditional and more natural modes of life at the heart of the irreducibly heterogeneous *Lebensreformbewegung*, and the ambition of the mental hygiene movement to eradicate nervous disorders through broad social intervention.

<sup>14</sup> As Anna Freud put it in an interview from 1977, "These were the post war years when Vienna had gone social-democratic and there was the so-called school reform in Vienna, which was a very good thing, going from old-fashioned methods to progressive ones..." Freud went on to describe the role that the contacts of the psychoanalytic association with the *Gemeinde* played in facilitating the expansion of movement – the links that emerged with the city of Vienna, she noted, "were very promising ones." Anna Freud interview with Milton Senn, 1977, Anna Freud Papers, File 114, Library of Congress.

At the heart of the Social Democratic ambition to create new working class subjects through refashioning the conditions of proletarian socialization (chapter five) was a program of systematic and far-reaching enlightenment. In conjunction with an array of liberal educational associations, Social Democrats pursued a pedagogical politics geared towards the inculcation of a rational-scientific, anti-metaphysical worldview in the masses, one that would immunize its subjects from both the blandishments of religious superstition and the temptations of reactionary fanaticism. Far from merely defensive, however, the impulse to “create more enlightenment” entailed a frontal assault on the entrenched power of the Catholic church in Austrian society. In the *Kulturkampf* that rent interwar Austria, pitting political Catholicism allied with völkische nationalism against the anti-clerical forces of progressive liberalism and Social Democracy, *Aufklärung* was understood by its representatives as a vital weapon in the struggle to secure the rational and emancipatory course of history.<sup>15</sup>

A commitment to *Aufklärung* – understood, in the Kantian sense, as the overcoming of “self-incurred immaturity” – bound psychoanalysts to the cultural politics of Red Vienna. As Freudians sought to bring psychoanalytic insight to the masses, they were thus inevitably intervening into the *Kulturkampf* that dominated the First Republic, a fact that left a distinctive impression on their own pedagogical politics. Yet while Freudians embraced the politics of Enlightenment championed by the embattled municipal experiment of Red Vienna, they approached the problem from a distinctive – and rather oblique – angle. For Freudians, the vicissitudes of the developing subject’s drive for knowledge, and thus, the fate of the enlightening project itself, were contingent, above all, upon the unfolding of his or her sexuality. A pivotal role in this process was played by the so-called sexual enlightenment of the child, since how the child

---

<sup>15</sup> On the interwar *Kulturkampf* see especially Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918-1938* (Ithaca, 2014).

learned (or failed to learn) about sexual life was understood by Freudians to be paradigmatic for how it would think in adulthood. While psychoanalysts were unique in their exploration of the intricate relationship between *sexuelle Aufklärung* and the individual's capacity for rational thought, their concern with the means and ends of sexual enlightenment was by no means unique. Beginning in the years prior to the war and intensifying in its aftermath, a massive literature devoted to the question of when, where, and how children should be taught the "facts" of sexual life emerged in central Europe. In interwar Vienna, sexual enlightenment was an issue that tasked pedagogues, health officials, and psychologists alike, and one that appeared to be of paramount importance to the social and political problems of the day.<sup>16</sup>

As intellectuals from numerous professional backgrounds converged on the subject of *sexuelle Aufklärung*, a broad consensus emerged on the necessity of greater openness and honesty in interactions with the child. Yet the more experts demanded unqualified frankness concerning sexual matters from parents and teachers, the more inadequate the traditional agents of youth socialization appeared. More than any other field of pedagogical activity, the subject of sexuality seemed to lay bare the shortcomings of educators and the necessity of a far-reaching program of enlightenment directed at teachers and parents themselves. The discourse surrounding sexual enlightenment thus fed directly into demands for an education of the educators.

For Social Democrats such an education was a precondition for creating new people, the so-called "bearer[s] of the coming society," and Red Vienna witnessed a wide array of efforts to refashion parents and teachers into suitable educators for the young.<sup>17</sup> Freudians participated eagerly in this endeavor, glimpsing in such an undertaking – that is, in an education directed at the

---

<sup>16</sup> On the subject of sexual enlightenment see Britta McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge: Feeling, Fact, and Social Reform in Vienna, 1900-1934* (New York, 2012), 54-90.

<sup>17</sup> The description of the child as the bearer of the coming society was from the title of a popular work of socialist pedagogy, *Das Kind als Träger der werdenden Gesellschaft*, by Kurt Kerlów-Löwenstein (Vienna, 1924).

elder generation by virtue of its *erzieherisch* relation to the young – a means of overcoming the limits of classical analytic practice and bringing the benefits of psychoanalysis to the masses – of permeating the social with the analytic insight. “With justice,” wrote Zulliger in 1927, “psychoanalysis has been accused of being a privilege of the bourgeoisie,” yet in an age of mass, compulsory schooling, “a psychoanalytically orientated pedagogy would reach everyone (*reicht an jederman heran*).” “This,” he concluded, “is the path by which everyone could partake of the blessings of psychoanalysis.”<sup>18</sup>

This chapter focuses on the emergence of psychoanalytic pedagogy around the intertwined and overlapping projects of sexual enlightenment and the education of the educators. While the ensuing discussion draws in Freudians from across the European continent, its center of gravity, like that of the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement itself, is in interwar Vienna, where the enlightening ethos ran the strongest and the politics of reason were pursued with the greatest rigor. Tracing the valences of *Aufklärung* in psychoanalytic thought reveals both significant overlap with and divergence from the Social Democratic project. Amid the enlightening cultural politics of interwar Vienna, psychoanalysts pursued what a number of scholars have termed a “dark enlightenment,” one that plunged into the irrational and explored the regressive appeal of reactionary ideologies in order to recuperate a more robust and supple rationality.<sup>19</sup> What psychoanalysts uncovered as they investigated how tenaciously individuals resist the force of enlightenment and cling to their “immaturity” were a new set of *Grenzen* that both impeded and

---

<sup>18</sup> Hans Zulliger, *Gelöste Fesseln. Studien, Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen* (Dresden, 1927), 222.

<sup>19</sup> The description of psychoanalysis as a “dark enlightenment,” a term borrowed from Theodor Adorno, figures prominently in two recent biographies of Sigmund Freud by Élizabéth Roudinesco and Joel Whitebook. The notion of a “dark enlightenment” offers a way of mediating between (and to some extent reconciling) what Adam Phillips has characterized as the Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment aspects of Freud’s thought. Phillips, *Becoming Freud: The Making of a Psychoanalyst* (New Haven, 2016), 51-2. See Roudinesco, *Freud: In His Time and Ours* trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA, 2016), at 215, 226, 318, and Whitebook, *Sigmund Freud: An Intellectual Biography* (New York, 2017), at 12, 236, 238.

defined their professional work. In uncovering and exploring the indestructability of psychical infantilism, the fragility of reason, and the insistent force of apparently senseless aggression, Freudians exposed something of the disavowed shadow-side of the rationalist pedagogical project unfolding around them. The cumulative impact of their disillusioning encounters with the irrational and regressive dimension of psychic life and the darkening political horizons in central Europe would increasingly erode their confidence in the emancipatory promise of enlightenment and lead to a reorientation of psychoanalytic pedagogy.

### Educating the Educators

Among the first Freudians to devote sustained attention to the subject of education was Josef Karl Friedjung, a pediatrician and member of the *WPV* since 1909. A rather peripheral figure within the Viennese psychoanalytic community between the wars, Friedjung was nonetheless a central participant in the Social Democratic program of hygienic and welfarist social reconstruction spearheaded by the municipal welfare councilor Julius Tandler (chapter three). Elected to a series of minor political posts in the immediate aftermath of the war, Friedjung would subsequently serve on the municipal council of Vienna (1922-1934) while directing a pediatric outpatient clinic (*Kinderambulatorium*) established by the *Gemeinde* in Ottakring. In the midst of this activity, Friedjung would lecture and publish extensively, generating dozens of articles and monographs on subjects like the role of milieu in psychosexual development and the responsibilities of parents and society in the upbringing of the child.<sup>20</sup>

A member of numerous progressive liberal and Social Democratic associations, Friedjung personified the broad reformist culture that flourished in the socialist municipality. As Friedrich

---

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Ann Danto, “‘The Environment as a Cause of Disease in Children’: Josef Friedjung’s Transnational influence on Modern Child Welfare Theory,” *Child Welfare* 92 (2013): 159-179, at 164.

Stadler has argued, a “late Enlightenment” culture emerged in interwar Vienna, uniting socialists and liberals around a politics of social transformation through nonrevolutionary socioeconomic reform and the cultural and ethical elevation of the masses. Anchored in a dense network of ethical associations and popular educational initiatives, the “late-Enlightenment” culture of interwar Vienna formed what Stadler has termed a “pink-periphery” around the “red” center of the Social Democratic metropolis.<sup>21</sup> In the Viennese Monist Association, the forum in which Friedjung delivered a 1916 lecture titled “Erziehung der Eltern,” this commitment to a politics of mass enlightenment took the form of the propagation of a natural-scientific, anti-metaphysical worldview. “Only since Darwin,” Friedjung argued, “has the aim for the educator become distinct and comprehensible” – resting on the foundation of “our powerfully expanded biological, sociological, and psychological knowledge” the developmental process that had formerly “proceeded unconsciously,” disrupted by a “thousand false methods (*Irrwege*),” he contended, will henceforth unfold under our conscious direction.<sup>22</sup> Despite the optimism of this vision, the fact that the knowledge necessary for the rationalization of education had failed to penetrate the masses posed an obstacle to this politics, one that necessitated an ambitious program of popular enlightenment.

“When we look around us with impartial eyes we glimpse almost only children,” Friedjung contended,

large children naturally, with the pose and gestures of adults, but with the psyche of the child, with its narrow egoism and poorly controlled affects, with its credulity and suggestibility, with its reverence for taboos and belief in miracles. And such are...on the whole, the educators of our children.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Friedrich Stadler, “Spätaufklärung und Sozialdemokratie in Wien, 1918-1938. Soziologisches und Ideologisches zur Spätaufklärung in Österreich,” in Franz Kadroska ed., *Aufbruch und Untergang. Österreichische Kultur zwischen 1918 und 1938* (Vienna, 1981), 441-73, at 446. For an overview of this culture see also Malachi Haim Hacohen, *Karl Popper – The Formative Years, 1902-1945* (New York, 2000), 23-61.

<sup>22</sup> Josef K. Friedjung, “Erziehung der Eltern,” (Vienna, 1916), 7-8.

<sup>23</sup> Friedjung, “Erziehung der Eltern,” 17. See also, Friedjung, “Was bietet die Psychoanalyse dem sozialistischen Erzieher?” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* (1926), 159-62, at 61: “Aus dem Kinde organisch geworden, in ihm bereits

Friedjung's assessment of the inadequacy of the traditional agents of youth socialization captured an element that would be of fundamental importance to the pedagogical thought of psychoanalysts and Social Democrats alike over the coming years. As they surveyed the social landscape around them, progressive liberals and Social Democrats saw a world populated almost exclusively by immature subjects, whether real children or adults who, in Friedjung's words, had "hardly surpass[ed] the level of the child in their mental development."<sup>24</sup> While the pedagogical priorities of interwar Social Democracy placed the child at the center of their programs for social and political renovation, the twin aims of educating republican citizens and of fashioning the socialist new person (chapter five) were thus premised on a prior transformation of those charged with socializing the younger generation – above all, teachers and parents. The deficiencies of the educators had to be ameliorated through self-education, Friedjung insisted – "it is time," he wrote, "that parents as educators become mature and conscious."<sup>25</sup>

The attempt to fashion suitable educators for the coming generation took a wide range of forms in interwar Vienna – from the creation of a network of guidance clinics (*Ehe- und Erziehungsberatungstelle*), to the establishment of schools and institutes for educators, to the publication of numerous popular articles, pamphlets, and books on educational themes. The same year that Friedjung delivered his lecture, Otto Glöckel elaborated a complementary program in his lecture "Das Tor der Zukunft," in which he envisioned not only a new school run by "practically adept and scientifically elevated" teachers but a vast new web of nurseries, children's homes, and

---

zum guten Teil angedeutet, ist der Erwachsene meist doch nur ein großes Kind, auch seinerseits immer wieder geneigt, vor den Realitäten auszuweichen und nach dem Lust-, Unlustprinzip auf die Umwelt zu reagieren. Und um so dringender müssen wir dem Erzieher das 'Kenne dich selbst!'

<sup>24</sup> Friedjung, "Erziehung der Eltern," 17.

<sup>25</sup> Friedjung, "Erziehung der Eltern," 44.

kindergartens under the direction of “qualified and educated persons.”<sup>26</sup> Echoing Glöckel’s call, the socialist pedagogue Max Adler, in an article titled “Erziehung als Beruf,” decried the “thoroughly bourgeois” (and apparently widespread) assumption that the proper educators of proletarian youth were those provided by life itself – far from “grow[ing] in the wild,” he wrote, “the educator must himself educated.”<sup>27</sup> The proletariat does not develop a revolutionary consciousness under the influence of its lived experience, Adler insisted, but “only against it” – thus the creation of new socialist people required educators who had distanced themselves from the reality of proletarian life under capitalism.<sup>28</sup> Despite the differences between Adler’s revolutionary socialist educational politics and the liberal democratic priorities of Glöckel’s campaign for school reform (chapter five), they were united in their call for a thorough, scientifically-grounded education of the educators. Liberated from the regressive pull of tradition, *Erziehung* was reframed in Social Democratic discourse as a calling (*Beruf*), one that demanded a new degree of formalized training and scientific expertise.

The attempt to create a new class of professional educators who had inwardly broken with the world of capitalism and who embodied the democratic, egalitarian principles of the new era, was supplemented by ambitious efforts to recast the educational relations that prevailed within the proletarian family.<sup>29</sup> While they linked the deficient household education of proletarian children to the exploitation of capitalism and the disruptions of the war, Social Democratic educators were often damning in their critiques of the familial conditions of the proletariat and the limitations of working-class parents. Unhygienic, disorderly, and mired in benighted worldviews, the proletarian

---

<sup>26</sup> Otto Glöckel, “Das Tor der Zukunft,” 345, 335.

<sup>27</sup> Max Adler, “Erziehung als Beruf,” *Die sozialistische Erziehung*, 238

<sup>28</sup> Adler, “Erziehung als Beruf,” *Die sozialistische Erziehung*, 245.

<sup>29</sup> For a critical reading of the attempts of Social Democrats to reshape proletarian life-worlds see Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture, 1919-1934* (New York, 1991).

family, in the eyes of Social Democratic critics, only served to reproduce the brutality and irrationality of the capitalist social order. While one aspect of this struggle to transform the supposedly backward and disordered proletarian family entailed a greater degree of social welfare and expert intervention (together with the training of the new professionals capable of administering this expanded pedagogical and biomedical activity) another involved the penetration of the family by *Aufklärung*. Proletarian parents required a greater degree of social assistance in order to relieve them of their insurmountable burdens, but they also required enlightenment and instruction,” wrote Therese Schleisinger.<sup>30</sup> As new cadres of social workers reached into the family, offering material assistance while implementing a new mode of disciplinary supervision, a veritable flood of publications sought to instill what Social Democratic educators conceived as a proper comprehension of gendered parental responsibilities.<sup>31</sup>

An essential aspect of these parental responsibilities was a scientifically-grounded understanding of the child’s needs. In their enlightening efforts directed at parents, Social Democrats sought to impart a conception of childhood as a distinct developmental phase subject to its own requirements and guided by its own laws. Psychological knowledge was central to this undertaking: across their popular educational works, Social Democrats emphasized the psychic and emotional challenges of childhood and the deleterious impact of traditional modes of upbringing (the use of physical punishment, the preferential treatment of male children, and repressive or hypocritical sexual attitudes) on the vulnerable psyche of the developing subject. For Social Democrats, Otto Felix Kanitz’s insistence that proletarian parents required psychological

---

<sup>30</sup> Therese Schlesinger, “Wie will und wie soll das Proletariat seine Kinder Erziehen,” (Vienna, 1921).

A more radical contribution to this strain of thought was Marianne Pollak’s call for a “Revolutionierung des Elterngehirns” in her article “Die Bedeutung der Elternräte,” *Der Kampf* 12 (1919): 527.

<sup>31</sup> On this subject see especially Gudrun Wolfgruber, *Zwischen Hilfestellung und sozialer Kontrolle. Jugendfürsorge im roten Wien, dargestellt am Beispiel der Kindesabnahme* (Vienna, 1997) and Gruber, *Red Vienna*.

education in order to recognize the child's needs was equally valid for professional educators.<sup>32</sup> If the school was to be transformed into the "point of departure for further progress," a means of securing a more democratic future, enlightened teachers were a necessity, argued Glöckel – the new teacher, in addition to being scientifically proficient, would be an "understanding mental expert" (*verständnisvoller Seelenkundiger*) proficient in the "art of cultivating the peculiarity of every child."<sup>33</sup>

Glöckel's conception of the new teacher as a professional equipped with essential insight into the child's psyche was a vision that fit squarely within the longer history of the reform pedagogy movement. From the late nineteenth century on, the widespread demand for an education that took the child as its point of departure (*Erziehung vom Kinde aus*) had come closely bound up with calls for a psychological education of the educators.<sup>34</sup> With the founding in 1922 of the Viennese Psychological Institute and the following year of the Pedagogical Institute of the City of Vienna, the Social Democratic municipality was vaulted into the forefront of the transnational movement to develop a child-centered pedagogy grounded in psychological knowledge. United under the auspices of the academic power couple, Charlotte and Karl Bühler, the hybrid Psychological-Pedagogical Institute possessed a double mandate, as Gerhard Benetka has argued – namely, to furnish the scientific knowledge necessary for the development of a public school curriculum adapted to the child's development and to disseminate this knowledge through the training of *VolkschullehrerInnen*.<sup>35</sup> In this new collaboration between academic institute and

---

<sup>32</sup> Otto Felix Kanitz, *Das proletarische Kind in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Jena, 1925), 41-2. "Psychologisch müßten sie geschult sein, um das Erziehungsobjekt, den Menschen, so gut als möglich zu kennen, also den Ausgangspunkt für all ihre erzieherische Arbeit deutlich ins Auge fassen zu können."

<sup>33</sup> Otto Glöckel, "Das Tor der Zukunft," 334, 344.

<sup>34</sup> See on this subject, Marjorie Lamberti, *The Politics of Education: Teachers and School Reform in Weimar Germany* (New York, 2002).

<sup>35</sup> Gerhard Benetka, *Psychologie in Wien. Sozial- und Theoriegeschichte des Wiener Psychologischen Instituts 1922-1938* (Vienna, 1995), 18.

public school system, Benetka notes, the school was to serve as a laboratory for the production of psychological knowledge that would, in turn, function as a practical foundation for pedagogical reforms.<sup>36</sup> By providing an institutional connection between scientific research, university teaching, and the professional education of public school teachers, the Psychological-Pedagogical Institute helped form the Viennese *VolksschullehrerInnen* into a politically self-conscious occupational group while elevating their professional standing.

Despite the widespread demand for psychological knowledge (illustrated by the enormous popularity of Karl Bühler's lectures among university students), psychoanalysis struggled to secure more than a toehold within the institutionalized efforts of the *Gemeinde* to educate the educators.<sup>37</sup> As academic psychology flourished through its affiliation with the school reform movement in Red Vienna, psychoanalysis was effectively relegated to the margins of the Social Democrats' attempts to mold new teachers. A similar dynamic characterized its relationship to the broader pedagogical-welfarist mission of social renovation undertaken by the party. Despite Friedjung's prominence within the *Gemeinde*, the institutional presence of Freudian psychoanalysis paled in comparison to that of Adlerian Individual Psychology.<sup>38</sup> While psychoanalysts, for instance, oversaw and administered only a single municipal educational

---

<sup>36</sup> Benetka, *Psychologie in Wien*, 39, 30.

<sup>37</sup> On the popularity of Karl Bühler's lectures, Benetka has demonstrated that a good tenth of the students enrolled at the University of Vienna in the year 1926/27 attended his lectures in psychology. Benetka, *Psychologie in Wien*, 46.

<sup>38</sup> "Adler's Individual Psychology had much direct and indirect influence on the development of Austria's school reform," the Adlerian educator, Ernst Papanek, would write in 1962, *The Austrian School Reform: Its Bases Principles and Development – The Twenty Years Between the Two World Wars* (New York, 1962), 72. Adlerian Individual Psychology exercised a far greater influence than Freudian psychoanalysis on the reform of the Viennese school system between the wars Helmut Engelbrecht has argued, see *Geschichte des österreichischen Schulwesens. Erziehung und Bildung auf dem Boden Österreichs. Bd. 5. Von 1918 bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1988), 43.

counselling clinic – under the direction of August Aichhorn – Adlerian Individual Psychologists ran a total of seventeen scattered around the city.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to what many reformers saw as the self-defeating abstruseness of Freudian theory and its pessimistic image of the individual, Individual Psychology, with its insistence on the innate sociability of the individual and on the capacity of education to reform subject and society, resonated deeply with the optimistic pedagogical politics of Social Democracy and answered to its immediate needs for a practical psychology.<sup>40</sup> Yet the presence of psychoanalysis in the educational thought of Social Democrats was by no means as peripheral as the marginality of Freudians within the organizations of the party and the institutions of the *Gemeinde* would suggest – often without being explicitly invoked, psychoanalysis significantly inflected the way that school reformers and socialist pedagogues understood their work. Against the influence of the Böhlers and the Adlerians, Freudian psychoanalysis helped shore up an appreciation of the difficulties and dangers of education in its effort to mold the asocial sexual and aggressive drives of the developing subject.<sup>41</sup> In marked contrast to the Bühler's biological model of enculturation as a linear process of growing into a given sociocultural order (*Hineinwachsen in die Kultur*), psychoanalysts emphasized the inevitably conflictual dynamics that dominated the child's

---

<sup>39</sup> See on this subject, Renate Göllner, "Psychoanalytisch-pädagogische Praxis ohne Ideologie vom 'Schädling'. August Aichhorns Erziehungsberatung zwischen Jugendamt und psychoanalytischer Vereinigung," *Luzifer-Amor* 31 (2003): 8-36.

<sup>40</sup> Adlerian educator Hermann Schnell has written that Individual Psychology served both as confirmation of the optimism of the school reform movement, 'der von der Überzeugung der Bildsamkeit des Menschen und der Veränderbarkeit der Gesellschaft getragen wurde,' and as a völlig neues Instrumentarium for this movement. Teachers, Schnell argued, "erkannten sofort, dass die Individualpsychologie eine echte Hilfe...bot," an assessment supported by the recollections of another Adlerian pedagogue, Oskar Spiel who described his first encounter with Individual Psychology as a veritable conversion experience following a prolonged period of fruitless searching for orientation in among the impractically complicated and ethically "sterile" Freudian theory ("wie Schuppen fiel es mir damals von den Augen. Das, ja das hatte ich jahrelang gesucht und nirgends gefunden"). Above examples quoted from Lutz Wittenberg, *Geschichte der individualpsychologischen Versuchsschule in Wien. Eine Synthese aus Reformpädagogik und Individualpsychologie* (Vienna, 2002), 48 and 91.

<sup>41</sup> Few educators recognize how difficult the child's task was as it was faced with the challenge of governing its natural drives and selfish wishes," argued Therese Schlesinger. Schlesinger, "Wie will und wie soll das Proletariat seine Kinder Erziehen."

socialization.<sup>42</sup> While the largely circumspect attitude of Freudians to educational questions did not preclude occasionally far-reaching hopes, in the optimistic climate of Red Vienna the general tenor of their interventions was a critical and disabusing one. Against the eager embrace of Adler's thought in the Social Democratic *Gemeinde* and the far-reaching support of the developmental psychology of Karl and Charlotte Bühler, psychoanalysis exerted a quiet but insistent pressure, reminding educators of the intractable difficulties of education and of the limits of their pedagogical politics.<sup>43</sup>

Facilitating this process of reception was the fact that psychoanalysts were themselves turning to educational questions and attempting to enlighten parents and teachers about the ways and means of education. The parallel effort undertaken by Freudians overlapped substantially with Social Democratic educational thought, helping to solidify a nascent common sense on questions of *Erziehung* that drew from and reinforced the longstanding principles of the central European reform pedagogy movement. Like progressive educators more broadly, all of the theorists who contributed to the movement to reform *Erziehung* in Red Vienna eschewed physical punishment and threats as educational techniques and embraced a pedagogical spirit of openness and honesty towards the child. In place of traditional authoritarian educational methods, which were understood to suppress the child's innate drive for knowledge and generate potentially pathogenic

---

<sup>42</sup> This subject is discussed in more detail in chapter one. The developmental model at the heart of the Böhlers' psychology was elaborated in two classic works, Karl Bühler's *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes* (Jena, 1918) and Charlotte Bühler, *Kindheit und Jugend. Genese des Bewußtseins* (Leipzig, 1928). These works served as a theoretical and conceptual foundation on which Charlotte Bühler's students – most notably, Hildegard Hetzer, Lotte Schenk-Danzinger, and Karl Reininger – would construct their own detailed studies of child development.

<sup>43</sup> The work of Social Democratic pedagogy where this influence was most clearly on display was Anton Tesarek's *Das Kind ist entdeckt. Beitrag zu einer volkstümlichen Seelenkunde* (Vienna, 1933), a study that sought to synthesize the theories of the different psychological schools that flourished in interwar Vienna. Tesarek would be instrumental in arranging for Anna Freud to lecture to the staff of the municipal day care system in 1930 (see chapter seven).

psychic conflicts, reform educators espoused a model of *Erziehung* premised on reciprocal trust and assistance.<sup>44</sup>

As they had in the years prior to the war (chapter one), psychoanalysts emphasized the liberation of the child from unnecessary compulsion – a loosening of constraints being understood as essential to the mitigation of psychic conflict and the avoidance of pathogenic repressions. Echoing Freud’s statements in his 1909 “Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year Old Boy,” the Vienna born and Budapest and Berlin trained child analyst Melanie Klein, encapsulated the liberal ethos of psychoanalytic pedagogy:

we shall be more sparing of compulsory ethical requirements in regard to the tiny developing creature than people were with us. We shall allow him to remain for a longer period uninhibited and natural, less interfered with than has hitherto been the case, to become conscious of his different instinctive impulses and of his pleasure therein without immediately whipping up his cultural tendencies against this ingenuousness.

By aiming for a “slower development,” educators – in the first instance parents – would allow the child’s drives to become “partially conscious,” Klein argued, thus avoiding their repression and assisting in the process of sublimation.<sup>45</sup>

While some psychoanalytic educators embraced more radically libertarian principles – placing greater faith in the ability of innate developmental laws to guide the child to civilized

---

<sup>44</sup> Even within this consensus, however, differences persisted. Above all, while Social Democrats and Adlerians sought to positively cultivate the developing subject’s identification with the collective, for Freudians – generally inclined towards a more cautiously liberal pedagogical politics – the emphasis remained on training educators to avoid harmful interventions (above all, by deepening the self-awareness of the educator herself). Despite the considerable overlap between their educational techniques, psychoanalysts retained a predominately individualist orientation (a reflection of the fundamental contradiction between the instinctual endowment of the individual and the demands of culture), while Adlerian Individual Psychologists regarded the ultimate identity of individual and collective interests as both the means and end of their therapy.

<sup>45</sup> Klein, “Eine Kinderentwicklung,” *Imago* 7 (1921): 251-309, 251-2. Similar statements can be found in the writings of a host of psychoanalysts. See for example, Wilhelm Reich’s contention in his 1926 “Eltern als Erzieher,” “Als Optimum erweist sich...eine derartige Einwirkung, dass die Triebe bis zu einem gewissen Grade zur Entfaltung zugelassen werden und die Versagung dann allmählich, immer getragen von guten Beziehungen zum Kinde erfolgen.” In *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* 1 (1926): 65-74, at 69. In her 1930 article “Beziehungen zwischen Sexual- und Intellektenwicklung,” Berta Bornstein would encapsulate this view succinctly: “Wo nicht verdrängt wird, kann sublimiert werden.” In *ZfpP* 5 (1930): 445-54, at 451.

maturity independent of external intervention – the majority accepted the need for disciplinary authority in the upbringing of the child.<sup>46</sup> The incestuous and parricidal wishes that psychoanalysts placed at the core of subjectivity meant that, in the final instance, the educator’s authority had to remain, in Freud’s words, “superior and...unassailable,” if only to impress on the child the unfulfillable (tabooed) nature of its most primitive desires.<sup>47</sup> At the heart of psychoanalytic pedagogy thus ran a tension between dismantling constraint and upholding taboos, between jettisoning repressive authority and preserving the substance of its prohibitions. The consequence of these countervailing responsibilities was a circumspect distrust of extremes that placed a limit on the progressive, liberalizing spirit of psychoanalytic pedagogy. In terms that would have made complete sense to most psychoanalytic pedagogues, Freud would describe the essential task of the educator as that of charting a course between the twin dangers of permissiveness and denial.<sup>48</sup> Eschewing older, repressive forms of educational authority was only half the challenge – equally important was that of upholding cultural standards and of ensuring the child’s adherence to normative demands.

An essential feature of reform pedagogical thought, however, and one particularly marked in psychoanalytic discourse, was the conviction that the priorities of loosening educational constraints and of instilling cultural values were, to a considerable degree, complementary. Genuine social authority, psychoanalysts concurred, could not be upheld from without, but had to

---

<sup>46</sup> Fritz Wittels, author of the revealingly titled *Die Befreiung des Kindes* (Stuttgart, 1927) and the first Freud biographer (his *Freud. Der Mann, die Lehre, die Schule* was published in 1924), is perhaps the purest exemplar of this radically libertarian strand of psychoanalytic pedagogy. Wittels had been a member of the *WPV* in the prewar years before leaving the association in protest at what he perceived as its increasingly authoritarian character and becoming a follower of the recently expelled Wilhelm Stekel. Despite returning to the psychoanalytic fold and publishing a number of popular works on Freudian theory and practice over the interwar years, Wittels remained a somewhat suspect figure in the eyes of many of his analytic colleagues.

<sup>47</sup> Sigmund Freud to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 17 February 1918, in *Sigmund Freud and Lou Andreas-Salomé – Letters*, 74.

<sup>48</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse,” 160.

be fashioned from within by the child itself – children reared through orders, threats, and punishments, as Zulliger argued in his work *Gelöste Fesseln*, remained little more than “trained beasts,” whose internal dispositions were either unaffected by such interventions or driven deeper into a sadomasochistic relation to authority.<sup>49</sup> Liberation from excessive educational constraints was essential to the development of a capacity to regulate innate drives and desires and thus to the safeguarding of culture against the asocial impulses of the individual. Loosening the restrictions and prohibitions of traditional education was understood to assist, however, not only in the defense of culture but in its progressive advance as well – by relieving the child of repression, liberal educational techniques were believed to clear the way for the sublimation of primitive impulses at the same time as they facilitated the conscious control of the instincts.<sup>50</sup> As much as psychoanalysts sought to align the imperatives of liberation and discipline, however, their thought orbited around a paradox – namely that if a loosening of demands facilitated cultural development, the foundation of all culture was prohibition. Despite the danger it posed of generating neurotic illness, “education must inhibit, forbid, and suppress,” Freud wrote.<sup>51</sup> The difficulty that emerged – that of striking an optimum balance between allowing and denying – posed a potentially insoluble problem for psychoanalytic pedagogy.

Regardless of how they attempted to resolve this problem (and thus where they fell along the spectrum between progressive tolerance and traditional authority) all psychoanalysts were

---

<sup>49</sup> Zulliger, *Gelöste Fesseln*, 88. As he put it in an earlier book, “Disziplin lässt sich nicht von aussen her an ein Kind blasen.” Zulliger, *Psychoanalytische Erfahrungen aus der Volksschulpraxis* (Zürich, 1921), 16.

<sup>50</sup> A considerable amount of psychoanalytic pedagogical writing was devoted to the question of how best to facilitate the process of instinctual sublimation. The solutions offered generally took the form of compromise formations, in which the original, uninhibited pleasure was denied and a substitute gratification offered in its place. One oft-repeated example was that of providing the child with a viscous substance such as clay, wet sand, or paint in order to simultaneously satisfy and displace its urge to play with its feces (the so-called *Schmierlust* of children). See for instance, Nelly Wolffheim, “Psychoanalyse und Kindergarten,” in *ZfpP* 4 (1930): 18-27, at 21 and Berta Bornstein, “Zur Psychogenese der Pseudodebilität,” in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 16 (1930): 378-99, at 396.

<sup>51</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Neue Folge der Vorlesungen,” 160.

united by the conviction that a psychoanalytic *Erziehung der Erzieher* was essential for the optimal execution of the educator's responsibilities. Even if such an education was incapable of providing rational guidelines for navigating the dangers of socialization, it was understood to provide a clearer comprehension of the child and its needs as well as a deeper recognition of the unconscious forces that traversed the pedagogical relationship.<sup>52</sup> As Siegfried Bernfeld had argued in 1925, the unconscious represented a permanent obstacle to the conscious aims of *Erziehung*, one that continually threatened to subvert the educators' intentions and give rise to an uncontrollable pedagogical situation. Opaque to themselves, traditional educators were prone to indulge or punish the child on the basis of unconscious, irrational forces, Bernfeld argued.<sup>53</sup> In addition to imparting basic information about the psychosexual development of the child, the psychoanalytic enlightenment envisioned by Freudian pedagogues was understood, through a lifting of the educator's own repressions, to enable the conscious apprehension and rational management of the erotic and aggressive impulses that shaped the educational relationship.

Such an enlightenment would ideally take the form of a proper psychoanalysis, Freudians argued, since divorced from firsthand experience, theoretical instruction would fail "to penetrate deep enough and carries no conviction."<sup>54</sup> Yet the practical impossibility of such a scenario pushed psychoanalysts to disseminate their knowledge by alternative means with the intention of facilitating what Vera Schmidt described as an analytic self-education of the educator. As she argued in a 1924 report on an experiment in psychoanalytic education that she organized in Moscow, arriving at a proper attitude in relation to infantile impulses required that the educator

---

<sup>52</sup> As Sigmund Freud put it in 1925 without such a training "the object of [the educator's] endeavors...must remain an inaccessible problem for him." Freud, "Geleitwort," 566. See also Freud, "Neue Folge der Vorlesungen," 161 and Friedjung, "Was bietet die Psychoanalyse dem sozialistischen Erzieher," *Die sozialistische Erziehung*, 162. As Friedjung put it, "Nur der Erzieher, dessen erstes und stetes Erziehungsobjekt er selbst ist, der sich unablässiger Selbsterkenntnis, Selbstbeherrschung...befleißt, wird sachlich bleiben und damit erfolgreich sein."

<sup>53</sup> Bernfeld, *Sisyphos, oder die Grenzen der Erziehung*, 117-19.

<sup>54</sup> Freud, "Geleitwort," 566.

“liberate [herself], through analytic work on herself, from the prejudices that her own education had left behind.”<sup>55</sup> By enabling the educator to recognize the derivatives of the unconscious in the pedagogical scenario and to adopt a properly objective attitude towards the florid manifestations of childhood sexuality, the self-education of the educators that Schmidt envisioned was one that would instill an analytic habitus grounded in scientific objectivity in those responsible for the upbringing of the young. The capacity for detached, nonjudgmental observation of the child that such an education cultivated was understood by Freudians as a developmental achievement, one that prefigured and paved the way for the new education they aimed to realize among children and adolescents. Through the permeation of the social with psychoanalytic insight, Freudians strove to realize a form of mass enlightenment that lifted traditional educators to a new level of psychic maturity and opened onto a more rational mode of enculturation for the young.

### Autonomy and Enlightenment

The psychoanalytic education of the educators and the analytically-informed upbringing of children were thus understood to be closely related – indeed analogous – undertakings. Just as the enlightenment of parents and teachers was envisioned as contributing to the overcoming of the childishness of masses, the rearing of the young by a psychoanalytically trained educator was believed to assist the safeguarding and completion of the child’s psychosocial maturation, above all, by sparing it unnecessary conflicts that could lead to neurotic fixation on infantile impulses and thus by clearing the way for the attainment of a secure sense of autonomous selfhood. For all their emphasis on cultivating the child’s emotional identification with the collective (what

---

<sup>55</sup> Vera Schmidt, “Psychoanalytische Erziehung in Sowjetrussland. Bericht über das Kinderheim-Laboratorium in Moskau,” 18. On this educational experiment see Alexander Etkind, *Eros of the Impossible: The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia* trans. Noah and Maria Rubins, (Boulder, 1997), 200 ff.

Adlerians termed *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*), Social Democratic educators in Red Vienna understood intellectual autonomy grounded in critical rationality as a central priority of *Erziehung*. “Every education,” Max Adler contended, must fill the developing subject with a “spirit of the freest independence in thinking and feeling” so that every child would become “a new person intellectually, an origin of new judgments and new perceptions and therefore new creation.”<sup>56</sup> For Social Democrats, the educational techniques that prevailed in both the patriarchal family and in the traditional school had permanently impaired the child’s intellectual autonomy, in the process, preparing it for a lifetime of submission to established authority.<sup>57</sup> Through the new pedagogical methods advanced by progressive reformers, the child would not only come to internalize sociocultural demands but, no longer consigned to a permanent immaturity, would develop the capacity to critically examine and consciously modify the conditions under which it suffered.

The ideal of cultivating the intellectual autonomy of the child was central to the anticlerical mission of the enlightening culture of interwar Vienna. For Social Democratic school reformers, religion served to keep the masses mired in a state of dependence and credulity, and thus, mitigating the power of the Catholic church over education was understood to be vital to winning the masses to their cause.<sup>58</sup> Writing in 1919, Max Adler offered a particularly pointed statement of what would increasingly become a party orthodoxy: a power such as the Catholic church, which adhered to a rigid dogmatism developed in the Middle Ages and whose “intellectually creative work had finished centuries ago, could not be entrusted with the sources of our intellectual development, the schools.”<sup>59</sup> Eliminating the influence of the church in the Austrian school system

---

<sup>56</sup> Adler, “Erziehung als Beruf,” 239.

<sup>57</sup> See Herbert Dachs, *Schule und Politik: Die politische Erziehung an den österreichischen Schule 1918 bis 1938* (Vienna, 1982), 58 and Michael J. Zeps, *Education and the Crisis of the First Republic* (New York, 1987), 64.

<sup>58</sup> See on this subject, Otto Glöckel, “Selbstbiographie. Sein Lebenswerk: die Wiener Schulreform,” in *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, ed. Erik Adam (Vienna, 1983 [1939]) 324-30.

<sup>59</sup> Max Adler, “Kirche und Schule,” *Der Kampf*, 12 (1919): 395.

– part of a broader program for the thorough separation of church and state – was only part of this process of rolling back the influence of the Catholic church in society, albeit one that ensured that school reform was the most contested front in the incendiary *Kulturkampf* that divided the First Republic.<sup>60</sup> Faced with the fanatical commitment of reactionary political Catholicism to defending the traditional educational prerogatives of the church, Social Democrats embraced a pedagogical politics premised on the inoculation of the subject against what they saw as the mentally stultifying force of religious superstition. Linking anticlericalism to a commitment to egalitarian democracy, for instance, Social Democratic educators embraced the ideal of child-centered pedagogy (*Erziehung vom Kinde aus*) thus overturning the hierarchical authoritarianism that they associated with traditional, religiously-sanctioned education. Similarly, the conviction that education should take the child’s concrete environment as its point of departure (the principle of *Bodenständigkeit*) and that it should engage the pupil actively (*Arbeitspädagogik*) reflected a commitment to a materialistic, anti-dogmatic pedagogy geared towards the inculcation of critical rationality.<sup>61</sup>

For Otto Bauer, representing an extreme position within the SDAP, religion was an atavistic survival of a prescientific era, one destined to die out as the masses obtained enlightenment.<sup>62</sup> Reflecting this rationalist optimism and responding to the bitter interwar *Kulturkampf* that raged around the question of religion’s place in society, the late-1920s and early-1930s saw the publication of a number of critiques of religion and of metaphysical worldviews more broadly by intellectuals aligned with the late-Enlightenment culture of interwar Vienna. In 1927, with the publication of *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*, Sigmund Freud would add his own, in the

---

<sup>60</sup> See on this subject, Michael J. Zeps, *Education and the Crisis of the First Republic* (New York, 1987).

<sup>61</sup> These principles, which echoed broader reform pedagogical precepts, were set forth in a range of pamphlets by Glöckel and his close supporters. See especially, Oskar Achs and Albert Krassnigg, *Drillschule, Lernschule, Arbeitsschule. Otto Glöckel und die österreichische Schulreform in der Ersten Republik* (Vienna, 1974).

<sup>62</sup> Otto Bauer, “Sozialdemokratie, Religion und Kirche. Ein Beitrag zur Erläuterung des Linzer Programms,” (Vienna, 1927). See also Zeps, *Education and the Crisis of the First Republic*, 65.

process, positioning psychoanalysis squarely within this broader anticlerical culture.<sup>63</sup> At once a demystifying critique of religion and a call for educators to undertake the experiment of an irreligious upbringing, Freud's essay echoed broader Social Democratic and progressive liberal themes while offering a uniquely psychoanalytic perspective on the subjects of religion and education. Organized as a Platonic dialogue with an unnamed conservative critic, *Die Zukunft einer Illusion* was both the most hopeful and outspokenly progressive essay that Freud would ever publish and an anxiously uncertain and skeptical document, one whose dialectical structure continually unsettled its avowed optimism. While reason was often invoked as a panacea for social and cultural ills in "late Enlightenment" Vienna, Stadler has noted, for Freud it was itself a vulnerable achievement.<sup>64</sup> Even as his essay aimed to deepen and reinforce the *aufklärerisch* politics of Social Democratic reformers, the self-reflective circumspection that traversed it distanced psychoanalysis from the prevailing rationalism of the anti-clerical culture of late-Enlightenment Vienna.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the progressive position that Freud would stake out over the course of the essay, his point of departure was a markedly conservative one. Harkening back to his 1908 "Die 'kulturelle' Sexualmoral und die moderne Nervosität" and anticipating his 1930 essay *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, Freud began *Die Zukunft einer Illusion* by insisting on the hostility of

---

<sup>63</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Die Zukunft einer Illusion," *GW XIV* (1927): 325-80. The critique of religion Freud elaborated in his 1927 essay would be reiterated in condensed fashion in the final lecture of his *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, "Über eine Weltanschauung," *GW XV* (1933): 170-97.

<sup>64</sup> Stadler, "Spätaufklärung und Sozialdemokratie in Wien, 1918-1938," 441.

<sup>65</sup> Freud's essay has often been criticized even by sympathetic commentators for its un-Freudian sanguineness. Jonathan Lear has described *Die Zukunft einer Illusion* as a "progressivist fantasy;" more bluntly, Elisabeth Roudinesco has dismissed it simply as "a bad book." Such criticisms, however, fail to adequately take into consideration the essay's organization as a dialogue – its enactment of Freud's own ambivalence in its very structure. Rather than disavowing his skepticism, Freud allowed it to be voiced in full by his interlocutor and the consequence is a text rife with reversals, ones that point to the complex and conflicted renegotiation of psychoanalytic politics unfolding at the moment Freud wrote. See Lear, *Freud* (New York, 2005), 210. For a "redemptive" reading of Freud's critique of religion, see Whitebook, *Freud*, 377-406.

the individual to culture. While progressives and reformers asserted that this antipathy was determined by the imperfections of the particular cultural forms that confronted the individual, Freud dismissed such optimistic assessments – every culture, he insisted, was built on compulsion and renunciation, a reflection of the fact that every individual was equipped with “destructive, and therefore anti-social and anti-cultural, tendencies.”<sup>66</sup> Adopting a familiar *bürgerlich* stance towards the masses, Freud pointed to the immaturity of the broadest strata of the population as justification for his conservative skepticism:

It is just as impossible to do without control of the mass by a minority as it is to dispense with coercion in the work of civilization. For masses are lazy and unintelligent (*träge und einsichtslos*); they have no love for instinctual renunciation, and they are not to be convinced by argument of its inevitability; and the individuals composing them support one another in giving free rein to their indiscipline.<sup>67</sup>

The notion that a new education could fundamentally alter this relationship by producing “new generations, reared affectionately and to a high estimation of reason,” was one that Freud regarded skeptically – the “limits of man’s educability” (*die Schranken der Erziehbarkeit des Menschen*) placed bounds also on the possibility of such a transformation of culture, Freud averred. Yet “the grandeur of the plan and its importance for the future of human civilization cannot be disputed,” he wrote. Suspending his own incredulity, he noted, “the experiment has not yet been made.”<sup>68</sup>

Even if the utopian viewpoint that the antagonism between the individual and culture could be abolished left him unconvinced, Freud nonetheless argued that it was possible to displace and modulate this hostility – in a sense, to educate it. Drawing an analogy to the process by which the child internalizes external compulsion and thus undergoes a transformation from an “opponent to a bearer of culture” (*Kulturgegner zu Kulturträger*), Freud argued that increasing the number of

---

<sup>66</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 327-8 (translations modified).

<sup>67</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 328

<sup>68</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 329-30.

individuals who had undergone this metamorphosis would contribute to the safeguarding of culture and enable it to dispense with external means of coercion. In any society, however, in which the satisfaction of a minority presupposed the suppression of the majority (and such “is the case in all present-day cultures”), the oppressed developed an intense hostility towards the prevailing culture, one that effectively obscured the latent hostility of the more privileged classes. “An internalization of external compulsion is not to be expected among the oppressed,” Freud argued, and thus, in the face of the implacable hostility of the masses, civilization could ultimately be sustained only through the pressure of external coercion.<sup>69</sup>

As unwelcome as they were, however, the prohibitions of culture alone stood between man and “a state of nature” “that would be far harder to bear,” Freud contended – deprived of their protection, nature would destroy us “coldly, cruelly, relentlessly.”<sup>70</sup> Despite the advances of civilization, “nature” remained an untamed, elemental force for Freud, one that threatened to extinguish human existence and that prevented any significant loosening of cultural prohibitions. Trapped between the privations imposed by civilization and the hostility of nature, the individual turned to the supernatural for consolation, Freud argued. Animistic religion served to reconcile the individual to his helplessness, to deprive life and the universe of their terrors, and repair man’s damaged self-regard – having populated the natural world with beings like himself, man could “breathe freely, feel at home in the uncanny and deal by psychical means with [his] senseless anxiety.”<sup>71</sup> What the humanization of nature – the transformation of impersonal forces into manifestations of anthropomorphic deities – achieved for primitive man, was accomplished, at a later stage of civilizational development, through the postulation of a beneficent providence that

---

<sup>69</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 332-3 (last translation modified).

<sup>70</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 336.

<sup>71</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 338.

directed human affairs. Impotent in the face of a destructive, inscrutable nature, humanity recapitulated a universal, ontogenetic response to infantile helplessness in the process of constructing civilization: just as the infant turned to its parents (and especially the father) in order to protect itself against the dangers it faced, a defenseless humanity satisfied its longing for paternal protection by ascribing the course of natural events to the will of a just and benevolent god.

As civilization advanced, Freud argued, religion took on the additional function of correcting the painfully sensed imperfections of culture, both authorizing the privations it imposed while ensuring the fulfillment of the demands for justice that civilization failed to meet. Yet the teachings of religion, far from being the precipitates of experience or the end-results of thinking, were illusions, Freud insisted, “fulfillments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind.”<sup>72</sup> “When the growing individual finds that he is destined to remain a child forever, that he can never do without protection against strange superior powers,” Freud wrote, “he lends those powers the features belonging to the figure of his father,” in the process, ensuring the indefinite prolongation of his own subjection to unquestioned authority.<sup>73</sup> Arising from the individual’s experience of unrelieved helplessness, religion thus preserved the infantile situation from which it emerged.

Yet the advance of civilization, and the expansion of scientific knowledge in particular, had led to an ever-greater falling away from religious belief, Freud argued. As a cultural form that kept individuals in a state of dependence and credulity, religious belief was bound to be overcome with the advance of knowledge, its decline unfolding with the “fatal inevitability of a process of growth” (*schicksalsmässigen Unerbittlichkeit eines Wachstumsvorganges*).<sup>74</sup> In a civilization

---

<sup>72</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 352.

<sup>73</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 346.

<sup>74</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 367.

grounded on religious belief, however, the falling away from religion threatened to undermine the observance of cultural precepts more broadly, a danger particularly marked, Freud averred, among the mass of the uneducated and oppressed, those who had “every reason for being enemies of culture.” “Thus either these dangerous masses must be held down most severely and kept most carefully away from any chance of intellectual awakening,” he wrote, “or else the relationship between civilization and religion must undergo a fundamental revision.”<sup>75</sup>

Opting for the latter course, Freud argued that the necessary revision would ensure that the observance of cultural precepts was no longer dependent on belief in God. At the same time, it would dispel the character of “sanctity and inviolability” that had spread like a kind of “infection” “from a few major prohibitions on to every other cultural regulation, law, and ordinance.” With the loss of this aura of sanctity, the rigidity and immutability of these cultural regulations would also fall away, Freud argued, allowing the individual to recognize that they were made not so much to rule him as to serve his interests.<sup>76</sup> While the task of reconciling the individual to culture would thus be significantly advanced, the same process would contribute to the enrichment of civilization itself. For Freud, the intellectual atrophy (*Verkümmerung*) that beset the masses was intimately connected to the religious element of their upbringing, which erected prohibitions while forbidding interrogation and critique. In place of traditional education, he proposed the experiment of an irreligious upbringing, one he described as an *Erziehung zur Realität*.<sup>77</sup> Where religion served to disavow impotence and perpetuated a condition of infantile dependency, the education to reality

---

<sup>75</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 362-3 (first translation modified).

<sup>76</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 364-5.

<sup>77</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 373. Freud had already elaborated the basic features of this theory of religion in his 1910 study of Leonardo da Vinci. See Sigmund Freud, “Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci,” *GW* VIII (1910): 128-211: “Die Religiosität führt sich biologisch auf die lang anhaltende Hilflosigkeit und Hilfsbedürftigkeit des kleinen Menschenkindes zurück, welches, wenn es später seine wirkliche Verlassenheit und Schwäche gegen die großen Mächte des Lebens erkannt hat, seine Lage ähnlich wie in der Kindheit empfindet und deren Trostlosigkeit durch die regressive Erneuerung der infantilen Schutzmächte zu verleugnen sucht” (195).

Freud envisioned entailed a full recognition of man's helplessness and insignificance in the machinery of the universe. No longer "the center of creation" or "the object of tender care on the part of a beneficent Providence," the individual "will be in the same position as a child who has left the paternal home where he was so warm and comfortable." Infantilism, however, exists to be surmounted, Freud averred, "men cannot remain children forever." Eventually, "they must...go out into 'hostile life'."<sup>78</sup>

The intention behind his essay, Freud wrote, was to convince the reader of the necessity of his educational experiment, one that entailed not only the abandonment of religion in the upbringing of the child but also the adoption of the role of a "sensible educator" in relation to the masses.<sup>79</sup> Finding themselves in the midst of a phase of historical development in which, Freud believed, advancing secularization threatened the normative underpinnings of the cultural order, he urged his readers not to oppose this impending development but rather to seek to "ease its path and mitigate the violence of its irruption."<sup>80</sup> Such a course would both enable cultural precepts to be placed on a rational foundation and would allow for a general flourishing of intelligence. Yet as Freud elaborated this plan for helping humanity overcome its self-incurred immaturity, he found himself enmeshed in an awkward paradox – as his cynical interlocutor pointed out, they seemed to have swapped roles, with Freud embracing utopian illusions and he himself upholding the claims of skeptical reason (*Sie zeigen sich als der Schwärmer, der sich von Illusionen fortreißen läßt, und ich vertrete den Anspruch der Vernunft, das Recht der Skepsis*).<sup>81</sup> From a perspective characterized by liberal elitism and conservative circumspection, Freud had arrived over the course of the essay

---

<sup>78</sup> Freud, "Die Zukunft einer Illusion," 373.

<sup>79</sup> "Unser Verhalten sollte sich dann nach dem Vorbild eines verständigen Erziehers richten, der sich einer bevorstehenden Neugestaltung nicht widersetzt, sondern sie zu fördern und die Gewalttätigkeit ihres Durchbruchs einzudämmen sucht." Freud, "Die Zukunft einer Illusion," 367 (translation modified).

<sup>80</sup> Freud, "Die Zukunft einer Illusion," 367.

<sup>81</sup> Freud, "Die Zukunft einer Illusion," 374.

at a position remarkably similar to the progressive enlightening mission of interwar Social Democracy – “Certainly human beings are like this,” he answered his critic, “but have you asked yourself whether they *must* be like this, whether their innermost nature necessitates it?”<sup>82</sup> Even as he underwent this conversion, however, the anxieties voiced at the outset of the essay reemerged to unsettle Freud’s optimism. Above all, in vesting his faith in human reason, Freud acknowledged that his vision rested on a weak foundation – a fragile product of a fraught development, the human intellect was virtually powerless in comparison to the force of the drives and in constant danger of being drowned out entirely. “Nevertheless, there is something peculiar about this weakness,” Freud wrote, “the voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing.” The tenacity of reason, in spite of its apparent timorousness, was one of the few points on which Freud declared himself to be “optimistic about the future of mankind.” Even if the “primacy of the intellect lies...in a distant, distant future,” it was likely not an “*infinitely* distant one.”<sup>83</sup>

Yet reason remained a vulnerable achievement for Freud, its vicissitudes intimately bound up with the difficult course of individual enculturation and the fate of civilization itself. At the crux of this fraught dynamic was sexuality. On their own, Freud believed, children were unlikely to concern themselves with the otherworldly questions of religion, being far too interested in the physical and emotional dimensions of their lived experience. Contemporary education, however, counteracted the child’s innate drives, emphasizing, as its two main priorities, the “retardation of sexual development and premature religious influence.” It was to these deleterious interventions that Freud ascribed “the depressing contrast between the radiant intelligence of a healthy child and

---

<sup>82</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 370.

<sup>83</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 377.

the feeble intellectual powers of the average adult.”<sup>84</sup> Through the influence of religious injunctions, the child fell under the sway of prohibitions of thought (*Denkverbote*) that stymied its inquisitiveness and suppressed its budding intelligence, thus depriving it of the means to regulate its own impulsivity. Where this played out most transparently was in the response of traditional education to the child’s curiosity about sexual matters – confronted with the child’s questions, parents generally either prohibited its interest in sexuality outright, with lasting consequences for its intellectual capacity, or offered mythical transfigurations of the biological reality, sanitized fabrications that left the child feeling deceived and that stoked its hostility towards authority. A far better course, Freud averred, was to abandon all symbolic distortions and to meet the child’s curiosity halfway by providing it with knowledge of the real circumstances of human sexual life commensurate to its intellectual level.<sup>85</sup> Rebuffed in its first inquiries and denied access to this knowledge, the child’s intellect, Freud implied, would be all the more vulnerable to religious superstition.

The prospects for a rational foundation of cultural prescriptions thus seemed to hinge on the manner in which adults responded to the sexual inquiries of the child – at the heart of the broader mission of *Aufklärung* was the task of enlightening the child about sex. In broaching this subject, Freud was returning to a series of questions he had first addressed in the years prior to the war, specifically in his 1907 essay “Zur sexuellen Aufklärung der Kinder” and in the weekly discussions of the *WPV*. Declaring himself perplexed as to why adults would deliberately mislead their children, Freud had pleaded in his 1907 essay for a basic honesty in response to the child’s

---

<sup>84</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 370-1. As Freud had written the previous year in his essay “Die Frage der Laienanalyse,” “Die Kinder sind geistig sehr regsam in diesem Alter, die sexuelle Frühzeit ist für sie auch eine intellektuelle Blüteperiode. Ich habe den Eindruck, daß sie mit dem Eintritt in die Latenzzeit auch geistig gehemmt, dümmer, werden.” Similar contentions surfaced as early as 1909 in Freud’s case study of Little Hans. See Sigmund Freud, “Die Frage der Laienanalyse,” *GW* XIV (1926): 209-86, at 244.

<sup>85</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 368.

queries and had pointed to the deleterious effects of deceiving children in sexual matters.<sup>86</sup> But by the interwar years, as the discussion of sexual enlightenment exploded in the central European intellectual and cultural milieu in which psychoanalytic pedagogy emerged, the stakes seemed to have been raised considerably. While Freudians had long suggested that sexual enlightenment could serve a prophylactic function, both by forestalling pathogenic repression and equipping the developing subject with the knowledge necessary to avoid unhygienic sexual practices, these hopes were supplemented by even more far-reaching ambitions in the decades between the wars. Central to the psychoanalytic discourse of *sexuelle Aufklärung* over the interwar years was a broader project – at once, enthusiastically embraced and skeptically disavowed in *Die Zukunft einer Illusion* – of fashioning a “new generation,” one weaned of an inclination to superstition, trained to appreciate the benefits of civilization, and reared to “a high estimation of reason.”<sup>87</sup> The more psychoanalysts turned their attention to this subject, however, the more the uncharacteristically optimistic tenor of Freud’s 1927 essay became engulfed in a new set of anxieties and doubts.

### *Sexuelle Aufklärung* and the *Kulturkampf* Within

“Better a year too early than an hour too late,” wrote Josef Friedjung in his 1922 essay “Die geschlechtliche Aufklärung im Erziehungswerke.”<sup>88</sup> The anxiety that troubled Friedjung, namely, that sexual enlightenment would come too late to assist the child in its development, was one shared by many Freudians.<sup>89</sup> Missed opportunity could spell disaster – rebuffed or deceived by its

---

<sup>86</sup> “Ich glaube nicht, daß nur ein einziger Grund vorliegt, um Kindern die Aufklärung, nach der ihre Wißbegierde verlangt, zu verweigern.” Sigmund Freud, “Zur sexuellen Aufklärung der Kinder,” *GW* VII (1907): 19-27, at 25.

<sup>87</sup> Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 329.

<sup>88</sup> Josef Friedjung, “Die geschlechtliche Aufklärung im Erziehungswerke. Ein Wegweiser für Eltern, Erzieher und Ärzte,” (Vienna, 1922), 19. This essay was a substantially revised version of a 1909 lecture titled “Die sexuelle Aufklärung der Kinder.”

<sup>89</sup> An especially striking exclamation of this viewpoint can be found in Hans Zulliger, *Psychoanalytische Erfahrungen aus der Volksschulpraxis*, 77: “Ich hatte gemerkt, dass ich zu spät kam! Diese Tatsache und das Bewusstsein, dass

parents, the inquisitive child would turn to much less benign sources to sate its sexual curiosity. Even more deleterious, Friedjung contended, the child would invariably sense that its parents were hiding something and, as the educational relationship deteriorated, it would come to perceive the entire sphere of sexuality as something shrouded in a guilty secretiveness. The consequence, Friedjung averred, would be to stimulate the child's prurient curiosity – as everything sexual took on the character of the secretive and lustful, the child would be overwhelmed by its fantasies. The developing subject's first question regarding sexual matters was thus, for Friedjung, a fateful one (*eine Schicksalsfrage*), since the response it received could lead it either in the direction of a healthy character and a satisfying sexual life or essentially condemn it to the dangerous pursuit of perverse, illicit desires.<sup>90</sup>

Sexual enlightenment was a vital prophylactic measure for Friedjung, yet on its own, divorced from a broader program of scientifically-informed, ethically-grounded upbringing in sexual matters, the mere transmission of knowledge was inadequate for forming the child's character, he argued. Friedjung's emphasis on instilling a sense of personal responsibility in the child and on defending it against impure desires through a *geschlechtliche Erziehung*, of which the task of explicit *sexuelle Aufklärung* was only a part, was broadly typical of education reformers in interwar Vienna. The extraordinary importance that such an upbringing held for educators was, in part, a logical extension of reform pedagogical thought, which emphasized honesty and openness towards the child and adherence to its natural, biological development.<sup>91</sup> Added to this, however, were concerns of public health: in the face of the rampant spread of sexually transmitted

---

die sexuelle Aufklärung in der Schule wohl immer zu spät kommt, weil die Schüler dem Lehrer ja durch keine diesbezüglichen Fragen die richtige Zeit zur Behandlung verraten – schlugen mich noch mehr nieder als der verlorene gesunde Zahn der Luise B., den ich hätte retten könne, wenn ich einst weniger feige gewesen wäre.”

<sup>90</sup> Friedjung, “Die geschlechtliche Aufklärung im Erziehungswerke,” 18-9.

<sup>91</sup> What exactly this natural development consisted of would be the subject of debate (see below), but that it included a budding sexual life was increasingly taken for granted.

diseases as a consequence of the chaotic social dislocations of the preceding years, sexual education, Britta McEwen has argued, came to be understood by Social Democratic municipal reformers as “a powerful tool in the hygienic improvement of modern urban life.”<sup>92</sup> Reflecting the deficiency of existing modes of sexual education, a “frightful rate of sexual infestation had beset all civilized people,” Friedjung argued. “Draining the swamp” of contagion would require the pedagogical dissemination of a new sexual morality.<sup>93</sup>

For Social Democratic reformers an essential component of this new sexual morality was an ethic of social responsibility, one that consisted in taming the “uninhibited natural drives” and channeling them towards socially useful ends.<sup>94</sup> The inculcation of a hygienic consciousness in the masses was a precondition for this socialistic morality, one that Social Democrats aimed to realize through the establishment of an extensive network of municipal “marriage advice clinics” (*Eheberatungsstellen*) between the wars. Envisioned as the points of irradiation of a process of “systematic *Aufklärung*,” these counselling centers sought to disseminate an awareness of the dangers of sexuality and instill a sense of responsibility towards the coming generation.<sup>95</sup> As McEwen has demonstrated, both the focus of Social Democrats on sexual education and the specific sexual morality they sought to inculcate overlapped substantially with conservative, Catholic efforts between the wars: “for both Catholics and reformers,” sexual education formed “the cornerstone of a new social foundation that emphasized the ‘naturalness’ of sexuality, the reconstruction of motherhood, and the overwhelming necessity of purity and individual

---

<sup>92</sup> McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge*, 55.

<sup>93</sup> Friedjung, “Die geschlechtliche Aufklärung,” 8, 11-12.

<sup>94</sup> Otto Felix Kanitz, “Geschlechtliche Erziehung.” On social democratic sexual ethics in the prewar era see Tracie Matysik, *Reforming the Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890-1930* (Ithaca, 2008), 175-217 and Edward Ross Dickinson, *Sex, Freedom, and Power in Imperial Germany, 1880-1914* (New York, 2014), 137-51.

<sup>95</sup> McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge*, 36. On Social Democratic efforts to educate working class sexuality see also Gruber, *Red Vienna*, 155-79.

responsibility.”<sup>96</sup> Yet sex was also at the heart of the *Kulturkampf* that divided interwar Austria – in spite of their common ground, Social Democrats embraced a program of sexual education that was articulated explicitly against what they understood to be essential components of Catholic religious and social teachings, above all, the notion of childhood as a period of pre-sexual innocence and the belief that sexuality itself was irrevocably tainted by sin. The child, Kanitz insisted, “is a sexual creature from its first day on.” While socialist sexual education aimed to tame and cultivate sex, Kanitz nonetheless viewed sexuality as a positive force, one that, if liberated from the constraints of bourgeois hypocrisy and Church dogma, could contribute to the renewal and flourishing of the social collective.<sup>97</sup>

Throughout their writings on sexual education, Social Democrats embraced a conception of sexuality as a fundamentally beneficent force, albeit one that could be perverted to dangerous ends, through false educational methods and the artificial stimulations of capitalist culture. In Social Democratic thought, the individual’s supposedly natural urges were placed at the foundation of a new “generative ethic” in which sexuality was to be simultaneously liberated from deleterious cultural forces and subordinated to the imperative of the health of the collective.<sup>98</sup> Drawing heavily from the Monist tradition, this new ethic, McEwen has argued, framed the goal of civilization in terms of the expansion, disciplining, and rationalization of the sex drive rather than its inhibition.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge*, 54.

<sup>97</sup> For Kanitz, however, this optimistic vision presupposed a clear distinction between the concept of the erotic as the sexual force (*Geschlechtskraft*) that penetrated and animated the entire person and that of sexuality itself, that is, the drives and processes that related directly to reproduction. While fed from the same source, *Erotik* and *Sexualität* thus worked towards different ends and their practical conflation had only served to corrupt both, Kanitz contended. Taking aim at the suppression of the erotic in traditional *Erziehung*, Kanitz extolled the wonderful power of Eros, of love in the broadest sense, which ideally would pulse through the individual and permeate the totality. Despite distinguishing the sexual from the erotic and insisting on the importance of controlling the amoral, animalistic drives, Kanitz thus embraced a broadly sex-positive pedagogical politics. Kanitz, “Geschlechtliche Erziehung.”

<sup>98</sup> McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge*, 48. See also Dickinson, *Sex, Freedom, and Power*, 142, 149-50. This was part of a broader process, one reaching back to the prewar years, through which the class struggle was reframed as a struggle for the health of the working classes.

<sup>99</sup> McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge*, 47.

Critical to this effort to align sex with the work of nature and thus release it from the artificial constraints of Christian morality was the propagation of a natural scientific conception of sexuality. A powerful mechanism for undermining the authority of the Catholic Church and its political representatives, sexual scientific discourse was central to the interwar *Kulturkampf*.<sup>100</sup> For Friedjung and other progressive reformers, the insistence on the naturalness of sexuality served to turn the tables on the representatives of traditional morality – by erecting barriers to the honest and open discussion of sexuality, the defenders of the “innocence of the child” were in fact the upholders of the “filth of adults,” he wrote.<sup>101</sup>

The same natural scientific discourse also opened onto a concrete program for the sexual enlightenment of the child, one in which the natural world offered both a template for instruction and a means of facilitating sublimation. For Friedjung, as for the majority of Social Democratic educators, the parent or teacher confronted with the child’s sexual inquisitiveness had a ready-made model to hand in the observable processes of the natural world. The aim of such an education, Friedjung averred, was to deflect the child’s curiosity from specifically sexual matters to the universal and thus to awaken an interest in the “great laws of life” as they unfolded in the “totality of nature.” By binding the process of enlightenment to the observation of plant life, Friedjung argued that the fulfillment of the educator’s task could simultaneously contribute to the sublimation of the child’s drive for sexual knowledge.<sup>102</sup> Not only would such an approach to sexual enlightenment deprive the subject of everything secretive and tempting, it would also serve to cultivate a scientific, antimetaphysical worldview that would immunize the child against the blandishments of religious superstition. While the objective, unselfconscious administration of

---

<sup>100</sup> McEwen, *Sexual Knowledge*, 17. See also Edward Ross Dickinson, *Sex, Freedom, and Power in Imperial Germany, 1880-1914* (New York, 2014), 141.

<sup>101</sup> Friedjung, “Die geschlechtliche Aufklärung im Erziehungswerke,” 14.

<sup>102</sup> Friedjung, “Die geschlechtliche Aufklärung im Erziehungswerke,” 22-25.

sexual enlightenment based on the model of the natural world was a standard demand among reformers at the time, the connection Friedjung drew between this mode of enlightenment and the child's budding intellectual capacity reflected a specifically psychoanalytic perspective, one that stemmed from the intimate relationship in Freudian thought between sexual desire and the desire for knowledge.

For psychoanalysts, the vicissitudes of the developing subject's intellectual capacity were inseparable from the fate of his or her sexual drives – as Freud argued in his 1908 essay “Über infantile Sexualtheorien,” the child's first significant intellectual inquiries were undertaken in response to its anxious anticipation of a loss of parental love and the erotic gratification it provided.<sup>103</sup> Even when confronted with the “fundamental fact” of the existence of different genders, Freud insisted that the child's drive for knowledge (*Wissensdrang*) did not awaken “spontaneously” (out of “some inborn need for established causes”), but rather was “aroused by the goad” of its dominating “self-seeking drives” when confronted with the prospect of the arrival of new baby. The unwished for intrusion piqued the child's curiosity and prompted it to direct its now sharpened capacity for thought (*Denkfähigkeit*) towards a number of problems related to the origin of children, problems like the means of conception, the nature of the sex act, and the differences between the genders.<sup>104</sup> What emerged were a series of sexual theories – of oral conception, of birth through the anus, and of sexual intercourse as a form of sadistic domination – that reflected both the child's own developing sexual constitution and the limits of its knowledge: the theories the child constructed, Freud wrote, represented “uninhibited and unmodified” expressions of the component drives that dominated its sexuality at the time of its theorizing. As Freud's argument ran, the failure of these efforts to arrive at an adequate explanation of the sexual

---

<sup>103</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Über infantile Sexualtheorien,” *GW* VII (1908): 171-88.

<sup>104</sup> Freud, “Über infantile Sexualtheorien,” 174.

act made it easier for the child to subsequently forget and reject them, but the manner in which its researches ran aground – as they inevitably did – played a determining role in its later intellectual development.<sup>105</sup>

In a more extensive discussion of this process in his study of Leonardo da Vinci from the same year, Freud identified several potential outcomes for the child's drive for knowledge – following the “wave of energetic repression” that brought its sexual researches to a close and ushered in the latency phase of its psychosexual development, the child's independent instinct for research (*Forschertrieb*) underwent three possible vicissitudes according to its earlier connection with the child's sexual interests.<sup>106</sup> In the first, the child's drive for knowledge suffered the same fate as its sexuality – the repression of the latter yielding an inhibition of curiosity and one that could exercise a permanent limitation on the free activity of intelligence. In the second possibility, the child's intellectual development was strong enough to resist the inhibiting effects of sexual repression, but nonetheless remained bound to the suppressed content of its former researches – burdened with the pleasure and anxiety of sexual activity, the activity of thought took on the form of a compulsive brooding (*Grübelzwang*) that recapitulated the interminable character of the child's own sexual researches. In the final outcome, “the rarest and most perfect,” intellectual activity escaped inhibition and compulsivity alike by being “sublimated from the outset into curiosity (*Wißbegierde*).” While similar in some respects to the second outcome, the underlying psychological processes were fundamentally different, Freud averred, leaving the drive free to operate in the service of intellectual interests.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Freud, “Über infantile Sexualtheorien,” 185, 181.

<sup>106</sup> Freud, “Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci,” 146-7.

<sup>107</sup> Freud, “Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci,” 147-8 (translation modified). How precisely the underlying psychological mechanisms differed was a question Freud was never able to answer to his own satisfaction. The theory of sublimation would remain a lacuna in Freudian thought.

A combination of innate constitutional factors and cultural and pedagogical influences determined the fate of the child's intellectual development following the suppression of its sexual researches. Of the educational influences brought to bear on the child's desire for sexual knowledge, religion represented a particularly deleterious force, Freud contended, one conducive to a far-reaching, neurotic inhibition of thought.<sup>108</sup> "If it is the intention of the educator to stifle the child's capacity for independent thought as early as possible in favor of the so highly esteemed 'goodness'," Freud argued in his 1907 essay "Zur sexuellen Aufklärung der Kinder," they cannot set about this better than through trying to deceive it in sexual matters and intimidating it in matters of religion."<sup>109</sup> Ignorance, he wrote, did nothing to preserve the child's purity, and the collusiveness (*Geheimtuerei*) of adults in sexual matters only prevented children from developing the capacity to come to terms intellectually with such activities.<sup>110</sup>

What complicated the task of strengthening the child's intellectual faculties through sexual enlightenment, however, was paradoxically the child's own desires. For the majority of *Menschenkinder*, Freud wrote in 1910, "the need for support from some kind of authority is so imperative that their world begins to totter if that authority is threatened."<sup>111</sup> Having learned in his earliest years to do without a father, Leonardo was unique in his ability to dispense with such support: "the boldness and independence" of his later work, Freud explained, "presupposed a history of infantile sexual researches uninhibited by paternal authority." Yet the authority that impeded the child's budding intellectual autonomy was one that the child simultaneously sought

---

<sup>108</sup> Freud, "Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci," 147.

<sup>109</sup> Freud, "Zur sexuellen Aufklärung der Kinder," 25 (translation modified). Freud continued, "möglicherweise wirkt da auch ein Stück theoretischer Unwissenheit mit, dem man durch die Aufklärung der Erwachsenen entgegenreten kann. Man meint nämlich, daß den Kindern der Geschlechtstrieb fehle und sich erst zur Pubertätszeit mit der Reife der Geschlechtsorgane bei ihnen einstelle. Das ist ein grober, für die Kenntnis wie für die Praxis folgenschwerer Irrtum." The enlightenment of the child was thus to be complemented by that of educator.

<sup>110</sup> Freud, "Zur sexuellen Aufklärung der Kinder," 21.

<sup>111</sup> Freud, "Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci," 194 (translation modified).

to reinforce with the help of religion. As the child became increasingly conscious of the limits of its father's power, the acceptance of religious ideas – especially that of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent deity – served to restore and renew the paternal function that the father no longer incarnated, in the process, quelling the anxiety that resulted from the child's growing awareness of its own vulnerability.<sup>112</sup>

The investigation of the relationship between sexual enlightenment, religious belief, and intellectual development that Freud inaugurated in his prewar studies would be taken up and significantly deepened by the child analyst, Melanie Klein. Working at the time in Budapest, from where she would move to Berlin in 1921, Klein explored the child's reaction to *sexuelle Aufklärung* in a long essay titled "Eine Kinderentwicklung."<sup>113</sup> To an even greater extent than Freud and Friedjung, Klein invested far-reaching hopes in sexual enlightenment and an upbringing grounded in complete honesty towards the child: a frank answering of the child's questions, she argued, would yield an inner freedom that would influence mental development profoundly and beneficially, she argued.<sup>114</sup> If openness and honesty were vital in the fraught process of overcoming psychic infantilism, the introduction of "unverifiable (*unkontrollierbare*),

---

<sup>112</sup> Freud, "Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci," 194-5. Freud acknowledged the (for him) paradoxical fact that Leonardo remained devout despite having learned to do without paternal authority, but nonetheless insisted that "der persönliche Gott psychologisch nichts anderes ist als ein erhöhter Vater" (195). Three years later, of course, Freud would elaborate a complementary theory of the emergence of religious institutions (and, indeed, of culture itself) in his 1913 *Totem und Tabu*. Once again it was longing for the (in this case, murdered) father that functioned as the primary motor for the development of religious beliefs, customs, and institutions.

<sup>113</sup> Klein's essay was divided into two parts, "Sexualaufklärung und Autoritätsmilderung in ihrem Einfluß auf die intellektuelle Entwicklung des Kindes" and "Zur Frühanalyse. Die Widerstand der Kinder gegen die Aufklärung." Melanie Klein, "Eine Kinderentwicklung," *Imago* 7 (1921): 251-309, at 269.

<sup>114</sup> Klein, "Eine Kinderentwicklung," 269. As she wrote at the outset of the essay, "Wir können dem Kinde übergroße Verdrängung ersparen, indem wir – und vor allem in uns selbst – das ganze große Gebiet der Sexualität von den Schleiern des Geheimnisvollen, Unaufrichtigen und Gefährlichen befreien, die eine heuchlerische auf affektiver und nicht erkenntnismäßiger Basis begründete Zivilisation dicht gesponnen hat... Dieses an sich unermesslich reich erscheinende Resultat ist nicht der einzige Gewinn, den wir für den einzelnen und die Entwicklung der Menschheit aus einer auf unbedingtester Wahrhaftigkeit aufgebauten Erziehung zu erhoffen haben. Denn ihre Folge ist zugleich auch eine andere und nicht weniger bedeutungsvolle: *Die entscheidende Beeinflussung der Entwicklung des Denkens.*" (252, emphasis added).

supernatural ideas” into the child’s upbringing represented a new danger for thought and one that could exert a crippling influence on the child’s development towards intellectual autonomy.

The child, for Klein, was far from innocent in the construction of a religious *Weltanschauung*, however – in fact, it was its desire *for* such “unverifiable, supernatural ideas” that made the introduction of religious principles in education so harmful. Where Freud in 1927 would project the burden of responsibility for the construction and elaboration of religious systems away from the child onto external cultural and educational influences, Klein went much further in her insistence on the child’s complicity in its subjection to heteronomous religious ideas: alongside the longing for authority that Freud had emphasized in his study of Leonardo, the child’s acceptance of religious beliefs reflected its attempt to preserve an original sense of omnipotence from the incursions of a disillusioning reality. Supplementing Freud’s 1911 essay on the two principles of psychical functioning with Sándor Ferenczi’s 1913 “Entwicklungsstufen des Wirklichkeitssinnes” (both discussed in chapter one), Klein argued that that the child’s transition from the pleasure principle to the reality principle involved a painful renunciation of its own boundless, omnipotence feeling. What followed was a prolonged struggle between the reality and pleasure principles, an inner conflict in which the child was torn between the desires to critically assess the limits of its own and others’ power and to preserve a semblance of the innate omnipotence feeling by identifying subjects who incarnated what the child was forced to renounce in itself. At the outset, it was the parents who maintained the infantile omnipotence feeling by assuming the capacity of all-powerful (indeed god-like) protectors of the child. Yet with the growing recognition of their limitations, the parents’ place was taken by the idea of God, an idea that overwhelmed the child precisely because it met its own desires halfway. In reaffirming and upholding the child’s omnipotence feeling, the idea of God simultaneously introduced an

insuperable authority into the child's developing worldview, in the process, subordinating its impulse for knowledge, its "free, unhampered thought" to "dogmatic, theoretic" ideas supplied by authority.<sup>115</sup> If the child did not spontaneously produce the idea of God in Klein's analysis, it thus eagerly embraced it out of a desire to preserve the pleasure principle.

The child's active participation in the reproduction of religious ideas both raised the stakes and compounded the difficulties of the enlightening politics that Klein and her fellow Freudians embraced – while it made it all the more important that parents practice honesty and avoid introducing the idea of God into education (which Klein insisted could shatter the child's developing sense of reality), it also posed a new challenge to the efforts of parents and educators to address the child's most pressing questions. Suspended between countervailing impulses to dismantle authority through the exercise of critical reality-testing and to establish it on more secure (and ultimately unassailable) foundations, the child, Klein acknowledged, often manifested a strong resistance to enlightenment – "this negative attitude," she wrote, "may take the most varying forms up to an absolute unwillingness to know."<sup>116</sup> In spite of educational measures aiming at the unreserved satisfaction of its sexual curiosity and the corresponding avoidance of any prohibitions of thought (*Denkverbote*), the child's inquisitiveness, its relentless *Fragelust*, could thus be repressed and transformed into a resolute unwillingness-to-know (*Nichtwissenwollen*). What Klein's contribution began to map out was thus a kind of *Kulturkampf* within.<sup>117</sup> Over the coming

---

<sup>115</sup> Klein, "Eine Kinderentwicklung," 274-5. "Wie viel von dem geistigen Besitz des Einzelnen ist nur scheinbar sein Besitz, wie vieles ist dogmatisch, theoretisch, in Anlehnung an Autoritäten gewonnen, nicht auf dem Wege freien, unbehinderten Zuendedenkens sein Eigen geworden!" (274).

<sup>116</sup> Klein, "Eine Kinderentwicklung," 280.

<sup>117</sup> While Klein's essay has been characterized as a pre-Kleinian text by virtue of its emphasis on the importance of education, Klein's insistence of the way in which the child's psychic life outstrips and even subverts pedagogical interventions certainly presages the direction in which her thought would develop. For one such interpretation see Makari, *Revolution in Mind*, 427

years, amid the ever-expanding discourse of sexual enlightenment, it was the child's resistance to *Aufklärung* that increasingly dominated psychoanalytic contributions.

### The Future of Enlightenment

The difficulties that troubled Klein in her discussion of the sexual enlightenment of the child were strikingly absent from the writings of Adlerian Individual Psychologists. In fact, in the essays they devoted to the management of sexual problems in the upbringing of the child, Adlerians consistently downplayed the specific importance of *sexuelle Aufklärung* – since sexuality was not something that the child confronted only after a certain age, “sexual enlightenment,” in the strict sense, had no place in a rational educational system, argued Sofie Lazarsfeld.<sup>118</sup> For Adlerians, imparting knowledge about sexual life in response to the child's inquiries was a comparatively minor aspect of a broader *geschlechtliche Erziehung*, whose aim was to instill a mature, hygienic awareness of sexual responsibilities anchored in an ethic of social solidarity. The very need to set the child straight through *Aufklärung* was a testament, for Adlerians, to the failure of education to fulfill its primary responsibilities.

If the tasks of sexual enlightenment thus vanished into those of sexual upbringing more broadly for Adlerians, the latter in turn was integrated seamlessly (or rather, absorbed without a trace) into the overarching function of *Erziehung*, as Adlerians understood it.<sup>119</sup> The reluctance of Adlerians to regard sexuality as posing its own specific challenges in the upbringing of the child

---

<sup>118</sup> Sofie Lazarsfeld, “Sexuelle Erziehung,” (Vienna, 1931), 4.

<sup>119</sup> “Von einer sexuellen Erziehung als einer besonderen Aufgabe der Pädagogik kann nicht die Rede sein.” Erwin Wexberg, “Sexuelles und erotisches Problem,” in Sophie Lazarsfeld ed., *Technik der Erziehung. Ein Leitfaden für Eltern und Lehrer* (Leipzig, 1929), 260. Wexberg was, behind Adler himself, the most prominent Individual Psychologist in interwar Vienna and notably one of the few who attempted to further develop Adler's own ideas. On Wexberg, see Ulrich Kümmel, *Erwin Wexberg. Ein Leben zwischen Individualpsychologie, Psychoanalyse und Neurologie* (Göttingen, 2010).

reflected their conviction that sex was simply one aspect of social life among others – far from an independent factor set off against the rest of life, sexuality was an “inextricably interwoven part of life in its totality,” Lazarsfeld wrote.<sup>120</sup> Even more important, the significance sex held for many adults was largely derivative, a reflection of the conflicts and insecurities that they experienced in other aspects of their lives: “the more uncertain we are in managing our entire lives...the more uncertainly we face our sexual lives,” Lazarsfeld contended, “then we use [sexuality] all too often for purposes of compensation.” For the “well-instructed” (*gut angeleiteten*) child, by contrast, the theme of sexuality possessed none of the anxiety-inducing tension (*Spannungsmoment*) that it did for the average adult.<sup>121</sup> Through unselfconscious, matter-of-fact consideration, the much-discussed question of sexual enlightenment would essentially resolve itself (*löst sich...von selbst*), Erwin Wexberg insisted, since far from being disgusting or dirty in the child’s eyes, sexual matters were interesting and natural – part of a “wonderful arrangement of nature.”<sup>122</sup> Despite consistently minimizing the difficulties sexuality posed for the upbringing of the child, Lazarsfeld and Wexberg offered an unconscious admission of sorts that things were far from straightforward when they acknowledged that here, more than in any other aspect of education, was an *Erziehung der Erzieher* imperative.<sup>123</sup>

Perhaps nowhere would these disavowed difficulties be more apparent than in a 1926 essay, titled “Über sexuelle Aufklärung,” by Siegfried Bernfeld.<sup>124</sup> One of a series of articles in a special edition of the *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* devoted to the subject of sexual enlightenment, Bernfeld’s brief essay – like his critique of reform pedagogy from the preceding

---

<sup>120</sup> Lazarsfeld, “Sexuelle Erziehung,” 6.

<sup>121</sup> Lazarsfeld, “Sexuelle Erziehung,” 6, 13.

<sup>122</sup> Wexberg, “Sexuelles und erotisches Problem,” 263.

<sup>123</sup> Lazarsfeld, “Sexuelle Erziehung,” 7 and Wexberg, “Sexuelles und erotisches Problem,” 260.

<sup>124</sup> Siegfried Bernfeld, “Über sexuelle Aufklärung,” *ZfpP* 1 (1926): 195-99.

year (chapter five) – pursued a relentlessly disillusioning logic in its exploration of the ways that the child’s sexuality impeded the work of *Aufklärung*.<sup>125</sup> As he noted at the outset, many children who have received complete and honest answers to their queries regarding human sexuality, nonetheless develop neuroses. What was more interesting, Bernfeld continued, was that “fully enlightened children” often behave as if “that enlightenment had never taken place” – *sexuelle Aufklärung* can thus be repressed, he concluded, and far from being exceptional, this was most likely always the case.<sup>126</sup> The child’s rejection of the enlightenment offered, Bernfeld argued, stemmed from the fact that the answers it received agreed far less with its wishes than did its own theories of birth and conception (theories that, as Freud had argued, reflected the dominance of the particular partial drives that prevailed at a given stage of sexual development). *Aufklärung* invariably came too late, Bernfeld insisted, precisely because the child only inquired once it had formed its own theories and in the hope of having them confirmed by adult authority. Yet the enlightenment provided by the adult was dissatisfying for an even more basic reason, since “the

---

<sup>125</sup> The same *Sonderheft* included articles by Zulliger, Meng, Schneider, and Friedjung, as well as two that, along with Bernfeld’s, pointed in a more disillusioning direction (namely by Eduard Hitschmann and Karl Landauer). Echoing views he had elaborated more fully in an article for the *Volksbuch*, Meng described sexual enlightenment (by which he understood not the mere imparting of information but the entire relation of the child’s environment to sexuality) as “biologically advantageous” in that it clarifies and purifies “den im Kinde dumpf aufsteigenden Vorstellungen, Gedanken und Gefühlen” and allows “die Trieberziehung” to pave the way for a “Triebbeherrschung” “nach vernünftigen Gesichtspunkten.” Meng, “Sexuelles Wissen und sexuelle Aufklärung,” *ZfpP* 1 (1926): 223-24. Landauer, by contrast, insisted that *sexuelle Aufklärung* is not something the child desires and that it, in fact, prefers the dissembling fables of adults (“Also: das Kind will keine Aufklärung. Es will das Storchenmärchen”). The child’s main motive for rejecting enlightenment, Landauer insisted, was jealousy – by denying its parents attempts at *Aufklärung*, the child could continue to take no consideration of the intruder that would soon rob it of the exclusive possession of its first love object. Landauer, “Die Zurückweisung der Aufklärung durch das Kind,” *ZfpP* 1 (1926): 224-28, at 227. Zulliger’s article offered a mixture of pedagogical optimism and circumspection, contending that the fable of the stork “hat...etwas an sich, was der Phantasie der Kinder in einem gewissen Alter mehr entgegenkommt als die realen Tatsachen,” but offering a perspective in which sexual enlightenment (the openness and honesty of the educator) was generally effective in clearing up the anxiety and confusion of children. Zulliger, “Eltern, Schule und sexuelle Aufklärung,” *ZfpP* 1 (1926): 228-39, at 235.

<sup>126</sup> Bernfeld, “Über sexuelle Aufklärung,” 196.

child's original interest was not to know, but to see and to act." Regardless of how the adult set about enlightening the child, "a great many of its instinctual demands must be left unsatisfied."<sup>127</sup>

Given the fundamental disjuncture between the child's desires and the enlightening efforts of the adult, Bernfeld concluded that the benefits of *sexuelle Aufklärung* were primarily negative. While several educators were convinced that resolving the question of sexual enlightenment offered the "key to the construction of a new humanity (*Menschheitsgeneration*)," Bernfeld insisted that at most one could say that it was "not harmful, while lying to children frequently is." In light of the fact that *Aufklärung* was itself usually repressed, the contention that it could serve to prevent pathogenic repression or assist the child's budding intellectual autonomy was anything but plausible. By contrast, for Bernfeld, the virtues of enlightenment were merely that it did not "forcefully prevent" the sublimation of instincts or remove the possibility for further pedagogical influence by destroying the educational atmosphere. Beyond that, sexual enlightenment was a rather negligible factor in the upbringing of the child, he concluded. As with many enthusiastically embraced or passionately combated educational methods, *sexuelle Aufklärung* served to divert attention from the main issues – that is, one's own attitude towards sexuality, the complexes of one's own unconscious, and the total sexual upbringing of the child – and promised "a thousand beneficial consequences for humanity" while "leaving everything just as it is."<sup>128</sup>

The disjuncture between adult and child that obstructed and undermined the work of enlightenment in Bernfeld's essay would form of the fulcrum of yet another critique of *sexuelle Aufklärung* by Erik Homburger (later known, in exile in the United States, as Erik Erikson). An educator at a private experimental school organized in the outskirts of Vienna by Dorothy

---

<sup>127</sup> Bernfeld, "Über sexuelle Aufklärung," 197-8.

<sup>128</sup> Bernfeld, "Über sexuelle Aufklärung," 198-9.

Burlingham and Eva Rosenfeld and an analyst in training at the *WPV* (at the time, undergoing analysis with Anna Freud), Homburger developed his critique of sexual enlightenment in a 1930 lecture titled “Die Zukunft der Aufklärung und die Psychoanalyse.”<sup>129</sup> For Homburger, the enlightenment offered by the adult in response to the child’s queries represented a rationalization of the sex act, one that took no account of the child’s own drives. In its unselfconscious preoccupation (*Voreingenommenheit*), the child placed exclusive emphasis on aspects of sexuality that persisted in adult sexual life but, in the majority of cases, only after having been modified beyond recognition: the adult cannot distinguish “all the subtle imponderables of the oral, anal, sadistic, masochistic aspects of his sexual life,” Homburger wrote, “precisely these, however, are experienced at the different stages of development by the child with such definiteness, indeed with exclusive valuation.” By disavowing the relationship of these drives to adult sexuality, Homburger argued, the educator abandoned the child to a “grandiose existential struggle” with its own impulses.<sup>130</sup>

The relationship Homburger described was thus one marked by mutual incomprehension – not only did adults (as products of a repressive cultural training) know nothing about the child’s particular sexuality, but the child experienced sensations that prevented it from comprehending the sanitized portrayal of sexuality offered by its educators.<sup>131</sup> Echoing Freud’s own writings on children’s sexual theories, Homburger insisted that the child precociously grasped a dimension of adult sexuality that was systematically excluded from its “enlightened” representation. In Freudian

---

<sup>129</sup> Erik Homburger, “Die Zukunft der Aufklärung und die Psychoanalyse,” *ZfpP* 4 (1930): 201-16. Burlingham and Rosenfeld were both intimate friends and colleagues of Anna Freud within the psychoanalytic movement, and their children (along with a few others culled from the psychoanalytic milieu) provided most of the pupils at the small school. On the Burlingham-Rosenfeld school see Günther Bittner and Rolf Göppel, “Die Burlingham-Rosenfeld-Schule – ein Versuch progressiver Schulerziehung im psychoanalytischen Milieu Wiens,” in *Das Kind ist Entdeckt. Erziehungsexperimente im Wien der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Vienna, 2001). On Erikson’s time in Vienna, see Lawrence J. Friedman, *Identity’s Architect: A Biography of Erik H. Erikson* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 59-102.

<sup>130</sup> Homburger, “Die Zukunft der Aufklärung und die Psychoanalyse,” 209.

<sup>131</sup> Homburger, “Die Zukunft der Aufklärung und die Psychoanalyse,” 209.

sexual theory, “normal” adult sexuality (i.e. heterosexual genitality) was a composite of infantile perversions, and thus, the child’s theories, elaborated as they were on the basis of its perverse partial drives, spoke to what could be called the repressed underside of *Aufklärung*.

What chiefly prevented adults, however, from bridging the chasm that separated them from the children they sought to enlighten was the intimate relationship of sexuality and aggression in the drive life of the child (a relationship that likewise persisted into adulthood but usually only in modified, distorted fashion). In addition to overlooking the perverse partial drives that dominated the child’s sexual life, the natural scientific portrayal of sexuality within reformist programs of *Aufklärung* neglected the central place of aggression in the psychic and emotional lives of children and specifically what Homburger termed the “cruel-pitying” dimension of their sexuality. In answering the literal questions posed by the child, enlightening parents and teachers often ignored the deeper, implicit query – yet it was this underlying question that spoke to the child’s deepest concerns. “Quieter still than the question about becoming (*dem Werden*),” Homburger wrote, “was the question, only perceptible to one who interprets (*dem Deutenden*), that sounds from the interior of the child: why the wish and the fear to destroy and the fear and wish to be destroyed? With the gravest questions the child thus remains alone.”<sup>132</sup>

The emphasis Homburger placed on aggression was something of a novelty in this discourse but one that could be traced back to Freud’s own recent thought. In *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* from the previous year, Freud had argued that the concealment from children of “the part which sexuality will play in their lives” was not the only reproach to be leveled against contemporary education. “Its other sin,” he insisted, “is that it does not prepare them for the aggressiveness of which they are destined to become the objects” and thus sends them out into life

---

<sup>132</sup> Homburger, “Die Zukunft der Aufklärung und die Psychoanalyse,” 209, 212.

with a “false psychological orientation” (“as though one were to equip people starting on a Polar expedition with summer clothing and maps of the Italian Lakes”).<sup>133</sup> Through open conversations with the children at the Burlingham-Rosenfeld school, Homburger explored precisely the dimensions of psychic life that *Aufklärung* occluded. The children, he wrote, spoke about aggression (both expressed and merely felt), feelings of guilt, and a need for punishment “in an inner relation that an adult would scarcely have been capable of. They admitted openly that their need for punishment went unsatisfied” in the context of the progressive school – as one child vividly put it, “we are like balls that are loaded with explosives and that find themselves all of a sudden in a vacuum.” By helping the children to see their feelings of rage as “universal facts” rather than as “individual guilt,” Homburger and his fellow educator, Peter Blos (also a future analyst), opened the floodgates for a discussion of the forces that prevented the individual’s integration into the collective and thus continually disrupted the life of the school. In place of an authoritarian principle of social cohesion, there emerged a collective commitment to what Homburger termed a “subordination guided by understanding” (*Unterordnung aus Einsicht*): “In the end,” he wrote, “the children themselves said that the only possible solution was to talk about whatever threatened that understanding as often and as deeply as necessary in order to deprive it of its power.”<sup>134</sup> Social cohesion was to be preserved through the continual implementation of a collective talking cure.

In questions of aggression, guilt feelings, and the need for punishment, Homburger contended, pedagogical measures premised on either suppression or liberation would fail to reach the root of the matter. The same, however, could be said of a notion of *Aufklärung* based strictly on the imparting of information. What Homburger and Blos fashioned in their open-ended

---

<sup>133</sup> Freud, “Das Unbehagen in der Kultur,” *GW* XIV (1929): 494.

<sup>134</sup> Homburger, “Die Zukunft der Aufklärung und die Psychoanalyse,” 214-15.

conversations was a form of enlightenment oriented around the deepening of reflective self-knowledge, what Homburger described as “the healing power of *Von-sich-Wissens*.”<sup>135</sup> At the same time as it shifted the program of enlightenment psychoanalysts envisioned, Homburger’s essay reflected a new conception of what an “education to reality” entailed, one inextricably entwined with the deteriorating social and political situation Freudians confronted. The period in which Homburger wrote – one dominated by the onset of the global economic depression – witnessed the steady intensification of reactionary political currents in the First Republic. While the increasingly authoritarian politics of the ruling Christian Social party emboldened anti-Enlightenment intellectual movements within Austria, the rise of fascism across Europe provided the latter with formidable potential allies and offered a grim harbinger of the direction Austrian politics would take in the coming years. Social Democracy, as numerous historians have argued, was increasingly forced on the defensive by these developments, its optimistic vision appearing ever more detached from the catastrophic reality.<sup>136</sup>

In this context, the discovery that the child resists – that is, rejects and even represses – the adult’s enlightening efforts carried a disconcerting charge. So too did Homburger’s argument that *sexuelle Aufklärung* itself concealed, distorted, and repressed the child’s experience. What these revisionist critiques suggested was that the object at the center of this earnest *Aufklärungsarbeit* required reevaluation – while Social Democrats and their Adlerian allies saw the child as readily available for pedagogical appropriation (and entirely amenable to educational intervention), the same child appeared in psychoanalytic discourse as increasingly strange, in many ways closer and more amenable to their anti-Enlightenment opponents than to their own visions of socialist new people. If initially, it was the child’s longing for authority that posed an obstacle to the

---

<sup>135</sup> Homburger, “Die Zukunft der Aufklärung und die Psychoanalyse,” 216.

<sup>136</sup> Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism* and Wasserman, *Black Vienna*.

enlightening efforts of adults, the problem of aggression that loomed up at the close of the decade posed a more intractable and troubling problem. What resulted from this confrontation was an increasingly chastened notion of *sexuelle Aufklärung* in psychoanalytic thought, one that had shed the emancipatory aspirations of earlier programs. From the late-1920s on, the undercurrent of anxious uncertainty that haunted Freud's *Die Zukunft einer Illusion* would temper the optimism that marked both the initial contributions of Freudians to the discourse of sexual enlightenment and the early years of the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement itself. In the Viennese school of child psychoanalysis that emerged over the coming years – in many respects as the successor to the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement (chapter seven) – managing anxiety and strengthening the defenses essentially displaced the conviction that honesty and openness could liberate the child from pathogenic conflict and prepare the way for its intellectual flourishing.

Having emigrated to London in 1926, Melanie Klein would become the leading theorist of aggression in the psychic life of the developing subject. The emphasis in her 1921 essay on the manner in which psychic life outstrips lived experience and social reality would harden in her thought into a resolute rejection of the importance of educational interventions vis-à-vis the child's instinctual endowment and the constitutive role of fantasy. Viennese Freudians, by contrast, refused to give up on the pedagogical mission that bound them to the “late Enlightenment” intellectual culture of interwar Vienna even as their own politics of enlightenment underwent disillusioning revision.

In the coming years, Viennese Freudians would reaffirm their commitment to empirical science while distancing themselves from political commitments. In essays by Freud and the Viennese analyst Heinz Hartmann on the question of a psychoanalytic *Weltanschauung*, science

figured as a refuge from politicized worldviews.<sup>137</sup> If earlier, a commitment to a politics of reason and to an antimetaphysical, empirical-materialist epistemology had aligned psychoanalysts with Social Democracy, as the political horizons darkened, the same scientific perspective – defined by the aim of “correspondence with reality”<sup>138</sup> – came to undermine their confidence in the social democratic project. In an inversion of the optimism of his 1927 essay, Freud’s contribution to the question of a psychoanalytic worldview emphasized not the malleability – more to the point, educability – but the “untameable character (*Unbändigkeit*) of human nature.”<sup>139</sup> As reality became more bitter and implacable, facing up to it appeared to require abandoning progressive aspirations through a self-reflective stripping away of illusions. The disillusioning critiques that psychoanalysts had directed outwards, now rebounded back on themselves.

Psychoanalytic discourse investigated the shadow-side of progressive hopes amid the late-Enlightenment political culture of interwar Vienna. The “dark enlightenment” Freudians pursued explored how knowledge was intimately bound-up with sexuality and both were haunted by a seemingly incomprehensible aggression. While the Freudian project had been closely linked to broader hopes for an emancipation from religious superstition and the deepening of critical rationality, aspirations for social transformation gave way to a more circumspect individualist orientation. The same disillusioning revision was evident in the psychoanalytic pedagogy movement, where emancipatory, anti-authoritarian currents increasingly yielded to a practical

---

<sup>137</sup> See Sigmund Freud, “Über eine Weltanschauung,” in “Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse,” 170-97 and Heinz Hartmann, “Psychoanalyse und Weltanschauung,” *Psychoanalytische Bewegung* 5 (1933): 416-29. Freud and Hartmann were taking up a question that Bernfeld and the German analyst Carl Müller-Braunschweig had previously devoted essays to. See Bernfeld, “Ist Psychoanalyse eine Weltanschauung,” *ZfpP* 2 (1928): 201-8 and Müller-Braunschweig, “Psychoanalyse und Weltanschauung,” *ZfpP* 4 (1930): 345-55.

<sup>138</sup> Freud, “Neue Folge,” 184.

<sup>139</sup> Freud, “Neue Folge,” 195-97.

focus on fostering the development of robust and supple egos, firmly adapted to reality. Where this reorientation was undertaken most ambitiously was in the work of Anna Freud.

Anxiety, Aggression, and the Defense of the Ego: Anna Freud and the Psychoanalytic Education  
of the Child

*...consider: if an adult neurotic came to your consulting room to ask for treatment, and on closer examination proved as impulsive, as undeveloped intellectually, and as deeply dependent on his environment as are my child patients, you would probably say, 'Freudian analysis is a fine method, but it is not designed for such people.' And you would treat the patient by a mixed method, giving him as much pure analysis as he can stand...*

Anna Freud, *Einführung in der Technik der Kinderanalyse*, 1927

*Why are we all children who need to be held?*

Anna Freud to Eva Rosenfeld, 1931

“What should we conceive of as ‘education’ from the first day of life?” asked Anna Freud in a 1930 lecture. “What is there, indeed, to educate in the tiny animal-like creature, of whose mental processes we have hitherto known so little? Where can an educational effort take hold?”<sup>1</sup> The string of questions with which Anna Freud introduced her discussion of the infantile life of the drives in the second of her four “Lectures on Psychoanalysis to Teachers and Parents” marked the point of departure for an ambitious undertaking. Delivered at the invitation of the municipal *Jugendamt* to nursery educators active in the city’s expansive network of day-care centers for proletarian children, Anna Freud’s lectures aimed to familiarize her audience with the new mode of thinking about education and its challenges that psychoanalysts had fashioned over the

---

<sup>1</sup> Originally published, together with three other lectures, as *Einführung in die Psychoanalyse für Pädagogen: Vier Vorträge* (Stuttgart, 1930), Anna Freud’s lectures have been reprinted under the title “Vier Vorträge über Psychoanalyse für Lehrer und Eltern,” in *Die Schriften der Anna Freud. Bd. I, 1922-1936*, ten volumes (Frankfurt a.M., 1987 [1930]), 79-138, at 96. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Anna Freud’s writings are from *The Writings of Anna Freud*, eight volumes (New York, 1967-1981).

preceding decades.<sup>2</sup> Her lectures functioned as a bridge between the abstruse, often paradoxical, insights offered by psychoanalysis and the practical imperatives confronted by those responsible for the child's upbringing. In the same gesture, however, they also served to connect the tasks of enculturation that dominated the child's life with the therapeutic work of psychoanalysis, her own calling following a roughly four-year analysis – lasting from 1918-1922 – with her father. As “the first step,” in her own words, “to the realization of a psychoanalytic theory of education,” Anna Freud's lectures sought to consolidate the insights accumulated over the preceding years by drawing together and mediating between the different perspectives on enculturation fashioned by psychoanalytic pedagogues.<sup>3</sup>

Yet the implications of the project Anna Freud undertook reached far beyond the field of psychoanalytic pedagogy that her lectures helped define. Together with her contributions to the psychoanalysis of the child and her seminal work on the ego defense mechanisms, her attempt to construct a theory of education on a psychoanalytic foundation was ultimately an attempt to determine the future of psychoanalysis, that is, to stake out the paths along which it would advance rather than merely flesh out a distinct field for its application. At a time when the child had become “the main subject of psychoanalytic research,” as her father had contended in 1925, work with children, whether therapeutic, pedagogical, or both, was fraught with enormous consequence for the profession as a whole.<sup>4</sup> It was a salience that reflected a fundamental shift in psychoanalytic thought, one that lent the figure of the child, like the idea of the masses, a paradigmatic significance

---

<sup>2</sup> The formal invitation to deliver the lectures came jointly, according to Young-Bruehl, from Hugo Breitner, the municipal councilor for fiscal policy, and Anton Tesarek, an educational theorist and leader of the Social Democratic youth organization, *Die Rote Falken*. See Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 197-98.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Ilse Grubrich-Simitis, “Innenwelt des Kindes. Eine Skizze von Anna Freuds Lebenswerk,” in *Die Schriften der Anna Freud*, xix-xxxii, at xxii.

<sup>4</sup> Freud, “Geleitwort,” 565. The year before Freud made this statement, Karl Abraham would reportedly declare to Melanie Klein, in the wake of the latter's presentation to the 1924 congress of the IPA, that the future of psychoanalysis rested with child analysis. See Phyllis Grosskurth, *Melanie Klein: Her Work and Her World* (New York, 1986), 118.

over the interwar years. In its combination of vulnerability and dependence, the child seemed to metonymically represent the position of the subject *tout court* in “the fatherless society” that emerged in the wake of the war. Following the violence and upheaval of the preceding years, a profound sense of defenselessness and exposure haunted Sigmund Freud’s thought, shadowing both the metapsychological revisions he undertook between 1919 and 1926 and his increasing forays into the study of culture and society. In the absence of civilization (*Kultur*), Freud *père* wrote in 1927, nature would destroy us, “coldly, cruelly, relentlessly” – “Experience teaches us,” he noted five years later, “that the world is no nursery (*keine Kinderstube*).”<sup>5</sup>

Nature, by which Sigmund Freud understood the elemental forces that civilization had failed to subdue, took on a far harsher cast in his thought between the wars.<sup>6</sup> As it did so, the child, that tiny, vulnerable creature that stood “helpless and powerless in its environment,” seemed to speak to an existential condition that embraced everyone regardless of social standing or cultural development.<sup>7</sup> If classical analytic therapy privileged the idea of a mature, autonomous individual, a product of *Kultur* and its manifold discomforts, in the interwar period, as previous chapters have argued, this idea appeared ever more transparently ideological and divorced from social reality. The persistence of childhood conflicts into adulthood that psychoanalysis, from its inception, had emphasized, increasingly gave way to a more ineluctable continuity. Amid the intrusive, potentially overwhelming violence of the era inaugurated by war and revolution, a new question emerged to unsettle the problems and paradigms that structured classical psychoanalysis – as Anna

---

<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” 336 and Freud, “Neue Folge der Vorlesungen,” 181.

<sup>6</sup> In this it was consistent with Freud’s conception of reality as a whole, which as Joel Whitebook has noted, he tended to identify as “harsh reality” following the war. Whitebook, *Freud*, 297.

<sup>7</sup> Freud, “Nicht wahr, das kleine Lebewesen ist ein recht armseliges, ohnmächtiges Ding gegen die übergewaltige Außenwelt, die voll ist von zerstörenden Einwirkungen.” “Die Frage der Laienanalyse,” 229.

Freud put it to her friend and collaborator, Eva Rosenfeld, “why are we all children who need to be held.”<sup>8</sup>

Yet the nature that loomed up from without also lurked within the individual – the “overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction” that “rage against us” in the external world, were shadowed by a “bit of unconquerable nature” within, one that Freud termed the id (*das Es*).<sup>9</sup> If this rendered uncertain and tenuous the barriers between within and without, those between nature and culture were equally labile in Freudian thought. Just as civilizational development often appeared to Freud less to control and mitigate than to condense and intensify the violence he equated with nature (see chapter four), the untamed natural forces within seemed intimately tied to the psychological representative of ethical prohibitions Freud termed the super-ego (*Überich*).<sup>10</sup> The elemental drives he identified with nature thus occupied an ambiguous place in Freud’s thought: while on the one hand, they seemed to move fluidly across the barriers erected to control and channel them, to interpenetrate with and bleed into culture, on the other, they seemed to point to something beyond culture entirely, a primitive threat at the margins of encultured subjectivity. At times, this threat would appear in the guise of overwhelming quantities of stimuli intruding on the vulnerable psyche, at others, as a death drive working silently within the organism towards its own dissolution, but the danger was clearly of a different order than the conflicts between libido and the moral and aesthetic principles that constrained and repressed it that had dominated Freud’s prewar thought.

---

<sup>8</sup> Anna Freud to Eva Rosenfeld, 27 August 1931, in *Anna Freud’s Letters to Eva Rosenfeld*, ed. Peter Heller, trans. Mary Wegand (Madison, CT, 1992), 169.

<sup>9</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Das Unbehagen in der Kultur,” 434 and 445 (second translation modified).

<sup>10</sup> In addition to being the precipitate of abandoned love objects and the representative of the individual’s highest ideals, the superego was the locus of both internalized aggression and what Freud described as “primary masochism,” a state in which the death instinct (fused with libido) has not been projected onto objects but rather works towards the destruction of the organism itself. The intimate relationship between the id and the superego was explored perhaps most intensively in Franz Alexander’s 1927 study *Psychoanalyse der Gesamtpersönlichkeit*, a seminal exposition of the dynamic relationship of the mental agencies in the genesis of neurotic suffering.

In various manifestations, interwar psychoanalysis was troubled by what lay beyond the classical theory of the neuroses. “Education appears to us in a very different light when viewed not from the aspect of neurotic inhibition, but, for example, from the aspect of delinquency,” Anna Freud contended in her 1930 lecture. “No one offered the love which would in some way have compensated the child for giving up the gratifications obtained from her own body.”<sup>11</sup> The consequence was a sort of short-circuiting of development in which the fraught dialectic between desire and prohibition, reality and pleasure that characterized enculturation had tragically never begun. Years later, reflecting on her experiences observing patients in a psychiatric ward in the early 1920s, Anna Freud would write, “you understand the neuroses entirely differently when you consider them against the background of the psychoses.”<sup>12</sup> In both cases, the unremitting harshness of reality prevented the child from being drawn into civilization and thus from experiencing the “normal” discontents of encultured subjectivity. In place of the “good bourgeois symptoms” of classical neurotics, a more troubling set of disorders emerged within psychoanalytic thought, ones in which the brutality of the child’s upbringing generated a hostility towards social norms that went untempered by stable libidinal attachments.<sup>13</sup>

The new perspective opened up by this confrontation with forms of suffering beyond the classical norm was one that would compete, in Anna Freud’s work, with her commitment to upholding and preserving what she saw as the key components of her father’s thought. Often criticized for her perceived ultra-orthodoxy, Anna Freud’s project was in reality an attempt to straddle these divergent commitments, to reconcile conflicting imperatives without collapsing the one into the other. It was, as Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg has argued, a form of “impious fidelity,”

---

<sup>11</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge,” 130-31.

<sup>12</sup> Anna Freud to Eva Landauer, 15 March 1946, quoted in Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 122.

<sup>13</sup> The description of the symptomatologies characteristic of hysteria and obsessional neurosis as “good bourgeois symptoms” is from Wilhelm Reich, *Der triebhafte Charakter*, 16 (see chapter three).

which, like so many currents of interwar Viennese psychoanalysis, sought to push beyond the limits of established orthodoxies in order to preserve their crucial tenets.<sup>14</sup> The Oedipus complex would thus remain for Anna Freud the essential matrix for the genesis of neurotic suffering, but the neuroses themselves and the very form of subjectivity from which they emerged no longer furnished the stable foundation for psychoanalytic thought. Beyond the Oedipus complex and the matrix of the more-or-less stable nuclear family loomed threats of a different order that required a reorientation of analytic thought and practice.

The project Anna Freud developed, however, was not the only attempt to chart a new course for psychoanalysis over these years – the Freudian revision that had opened the space for such departures was far too complex to be wholly assimilated to any single undertaking. Her work thus developed within an intellectual field riven between rival theories and methods, each of which asserted its claim to being the legitimate successor to Sigmund Freud’s revolutionary discoveries. While all of these alternatives pushed beyond classical psychoanalytic theory and practice, Anna Freud’s project was distinctive for the manner in which it sought to bridge the classical and post-classical. Unlike other revisers – Otto Rank, Wilhelm Reich, and Melanie Klein, for instance – whose departures sought to fashion a single theoretical vantage from which psychical disorders could be understood, Anna Freud self-reflexively mediated between competing perspectives. The paradox of this position was that it would seem to bring Anna Freud’s thought perilously close to the borders of psychoanalysis at the very moment it laid itself open to charges of slavish devotion to classical orthodoxy.

For Anna Freud, the range of threats confronting the subject trained attention on the ego, that is, on the psychical agency responsible for upholding the fragile boundaries between within

---

<sup>14</sup> On the concept of “impious fidelity” see Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity*.

and without and for mediating between the demands of the id, the injunctions of the superego, and the requirements of external reality. Just as her father had aligned analytic therapy with the ego's capacity for resistance at the close of the war (chapter two), Anna Freud would position the ego's defenses at the center of psychoanalytic theory and practice. Formerly obstacles to be overcome, the defenses (or resistances) were now agencies to be strengthened, albeit not by being blindly reinforced but by being made more supple, flexible, and adaptive. The shift in perspective this yielded was tied to a generational succession and a transfer of authority within the Viennese Psychoanalytic Association – as one member privately remarked, “There [Sigmund] Freud had been sitting and taught us the *drives*, and now Anna sits there and teaches us the *defenses*.”<sup>15</sup> Anna Freud's position, both literally in the chair her father had once occupied and figuratively as his representative within the Association, marked a new course for psychoanalysis.

In tracing this new course, this chapter ultimately charts the reconstruction of a liberal politics of psychoanalysis through the work of Anna Freud and her fellow Viennese ego-psychologists. For Anna Freud, this entailed charting a course between extremes, but also of rethinking psychoanalytic practice in light of recent experiences. Unlike classical psychoanalysis, this new approach to analytic therapy was centered on the figure of the vulnerable child, but equally, it was circumspect and modest – the disabused successor of the radical visions and bold experiments of the postwar years. Coinciding as it did with the destruction of Red Vienna and the rise of fascism in central Europe, this reorientation of psychoanalytic thought and practice furnished a new foundation for psychoanalytic thought and practice in a far darker time.

### The Psychoanalysis of the Child

---

<sup>15</sup> The statement was made by Eduard Hitschmann. Quoted in Sterba, *Reminiscences*, 130. See also Sterba's recollection, “It was always impressive when she said: ‘Mein Vater hat gesagt...’,” 103.

Four years before her 1930 presentations to the nursery educators of the municipality, Anna Freud delivered a series of lectures on the subject of child analysis at the training institute of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society. If the context was more intimate, the book that Freud assembled from her lecture notes – *Einführung in der Technik der Kinderanalyse* (1927) – was directed at a rapidly expanding audience and intended as an intervention into a broader controversy that had taken shape over the preceding years.<sup>16</sup> This controversy was one that pitted the circle of psychoanalytic pedagogues that emerged around Anna Freud (see chapter five) against the child analyst Melanie Klein and her supporters in Berlin and London. Klein’s approach, in contrast to the more pedagogically-oriented Viennese, was one that stressed deep, more-or-less immediate interpretation of the symbolic manifestations of the child’s unconscious as the main – indeed exclusive – vehicle of therapeutic cure. While enjoying the firm support of Karl Abraham and attracting a growing circle of adherents, Klein’s procedure was confronted with skepticism – in some cases with outright derision – from the majority of her colleagues in Berlin. When she traveled to Vienna in late-1924 to present her ideas, the lines of dispute had hardened to the point that a similarly critical reception could easily be anticipated. As a British supporter, Alix Strachey – later instrumental in bringing Klein to London following Abraham’s death in 1925 – wrote to her husband, “it is to be expected that she will be opposed by Bernfeld and Aichhorn, those hopeless pedagogues, and, I fear, by Anna Freud, that open or secret sentimentalist.”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, in the pedagogical reading circle that Freud had organized with Bernfeld, Aichhorn, and Hoffer over the preceding years, the inadequacy of Klein’s psychological theory and therapeutic technique was

---

<sup>16</sup> Like her 1930 *Einführung in die Psychoanalyse für Pädagogen*, Anna Freud’s 1926 lectures appear in her collected writings under an alternative title, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” in *Die Schriften der Anna Freud. Bd. I*, 11-75.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Grosskurth, *Melanie Klein*, 124. No records of the ensuing discussion survive, but the reception was undoubtably a highly critical one.

a recurring theme. When Freud's *Introduction to the Technique of Child Analysis* appeared in published form in 1927, the confrontation that had been simmering beneath the surface finally burst out into the open. A book with a clear didactic function, as Elizabeth Young-Bruehl has observed, Anna Freud's lectures served to advertise the kind of child analysis practiced in Vienna through clarifying its differences from the procedure developed by Klein and her supporters.<sup>18</sup>

Child psychoanalysis was still in its infancy in the mid-1920s. While the first forays in this direction were made by Freud himself in his 1909 "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy," it was the work of the Viennese analyst Hermine von Hug-Hellmuth after 1912 that established child analysis as a distinct field with a clearly articulated set of principles and procedures grounded in a growing body of clinical experience.<sup>19</sup> For Hug-Hellmuth, the psychoanalysis of the child was a fundamentally different undertaking from that of adult neurotics. While both procedures aimed to reestablish mental health and psychological equilibrium, the task of the physician working with adult neurotics was fulfilled the moment recovery had taken place, regardless of the course the patient subsequently pursued in relation to the external world.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, the analysis of the child for Hug-Hellmuth was therapeutic and pedagogical in equal measure: liberating the child from its suffering was an insufficient conception of the child analyst's task, she contended, "she must also impart moral, aesthetic, and social values to the child." Given that the object of its activity was still in the midst of its development, the child analyst had to provide the "educational

---

<sup>18</sup> Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 165.

<sup>19</sup> Hug-Hellmuth published prolifically between 1912 and her death in 1924 (including ten articles and a monograph in 1913 alone). Emerging at the time of the major splits in the prewar movement, her work bore the impress of those early conflicts, specifically through its principle concern with tracing the developmental dynamics of the libido, the contested concept at the heart of prewar controversies. After the war, however, a distinct shift in her thought is evident, one reflective of the "active" therapeutic techniques fashioned over these years, but the structural model of the mind and the problems around which it was developed would never occupy the central role in her thought that it would in Anna Freud's and Melanie Klein's.

<sup>20</sup> Hermine Hug-Hellmuth, "Zur Technik der Kinderanalyse," *IZfP* 7 (1921): 179-97, at 179. Such a position was, of course, an echo of the classical position outlined in Freud's *Introductory Lectures*. On this subject, see chapter two.

guidance” (*Führung*) through which the child could become a person “conscious of aims and endowed with will” – “the therapeutic-pedagogical analyst (*heilpädagogische Analytiker*) must never forget that, above all, child analysis is always character analysis, education,” she averred.<sup>21</sup>

The peculiarities of the child’s mind and its particular relationship to the environment required a different analytic technique. Rather than falling ill from past occurrences, the child stood in the midst of the circumstances responsible for its illness, Hug-Hellmuth noted. Yet not only did the child not come to analysis on its own initiative, but it furthermore had little interest in altering itself or abandoning its attitude towards the environment – “its narcissism,” Hug-Hellmuth contended, “does not allow [the child] to relinquish its ‘naughtiness’.”<sup>22</sup> The technique that Hug-Hellmuth fashioned to accommodate these deviations from the classical analytic relationship was characterized by a peculiar combination of boldness and circumspection. In a cautionary vein, she argued that the child analyst had to avoid both intimidating the child through a “too violent boring” into its emotional and cognitive world and placing too great a strain on its powers of comprehension, which could “confuse” rather than “liberate” it.<sup>23</sup> While she warned against penetrating too deeply too quickly into the child’s psychic life, Hug-Hellmuth was less restrained when it came to wielding educational authority in the treatment of children. The child analyst in her vision was as much a counsellor as a therapist. While the pedagogical ethos she adopted was exceedingly liberal – aspiring as it did to avoid in so far as possible any “direct prohibitions” – the authority she assumed was thus one that reached into every corner of the child’s life.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Hug-Hellmuth, “Zur Technik der Kinderanalyse,” 179. See also Hermine von Hug-Hellmuth, “Kinderpsychologie, Pädagogik,” *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschung* 6 (1914): 393-404.

<sup>22</sup> Hug-Hellmuth, “Zur Technik der Kinderanalyse,” 179-80.

<sup>23</sup> Hug-Hellmuth, “Zur Technik der Kinderanalyse,” 181.

<sup>24</sup> Hug-Hellmuth, “Zur Technik der Kinderanalyse,” 190.

Anna Freud would later insist that she went her own way in developing her analytic procedure with children without seeking to be taught by her predecessor.<sup>25</sup> Yet the technical guidelines she elaborated in her 1926 lectures bore marked similarities to those of Hug-Hellmuth, whose premature death in 1924 left the way open for Freud to stake her claim to priority in the nascent field.<sup>26</sup> Where their approaches differed was perhaps above all in the degree of systematic rigor with which they were elaborated. Unlike Hug-Hellmuth whose thought was formed primarily through controversies with external enemies – with critics outside the psychoanalytic movement who denied infantile sexuality and decried the corruption of childish innocence they saw her technique as producing – Anna Freud’s was a product of the postwar revision of psychoanalytic thought and practice, a moment that witnessed the opening of a wider field of contestation about what could properly be called psychoanalysis. Facing a much more intimate antagonist in Melanie Klein, Freud had need of clarity and consistency in her presentation. While Hug-Hellmuth approached her task as a warrior for the cause eager to extend the borders of psychoanalysis, Freud’s thought revolved primarily around a set of tensions internal to an

---

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Anna Freud to Angela Graf-Nold, 4 December 1979, quoted in Claudine and Pierre Geissmann, *A History of Child Psychoanalysis* (London, 1998 [1992]), 70. See also Anna Freud, “A Short History of Child Analysis,” *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 21 (1966), 7-14, at 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> Despite being, by all accounts, a modest, retiring person, Hug-Hellmuth was at the center of a number of remarkable scandals in the early Freudian movement. It was her prewar work (especially, *Aus dem Seelenleben des Kindes. Eines psychoanalytische Studie* from 1913) that served as the chief target of an anti-Freudian jeremiad written by Wilhelm and Clara Stern in 1914, while a later book, *Die Tagebuch eines halbwüchsigen Mädchens* (1919), that she claimed to have compiled from discovered letters, generated controversy when it was alleged to have been written by Hug-Hellmuth herself. Overshadowing both of these scandals, however, was Hug-Hellmuth’s death at the hands of her own nephew who strangled her during a home invasion (most likely out of panic at having been surprised). While Hug-Hellmuth never formally treated her nephew, she was intimately involved in his upbringing and culled observations of his developing psychosexual and emotional life as examples in her works. Her nephew would later claim to have been a victim of psychoanalytic upbringing and, after his release from prison, even went so far as to demand reparations from Paul Federn (then president of the *WPIV*) for the abuses he believed he had been subjected to. Amid the scandal that followed her death, Alfred Adler would pen an editorial that laid the blame for the tragedy at the doorstep of psychoanalysis and the supposedly pessimistic conception of human nature that it propagated. See Adler, “Unerziehbarkeit des Kindes oder Unbelehrbarkeit der Theorie,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 5 March 1925, 6. On Hug-Hellmuth’s life and career see Angela Graf-Nold, *Der Fall Hermine Hug-Hellmuth* (Munich, 1988), George MacLean and Ulrich Rappen, *Hermine Hug-Hellmuth: Her Life and Work* (New York, 1991), and Geissmann and Geissmann, *A History of Child Psychoanalysis*, 40-71.

expanding and fissuring field of psychoanalytic thought and practice. The alterations of classical practice that both Hug-Hellmuth and Freud deemed necessary for the treatment of children pointed, in the latter's thought, to an underlying set of contradictions exposed by the postwar revisions of psychoanalytic thought and practice. The task of drawing out and reflecting on these contradictions, for Anna Freud, was inseparable from the work of extension and modification.

At the outset of her second lecture, Freud noted that the account she offered in the preceding talk must have left an odd impression upon practicing analysts – “the procedures I presented to you contradict at too many points the rules of psychoanalytic technique.”<sup>27</sup> Inspired by Aichhorn's innovative approach to the treatment of youth delinquency (described in the preceding lecture), Freud devised an experimental technique that deployed a host of unorthodox stratagems to create what she saw as the optimal conditions for treatment, from offering an unequivocal promise of cure in one case to embarking on a secret struggle against the child's home environment in another. Most reflective of Aichhorn's influence, however, was her use of “devious methods” to win the child's confidence (*sich in ein Vertrauen einzuschleichen*) and to conceal the educational intentions that would have aroused the child's mistrust – her task, in this preparatory phase of the treatment, was paradoxically to force herself on a child “who felt that he could do very well without me.” “Where in all this is the delicate restraint prescribed for the analyst,” Freud queried, “the caution with which one holds out to the patient an uncertain prospect of the possibility of cure, or even of amelioration; the scrupulous discretion in all personal matters...and the full freedom which one gives the patient to break off the treatment at any moment.”<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 27.

<sup>28</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 18, 27-8.

Rather than offering a direct answer to her question, Freud adopted a different perspective – “in order to suit a new situation, I merely extended certain elements of an attitude that you all show to your patients.” Whether this meant shoring-up the resolution and confidence of the patient in the first hours of treatment, confronting her healthy skepticism towards the person of the physician, or taking her side in conflicts with her family, analysts frequently overstepped the bounds of authority prescribed by classical analytic procedure. The technique of adult analysis, she clarified, contains “*vestiges* of all the procedures which prove necessary with children,” while the extent to which these are used depends “upon the degree to which the adult patient with whom we are dealing is still an immature and dependent being and in this respect is closer to a child.”<sup>29</sup> While adult analysis derives its technique from the fact that the patient is (“at least to a considerable degree”) a “mature and independent being,” the child lacks both such qualities. Indeed, its relative immaturity and dependence deprived the situation of everything that appeared “indispensable” in the case of the adult, from “insight into illness,” to the “voluntary decision” to undertake analysis, to the very “wish to be cured” – not only was the child often unaware of any disturbance in itself but it was frequently the case that only the environment suffered from its disorder.<sup>30</sup> In the absence of such factors, the motivation to undertake and sustain analysis was likewise absent in the child and thus had to be created through the artifice of the analyst herself.

The challenges presented by the analytic therapy of the child extended beyond these considerations, however. Even presuming the analyst succeeded, through various preparatory measures, in converting the child into a suitable patient for analytic therapy, one equipped with confidence in the analyst, a degree of insight into its disorder, and the resolution to strive for a

---

<sup>29</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 28, 30.

<sup>30</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 12, 14.

change of state, the child analyst was confronted with a difficulty even more far reaching in the child's refusal to free associate.<sup>31</sup> The inapplicability to children of the very method on which analytic technique is founded, Freud noted, had led "everyone concerned with the question of child analysis" to search for an alternative. For Klein, this substitute was to be found in the observation of the child's play activities. By situating the child in a room full of easily manipulable objects (creating "a world in miniature"), the technique Klein developed allowed the child to carry out actions that were often banned by the real world and confined to fantasy, and in the process, it enabled the analyst to become familiar with the child's emotional reactions and its attitudes towards the significant others in its life.<sup>32</sup>

While Klein's technique thus provided an indispensable method for observation in Anna Freud's view, she overstepped the mark by assuming that the child's actions were equivalent to free associations.<sup>33</sup> For Klein, the child's play activities served to directly materialize unconscious fantasies through symbolically significant actions. The task of the analyst was thus to uncover the symbolic content underlying each single motive in the child's play, that is, to assiduously interpret the sexual and aggressive significance of all of the child's actions in analysis. Skeptical of both the advisability of such a procedure and the assumptions informing it, Freud suggested that the activities Klein interpreted symbolically might often admit of harmless explanations. Where Klein insisted that a boy who caused toy wagons to collide was symbolically reenacting an observed scene of parental intercourse, Freud contended that such actions could very well reflect the influence of more quotidian observations and experiences rather than the immediate force of unconscious fantasies. Even in the analysis of adults "we do not feel justified in ascribing symbolic

---

<sup>31</sup> Freud, "Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse," 30, 39.

<sup>32</sup> Freud, "Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse," 42 (translation modified).

<sup>33</sup> Freud, "Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse," 43-4.

significance to every one of their acts or ideas, but do so only to those that arise under the influence of the analytic situation which he has accepted.”<sup>34</sup>

It was the analytic situation itself, however, that was in dispute – was the child at play far more under the dominance of its unconscious than the adult patient, as the Kleinians suggested, or did the main distinction between adult and child analysis consist in the child’s greater subjection to external forces. Where these questions converged was around the issue of the role of the transference in the analytic treatment of the child. For Freud, Klein’s insistence that the child’s affective reactions towards the analyst could be understood as analogous to the transference neuroses of adult patients elided a more complex reality. If the child expressed hostility towards the analyst at the outset of treatment, such a response did not necessarily indicate an ambivalent attitude towards the mother, as Klein averred, but likely indeed the opposite, Freud argued, since the more tenderly a child is attached to its caretaker, the fewer friendly impulses it has towards strangers.<sup>35</sup> In their interactions with the analyst, the child expresses a “multitude of reactions” taken over from its relationship to its parents, “but it forms no transference neurosis,” Freud wrote.

Unlike the adult, the child is not ready to produce a new edition of his love relationships, because, as one might say, the old edition is not yet exhausted (*vergriffen*). His original objects, the parents, are still real and present as love objects – not only in fantasy as with the adult neurotic; between them and the child exist all the relations of everyday life...<sup>36</sup>

Where the Kleinian child enacted fantasies reflecting a complex inner world that was always already structured by parental imagos, the psyche of the Anna Freudian child never attained the same degree of autonomy from real familial relationships.<sup>37</sup> If the psychic always outstripped the social in Kleinian theory, the social (and, in the first instance, the familial) remained, where Anna

---

<sup>34</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 45.

<sup>35</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 50-3.

<sup>36</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 50-1.

<sup>37</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 60.

Freud was concerned, an ever-active force within the developing psychical organization of the child.

Like the neurotic suffering of adults, the child's neurosis is an "internal affair," Anna Freud explained, one that emerges from the conflicts between the mental agencies that organize its developing psyche. Unlike adult neuroses, however, "the outer world penetrates deeply into the child's inner situation" at decisive points in both the etiology and the treatment of neurotic disorders.<sup>38</sup> The psychoanalysis of the child was thus never an "entirely private" undertaking, "played out exclusively between two persons," but rather one that always unfolded on a social stage through the interactions between the analyst, the child, and the parents. The authority of parents to intervene in the analytic therapy of their children was mirrored by the open, unfinished quality of the child's psyche in which external authority retained an active, formative role. As Freud explained, the child's detachment from its first love objects "still lies in the future," and thus, the gradual, piecemeal process of identification through which the child paradoxically seals its autonomy from its parents by incorporating their attributes was still far from completion.<sup>39</sup> Both the precipitate of this process of identification and the agency responsible for securing the subject's adaptation to social demands, the superego remained weak and fragmentary in the child and fundamentally dependent on the external authority of the parents. Left alone and deprived of external support in its struggle to regulate its instincts, "the child can take only a single, short, and convenient path" – namely that leading to "direct gratification" of its perverse drives.<sup>40</sup>

Freud's conception of the intimate relationship between the child's psyche and its social circumstances underpinned her particular understanding of the child analyst's responsibilities. As

---

<sup>38</sup> Freud, "Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse," 60.

<sup>39</sup> Freud, "Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse," 64, 61.

<sup>40</sup> Freud, "Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse," 66.

an intervention into an uncompleted process of development, child analysis always entailed education, for Freud. In contrast to the classical technique prescribed for adult neurotics, the child analyst had to be much more than a blank page, a screen onto which the patient could project his or her transferences. The “educational implications” involved in child analysis “result in the child knowing very well just what seems desirable or undesirable to the analyst,” Freud explained, and “such a well-defined and in many respects novel person is unfortunately a poor transference object.”<sup>41</sup> An even greater difficulty stemmed from the tension between the analysis and education: while it was the task of the analyst to liberate the patient from unconscious compulsions by overcoming resistances, education was tasked with regulating and controlling instinctual impulses. The two undertakings were thus strictly opposed, with the one seeking to bind what the other set free. Each, however, was essential to the treatment of children’s neuroses which, Freud explained, involved the undoing of “a piece of wrong education and abnormal development.” As she illustrated in the case of a child who oscillated, over the course of her treatment, between a severe obsessional neurosis and the uninhibited acting-out of perverse impulses, child analysis required tacking between analytic permissiveness and educational prohibitions. The child’s inability to control the instincts set free by analysis necessitated that “the analyst take charge and guide them,” Freud explained. Accordingly, the analyst combines in his own person two difficult and “diametrically opposed” functions: “he has to analyze and educate, that is to say, in the same breath he must allow and forbid, loosen and bind again.”<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 52-3. In a striking analogy, Freud described this process as one in which an image was projected onto a screen already bearing another picture – “the more elaborate and brightly colored it [the real object] is, the more will it tend to efface the outlines of what is superimposed,” preventing, in this case, any attempt to distinguish the transference from the “real” relationship.

<sup>42</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 71-2.

If “in favorable cases” of adult analysis the analyst need not concern herself with the “fate of the impulses which have emerged from the unconscious,” the question that troubled Freud was “who bears this responsibility in a child’s analysis?” The logically consistent answer was that responsibility rested with those charged with the child’s upbringing, yet here Freud noted serious reservations. After all, the parents and guardians now called to help in the child’s recovery were the same whose excessive demands drove the child into neurosis – “their outlook in most cases has not been changed,” Freud noted.<sup>43</sup> The unreconstructed attitude of the child’s primary educators and the dependence of the child itself required the analyst to assume a far-reaching authority and, indeed, to displace the child’s parents – the analyst, she wrote, “must claim for himself the authority to guide the child...in order to secure, to some extent, the achievements of analysis.” The child, Freud argued, had to feel that the analyst represented an authority even greater than the parents. In an echo of the postclassical techniques developed over the preceding years, Freud contended that only by “putting himself in the place of the child’s ego ideal” (a term she used interchangeably with super-ego) would the analyst be able to ensure that analysis did not merely “become the child’s charter for all the ill conduct prohibited by society”<sup>44</sup>

“It is evident that to deal with such different characters the method cannot remain the same,” Freud wrote.<sup>45</sup> Like Hug-Hellmuth, Freud’s conception of the psychic make-up and social circumstances of the child necessitated an approach to its treatment that diverged markedly from classical technique. While both analysts aligned their therapeutic procedures with education, Freud’s method reflected a far deeper awareness of the tensions and contradictions that this entailed. By assuming an educational authority, the child analyst was transgressing the

---

<sup>43</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 65.

<sup>44</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 66-7.

<sup>45</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse,” 12.

fundamental strictures of analytic practice and overstepping the very bounds that defined classical psychoanalysis. To a far greater extent than Hug-Hellmuth's analytic technique, Freud's work thus emerged from and situated itself within the crisis of authority – the state of exception – that marked the politics of analytic practice in the postwar years.

Hug-Hellmuth's work belonged to an earlier era in another respect as well. As Elizabeth Young-Bruehl has noted, the field of child analysis matured as Sigmund Freud was formulating his new structural theory of the mind.<sup>46</sup> While Hug-Hellmuth's method focused on tracking the permutations of sexuality both Anna Freud's and Klein's approaches emerged on a different theoretical terrain.<sup>47</sup> Taking the structural model of the psyche as her point of departure, Freud focused on renegotiating the relationships between the different mental agencies – at the heart of her work, both in her 1926 lectures and increasingly over the following decade, was the figure of a vulnerable ego compelled to reconcile divergent impulses and manage a range of threats to its tenuous authority. Yet as the controversy with Klein and her supporters would show, a common model of the organization of the psychical apparatus did little to mitigate theoretical and practical misunderstandings. To a large extent, it merely provided a shared language in which to articulate disagreements.

In response to Anna Freud's critique of the procedure she had developed over the preceding years, Klein and her supporters in London organized a symposium on child analysis in May of 1927. Seizing the opportunity to defend her method before her new colleagues in the British

---

<sup>46</sup> Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 161.

<sup>47</sup> In this respect, her technique was characteristic of an older generation of analysts who “had been educated to become libido hunters and detectives,” as Richard Sterba has written. Indeed, in his description of her technique, Hoffer writes, “From personal experience I can say that Hug-Hellmuth spent most of her effort in finding out secrets that the child had intentionally withheld from educators – and thus she opened the door to the child's fantasy life.” See Sterba, *Reminiscences*, 75 and Willie Hoffer, “Psychoanalytic Education,” *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 1 (1945): 293-307, 296.

Psychoanalytic Society, her adoptive home since September of the preceding year, Klein sought to systematically dismantle the assumptions underlying Freud's technique. Repeatedly in her address to the symposium, Klein pointed to Freud's departure from the rules of analytic technique. For Klein, the admixture of the analytic and pedagogical in Freud's procedure represented a fatal deviation from psychoanalysis. "All the means which we should regard as incorrect in the analysis of adults," she wrote, "are specially stressed by Anna Freud as valuable in analyzing children."<sup>48</sup> In particular, Freud's attempt to cultivate a positive transference in the child – an affectionate attachment to the analyst-educator that she distinguished from a full-blown transference neurosis – struck Klein as a "grave error." While in Freud's view such a bond was a precondition for effective therapeutic work with children – work that she identified with the *erzieherisch* aim of adaptation to social reality and cultural demands – for Klein it represented an attempt to render the child submissive by exploiting its anxiety "or otherwise to intimidate him or win him over by means of authority."<sup>49</sup> In place of such a procedure, Klein emphasized the alleviation of the child's anxiety through interpretation.<sup>50</sup> Only by gaining access to the child's unconscious and disclosing its contents through symbolic interpretation could analysis enable the child to recognize the incongruity between its guilt-ridden, anxiety-inducing fantasies and an external reality that for Klein was invariably far less terrifying than its inner world.

Anna Freud's failure, in Klein's view, was thus that her technique prevented her from accessing the deeper layers of the child's unconscious. In its emphasis on the cultivation of a positive bond to the analyst-educator, Freud's method effectively foreclosed the possibility of analyzing the aggression and hostility it directed towards the analyst – its negative transferences,

---

<sup>48</sup> Melanie Klein, "Symposium on Child Analysis," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 8 (1927): 339-70, at 343.

<sup>49</sup> Klein, "Symposium on Child Analysis," 343.

<sup>50</sup> Klein, "Symposium on Child Analysis," 349.

which like their libidinal counterparts reflected the child's prototypical attachments to its parents.<sup>51</sup> Even more fatal, was that by assuming the responsibilities of the child's ego ideal, Freud's method converted her into a representative of the very repressing agency that blocked the path of instinctual impulses to consciousness and, by extension, the progress of analysis itself. At base, Klein contended, Freud's substitution of education for analysis reflected a deeper unwillingness to analyze "completely and without reservation" the child's ambivalent attachments to its parents and thus its Oedipus complex.<sup>52</sup>

While both Klein and Freud saw an adaptation to reality of sorts as the aim of their technique, their different conceptions of the proper method of child analysis reflected two radically different understandings of the child's psychic development and its relationship to external reality. Freud's deviations from analytic technique, Klein argued, stemmed from her belief that children were markedly "different beings from adults."<sup>53</sup> By contrast, her own method, which she viewed as "a perfect analogy to the technique of adult analysis," reflected a view of childhood less as an uncompleted or deficient stage of development than as one marked by a fundamental excess – a quality of too much too soon.<sup>54</sup> While the (Anna) Freudian child struggled to come to terms both with demands imposed upon it from outside and the psychic conflicts these demands gave rise to, the Kleinian child was forced to grapple, above all, with its own destructive impulses. In place of a progressive growing into social life, Klein thus posited a conception of development premised on the working-through of a primary negativity.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Klein, "Symposium on Child Analysis," 354.

<sup>52</sup> Klein, "Symposium on Child Analysis," 370.

<sup>53</sup> Klein, "Symposium on Child Analysis," 343.

<sup>54</sup> Klein, "Symposium on Child Analysis," 350.

<sup>55</sup> Negativity in the Kleinian conception of the child is the subject of a wonderful essay by Jacqueline Rose, "Negativity in the Work of Melanie Klein," in *Why War?: Psychoanalysis, Politics and the Return to Melanie Klein* (Oxford, 1993), 137-190.

Where this disjuncture emerged most starkly was in Freud and Klein's disagreement about the origin and function of the superego. For Freud, following the standard theory developed by her father, the essential stage in the development of the superego was the period of psychosexual latency that followed the resolution of the Oedipus complex – only with the identifications that marked its passing did the superego attain a relative degree of autonomy from the external objects in the child's life.<sup>56</sup> By contrast, for Klein, it was not the renunciations that followed the classical, phallic iteration of the Oedipal phase but rather the frustrations and deprivations experienced at weaning that were the decisive factor in the construction of the child's superego – later developments, she wrote, merely added a “super-structure on a substratum which has assumed a fixed form and persists unchanged” from the earliest years of the child's life.<sup>57</sup> Anna Freud's contention that the undeveloped state of the child's ego-ideal left it dependent on external, educational authority was thus radically inverted in Klein's theory of psychosexual development. The child on the cusp of the classical Oedipal phase, Klein argued, had paradoxically already “left behind him the most important part of the development of the Oedipus complex.” Already “far removed, through repression and feelings of guilt, from the objects [it] originally desired,” the child's relations to its significant others had “undergone distortion and transformation so that the present love-objects are now *imagos* of the original objects,” Klein wrote.<sup>58</sup> Far from the feeble, inconstant agency that Freud posited, the infantile superego, built-up from the child's introjected

---

<sup>56</sup> See Freud's description of the formation of the superego through the process of identification in her *Einführung in die Psychoanalyse für Pädagogen*. “The price which the child has to pay for detaching himself from his parents is their incorporation in his own personality” – “it is as if the parents said: you can certainly go away, but you must take us with you,” 123, 122.

<sup>57</sup> Klein, “Symposium on Child Analysis,” 360.

<sup>58</sup> Klein, “Symposium on Child Analysis,” 352.

aggression and reflecting the dominance of its cannibalistic and sadistic impulses, was characterized by a “phantastic severity.”<sup>59</sup>

The fact that the Kleinian child lived in dread of its own persecutory superego had important implications for analytic practice. Where Anna Freud sought to facilitate the child’s adaptation to reality by strengthening its nascent superego, Klein emphasized the importance of “lessening the excessive pressure” it placed on the child’s “feeble ego.”<sup>60</sup> The status of the Kleinian superego as a “highly resistant” – “at heart unalterable” – product, however, meant that the analyst had to work from a different angle. Through interpretation of the child’s unconscious fantasies, the analyst helped alleviate the anxiety they caused, in the process, strengthening the child’s ego and enabling it to accurately apprehend its circumstances. Changing external reality to ease and facilitate the child’s adaptation – a constant theme in Anna Freud’s lectures – was, for Klein, entirely beside the point and often counterproductive. The decisive role of unconscious fantasy and innate aggression in Klein’s understanding of the psychic development of the child meant that a marked disconnect existed between the real objects in the child’s environment and the introjected ones with which it built up its superego. It was the child’s own impulses that lent the latter their perverse, punitive character and which at times gave rise to incongruities of truly “grotesque” proportions – the contrast, in the case of a four-year old boy, between its “tender and loving mother and the punishment threatened by [its] superego” illustrated the fact that “we must on no account identify the real objects with those which children introject.”<sup>61</sup> The task of analysis, for Klein, was to make the unconscious conscious in order to bring the child into contact with an

---

<sup>59</sup> Klein, “Symposium on Child Analysis,” 356.

<sup>60</sup> Melanie Klein, “The Psychological Foundations of Child Analysis,” in *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (London, 1932), 12.

<sup>61</sup> Klein, “Symposium on Child Analysis,” 356-57. Klein’s most extensive early discussion of the infantile superego is “Early Stages of the Oedipus Complex and of Super-Ego Formation,” in *The Psychoanalysis of Children*,

external reality far less punishing than the world its fantasies led it to expect. For Klein, the real violence always came from within.

A deep skepticism towards the efficacy of education was thus a defining feature of Kleinian technique.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, analysis appeared almost capable of displacing education entirely at points in Klein's writing – had Anna Freud “subjected the child's instinctual impulses to a more thorough analysis,” she argued, not only would the cure have been more complete, but “there would have been no necessity to teach the child how to control them.”<sup>63</sup> Failures in child analysis were invariably failures of interpretation for Klein, in particular, the failure of the analyst to penetrate the Oedipus complex with sufficient depth and resolve.<sup>64</sup> For Anna Freud, by contrast, the difficulties that attended the psychoanalysis of children stemmed from the impossibility of combining two “diametrically opposed” kinds of authority, neither of which was adequate on its own. What served in her lectures as the point of departure for a circumspect, self-reflective approach to the task of analyzing children, however, was taken up in Klein's address as an invalidation of her rival's technique.

As the British analyst and Klein surrogate Joan Riviere argued at the conclusion of her own contribution to the symposium, psychoanalysis “is Sigmund Freud's discovery of what goes on in the imagination of the child” – the “unconscious fantasies, abhorred and dreaded” yet “unwittingly longed for,” which analysts still “hesitate to probe to their depths.” Psychoanalysis, she continued, in the most categorical declaration of the principles of Kleinian technique

...has no concern with anything else: it is not concerned with the real world, nor with the child's or the adult's adaptation to the real world, nor with sickness or health, nor virtue or

---

<sup>62</sup> In Hoffer's words, “the educational implications of the Kleinian concept are almost entirely negative.” “Psychoanalytic Education,” *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 1 (1945): 297.

<sup>63</sup> Klein, “Symposium on Child Analysis,” 365.

<sup>64</sup> Abraham's formative influence on Klein's view of the role of interpretation as a means of quelling the child's anxiety is discussed in Grosskurth, *Melanie Klein*, 96.

vice. It is concerned simply and solely with the imaginings of the childish mind, the phantasied pleasures and the dreaded retributions.<sup>65</sup>

To the ears of Anna Freud and her supporters, such a declaration amounted to an abdication of responsibility. Perhaps more importantly it smacked of disavowal. In contrast to the Kleinian child, persecuted by the very depths that severed it from social reality, the Anna Freudian child was marked by an unbearable openness to the social. Like many of the forms of suffering and the classes of sufferers (Simmel's war neurotics, Aichhorn's delinquents, and Reich's impulsive characters) that prompted the postwar revisions of classical analytic therapy, the child for Anna Freud was threatened with overwhelming forces from without as well as from within.<sup>66</sup> Apparently oblivious to the social and political turmoil that prompted these revisions, Klein and her followers clung to a conception of analytic therapy that had lost much of its salience in the wake of the war. As she criticized Anna Freud for departing from the rules of analysis and promoted her own method, Klein recurred to a notion of the purity of analytic technique that had been increasingly contested over the preceding years – “surely,” she wrote, “we could work more certainly and more effectually by purely analytic means.”<sup>67</sup> While her understanding of the psychic development of the child introduced new problems of seminal importance for psychoanalytic thought, it did so only by foreclosing consideration of the state of exception at the heart of analytic practice over the interwar.

---

<sup>65</sup> Joan Riviere, “Symposium on Child-Analysis,” 376-77.

<sup>66</sup> As Anna Freud wrote decades later, “At the time [the emergence of child analysis] did not happen as an isolated new departure but as part and parcel of what we call in retrospect the ‘widening scope of psychoanalysis.’ While until then analytic therapy was confined in the main to young adults and the neuroses, from that era onward other ages as well as other categories of disturbance were included in its field of application.” As she noted pointedly in the same essay, “no similar concerns about technique played a part with [the Kleinians].” Freud, “A Short History of Child Analysis,” 7, 9.

<sup>67</sup> Klein, “Symposium on Child Analysis,” 346.

In contrast to the psychoanalytic culture that emerged in postwar Vienna, amid conditions of profound insecurity and in close proximity to Social Democracy, the British psychoanalytic milieu that proved so receptive to Klein's ideas was marked by a conjunction of cultural radicalism and political and social conservatism. No upheaval on the scale of the turmoil of postwar central Europe followed the mass bereavement of the war in the United Kingdom, and the educated upper-middle classes that embraced psychoanalysis in postwar Britain were spared the bracing experiences that prompted the radical refashioning of analytic practice by Freudians in interwar central Europe.<sup>68</sup> As their stances hardened amid the controversy, Freud and Klein assumed positions that mirrored one another while laying bare an underlying paradox – namely, that while the latter employed unorthodox theory to uphold classical practice, the former radically modified classical practice in the name of orthodox theory. The chiasmatic relationship that emerged was reflected in the disjuncture between their self-perceptions and the interpretations of their work by their fellow analysts: as Young-Bruehl has written, while Anna Freud “thought of her work as ‘wild’ and was accused of ultraorthodoxy,” Melanie Klein’s “thought of herself as the true Freudian and was accused of being ‘wild’.”<sup>69</sup> At the crux of this chiasmus, however, was common point of agreement, one around which their respective theories would revolve over the coming years – for both, the question of anxiety and its relationship to the vulnerable ego was the central problem of psychoanalytic thought and practice.

### Birth Traumas, Death Drives, and the Problem of Anxiety

---

<sup>68</sup> In his 1968 essay “Components of the National Culture,” Perry Anderson linked the reception and flourishing of Kleinian theory in Britain to the long-standing conservatism of its prevailing intellectual culture. *New Left Review* I/50 (1968).

<sup>69</sup> Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 180.

When Klein arrived to present her ideas to the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society in December of 1924, she was entering at an unpropitious juncture. Already unlikely to welcome ideas so radically at odds with the experiences of recent years, the society of Viennese Freudians was furthermore in the midst of a crisis. The fallout caused by Ferenczi's and Rank's publications earlier in the year (chapter three) had been compounded by the latter's sudden withdrawal from the society and his departure for America in April.<sup>70</sup> While Rank had recently returned to Vienna in a state of contrition for his transgressions, he would leave again under a cloud in January of 1925. Once the analyst who appeared most likely to assume the leadership of the society in the wake of Sigmund Freud's death, an eventuality that appeared imminent for most of the year preceding his and Ferenczi's heterodox publications, Rank's behavior over 1924 seemed to portend a defection from the psychoanalytic movement. Still reeling from Rank's apparent apostasy, the Viennese society was now confronted with a new set of radically unorthodox theories in Klein's approach to the psychoanalysis of the child. What no doubt compounded the unreceptivity of the Viennese society, however, was the more than passing resemblance between the ideas Klein developed and the bracing rethinking of psychoanalytic theory in Rank's *Das Trauma der Geburt*.<sup>71</sup>

Rank's study, which he presented to Sigmund Freud in late 1923, marked an attempt to emerge from the latter's shadow and to establish an independent reputation. At its heart, fittingly, was a theory of fundamental importance to the entire edifice of psychoanalytic thought and

---

<sup>70</sup> In America, as Peter Gay writes, Rank presented himself as "official spokesman and daring revisionist at the same time." Following his return to Vienna, he made two abortive attempts to depart again for America in November of 1924, the second time making it as far as Paris before returning to Vienna. "By mid-December, in the grips of a mental crisis, torn between old allegiances and new opportunities, he was consulting Freud daily." Gay, *Freud*, 477-79.

<sup>71</sup> Otto Rank, *Das Trauma der Geburt* (Vienna, 1924). The parallels between Rank's and Klein's theories are discussed sensitively in both Phyllis Grosskurth's biography of Klein (*Melanie Klein*, 127) and Elizabeth Young-Bruehl's biography of Anna Freud (*Anna Freud*, 164-65). A more extensive discussion of the affinities between Klein and Rank by Peter L. Rudnytsky is somewhat marred by the author's overdrawn contention that Klein was effectively a crypto-Rankian. See *Reading Psychoanalysis: Freud, Rank, Ferenczi, Groddeck* (Ithaca, 2002),

practice. Drawing from an idea that Freud would later contend “was originally [his] own,” Rank pointed to the experience of birth as an original trauma that accounted for the origin of anxiety and thus the emergence of psychoneuroses.<sup>72</sup> In moving beyond the Oedipal stage to the infant’s earliest relationship to its mother – and, in particular, to the decisive moment of separation from the womb – Rank was effectively offering a new foundation for psychoanalysis. The same could be said of the therapeutic technique he advanced. Echoing and amplifying ideas that he put forward together with Ferenczi in their joint publication, Rank emphasized the acting out of repressed impulses in analysis. In place of a method premised on intellectualized recollection, Rank insisted on the cathartic reliving of the original traumatic experience in the transference relationship – only the abreaction of the pathogenic affect left behind by the original trauma could lead to a restoration of psychical equilibrium. While his theory of the etiology of mental suffering thus pushed back to the pre-Oedipal, his therapeutic technique had the opposite effect of focusing the treatment almost exclusively on the immediate relationship to the therapist. By interpreting the analytic encounter as a recapitulation of the earlier relationship to the mother and by facilitating the patient’s reenactments, the analyst, Rank averred, could bring about a massive abridgement of analytic technique, an idea he would pursue even more assiduously in his publications over the coming years.<sup>73</sup>

What Sigmund Freud distrusted in Rank’s 1924 work was less its central insight, than its combination of therapeutic enthusiasm and theoretical reductiveness. Rather than seeking to integrate his thesis into the existing structure of psychoanalytic thought, Rank sought to bypass

---

<sup>72</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” *GW XIV* (1926): 113-205 (at, 194). The translation is admittedly open to interpretation since the original – “wie ich selbst zuerst behauptete” – can also be rendered “as I originally asserted.” Rank, however, would also argue that his central thesis was an elaboration of insights that initially stemmed from Freud himself. See Gay, *Freud*, 475.

<sup>73</sup> See Otto Rank, *Technik der Psychoanalyse*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1926-31).

the established theory by establishing a new etiological foundation for the neuroses. While initially enthusiastic at his protégé's discovery, Freud's grew increasingly skeptical as the implications of Rank's ideas became clear, namely that "our ingenious etiological construction should be displaced (*abgelöst*) by the crude birth trauma," as he put it in a letter to Ferenczi.<sup>74</sup> Freud's followers were even less reserved, accusing Rank of fleeing from the Oedipus complex and of manifesting a "rejection of father" (*Vaterablehnung*), a scarcely coded accusation of a patricidal wish to replace Freud himself.<sup>75</sup> Few, however, detested Rank's work with quite the same vehemence as Anna Freud. While she sought to control her anger at what she saw as Rank's "hidden, cheap malice" – or at least to contain it within private settings – the controversy had a lasting impact on her intellectual formation and, in many ways, established a prototype for her later critique of Klein.<sup>76</sup>

Sigmund Freud's response to Rank constituted the last of his great metapsychological essays, "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety" published in 1926. Even on a formal level, Freud's essay distinguished itself markedly from Rank's work – from the very title to the series of addenda that Freud appended to the body of the essay, a provisional, open-ended quality distinguished Freud's intervention from Rank's. If this attribute testified to Freud's "unusual difficulty in unifying the work" in James Strachey's words, it simultaneously offered a substantive critique of the intellectual procedure that underlay *The Trauma of Birth*.<sup>77</sup> In the desire it evinced for stability and closure, Rank's search for a single, uniform explanation for the origin of anxiety and the genesis of psychic suffering threatened more than the foundations of psychoanalytic theory, it

---

<sup>74</sup> Freud to Ferenczi, 26 March 1924, *Briefwechsel Bd. III/I*, 198 (translation modified).

<sup>75</sup> Phyllis Grosskurth, *The Secret Ring: Freud's Inner Circle and the Politics of Psychoanalysis* (Reading, MA, 1991), 154.

<sup>76</sup> Anna Freud to Max Eitingon, 16 September 1924, Anna Freud Papers, File 24, Library of Congress. As her father put it, also in a letter to Eitingon, "Anna spits fire when the name Rank is pronounced." Quoted in Gay, *Freud*, 478.

<sup>77</sup> See Strachey's editorial introduction to "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety," *SE XX* (1926): 78.

endangered the very mode of psychoanalytic thought itself. In contrast to the “ideal solutions” yearned for “medical men,” “psychoanalysis,” Freud contended, “leads to less simple, less satisfactory conclusions.”<sup>78</sup>

While Freud insisted, against his more implacable followers, that Rank’s study represented a legitimate contribution to psychoanalysis, he sought to sever its central idea from the far-reaching claims surrounding it in order to integrate the trauma of birth into a modified theory of the psychical apparatus and, in particular, of the genesis and function of anxiety.<sup>79</sup> The act of birth he noted was the first individual experience of anxiety and a prototype for all subsequent ones.<sup>80</sup> Where Rank erred, however, was in his assumption that later experiences of anxiety derived their traumatic character from their approximation to a memory of this *Ur-Trauma* – for Freud, “what recalled the event and what it is that is recalled” (*wodurch und woran es erinnert wird*) remained far from certain. Despite the presence of an “unmistakable” readiness for anxiety (*Angstbereitschaft*) in the infant, anxiety was not at its strongest immediately following birth, as Rank’s theory implied, but rather grew in tandem with the development of the mental apparatus over the following years.<sup>81</sup> As the locus of perception and memory, the ego was also the “sole seat of anxiety,” Freud explained, yet the ego, as he put already it in 1914, “has to be developed.”<sup>82</sup> Where Rank’s theory hypostatized the ego – assuming its essential functions were in place before the infant’s entry into the world – Freud’s approach to the subject of the trauma of birth was a

---

<sup>78</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 184. My reading of Freud’s 1926 study has been informed by the brilliant analyses of the Freudian theory of anxiety by Samuel Weber and Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg. See Weber, *The Legend of Freud*, 85-98 and Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity*, 151-71.

<sup>79</sup> As Freud wrote with regard to his theory of anxiety in his 1926 study, “it is not so much a question of taking back our earlier findings as of bringing them into line with more recent discoveries.” Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 172.

<sup>80</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 120-21, 182.

<sup>81</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 166-67.

<sup>82</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 193-94 and Freud, “Zur Einführung des Nazissmus,” 142.

dialectical attempt to explain the origins of the ego from out of anxiety and of anxiety from out of the development of the ego.

“Anxiety,” Freud averred, “is not easy to grasp,” a statement his essay was at pains to illustrate.<sup>83</sup> What was clear from the outset, however, was that his earlier theory of the origin of anxiety was in need of revision. In his earliest essays on the etiology of the neuroses, Freud had posited that anxiety was the consequence of sexual repression. The process, fundamentally an economic one, unfolded through the automatic and unconscious conversion of the energy of the repressed impulse into anxiety – anxiety was thus “transformed sexual libido.”<sup>84</sup> With the development of the structural model of the mind over the early 1920s, however, such a view appeared increasingly wanting. The recognition that the ego reached deeply into the unconscious led to an enhanced appreciation of the complex role of defensive processes in the genesis of neurotic conflict. Where the earlier theory had maintained that anxiety arose from repression, the inverse relationship, in which repression was a consequence of anxiety, now appeared more compelling.<sup>85</sup> As the organized portion of the mental apparatus and the agency capable of judging danger situations, the ego alone was capable of having anxiety. By sending out a signal of anxiety at moments when it recognized dangers, the ego was able to bring about the repression of undesirable impulses. With the postulation of the ego as the seat of anxiety, Freud thus reframed the emergence of anxiety from a process that occurred behind the back of the ego into one that unfolded at its behest.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 162 (translation modified).

<sup>84</sup> Freud, “Inhaltsangaben der wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten des Privatdozenten Dr. Sigm. Freud (1877-1897),” *GW I* (1897): 469-88, at 484. Freud had broached this subject in various letters to Wilhelm Fliess before first committing it to print. His first published statement of this position was his “Über die Berechtigung von der Neurasthenie einen bestimmten Symptomkomplex als ‘Angst-Neurose’ Abzutrennen,” *GW I* (1895): 315-42.

<sup>85</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 137-38.

<sup>86</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 120, 170-71.

Yet if the ego emerged as the prime mover in the etiology of the neuroses, its activity was a reaction to an earlier experience of helplessness that shadowed and threatened it at every stage.<sup>87</sup> Significantly, the old understanding of anxiety – as unwilled and unintentional – never entirely vanished from the revised theory.<sup>88</sup> Not only did Freud acknowledge that anxiety could arise directly from the economic conditions of a given situation – in particular, the flooding of the mental apparatus by external stimuli or affect – but this original experience of helplessness marked both the point of departure for the production of anxiety and the condition to which it tended to return the ego. In its intentional form, as a signal of danger released by the ego, anxiety was originally a reaction to the felt loss of the object responsible for the satisfying the child’s needs, Freud explained. Rather than an unwilled process in which anxiety was generated automatically by the emergence of a “*growing tension due to need...against which [the infant] is helpless,*” the perception of the object’s absence as a danger, in anticipation of the “dreaded economic situation,” and its production of a corresponding signal of anxiety marked the “first great progress in the provision made by the infant for its self-preservation.” By displacing the anxiety reaction from its origin in the situation of helplessness to the expectation of the same, the infant underwent a vital transition from passivity in the face of need to the active management of its condition.<sup>89</sup> In doing so, however, it paradoxically reproduced the very situation it sought to avoid: in response to a looming situation of danger (or to one that reminded it of an earlier traumatic experience), the ego anticipated its traumatization and acted as if it had already occurred. Just as anxiety could be both inexpedient, when a situation of danger had already occurred, and a functional means of signaling,

---

<sup>87</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 186, 199.

<sup>88</sup> See Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 153, 159-60, 172, 195.

<sup>89</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 167-68.

and thus preventing, the emergence of such a situation, it was simultaneously both an expectation of trauma and “a repetition of it in a mitigated form” (*gemilderte Wiederholung desselben*).<sup>90</sup>

The question that appeared most pressing in light of this dual character was why some individuals were “able to subject the affect of anxiety...to the normal workings of the mind” while others were “doomed to grief” by the task.<sup>91</sup> Beyond critiques of the inadequacy of earlier attempts to resolve this question (in particular, those of Adler and Rank), Freud could offer little towards a positive solution. What was clear, however, was that a more nuanced approach was necessary: where formerly the concept of repression had been understood as the quintessential form of psychical resistance, and one that was invariably pathogenic, now it appeared to be merely one particular technique among several that “the ego makes use of in conflicts which *may* lead to neurosis.”<sup>92</sup> This new approach, together with Freud’s inability to explain why anxiety was functional in some situations and pathogenic in others, trained attention on the defensive processes of the ego. As he wrote in another text from the same year, “the nodal point and pivot [*Knoten- und Drehpunkt*] of the whole situation is the relative strength of the ego organization.”<sup>93</sup>

Ultimately it was Anna Freud who would take up these questions in her 1936 study *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, a work she understood as a supplement to her father’s 1926 essay. What Freud bequeathed to his daughter, however, was not only a guiding question but a mode of inquiry, one whose self-reflective circumspection would be a hallmark of her most important interventions. “The remarkable thing,” she wrote Max Eitingon on the subject of her father’s 1926 essay,

...is how – unlike all the others – Papa continually emphasizes how much remains unexplained and uncertain about these questions, so that one gets the feeling of being

---

<sup>90</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 165, 191.

<sup>91</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 181.

<sup>92</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 196 (emphasis added).

<sup>93</sup> Freud, “Die Frage der Laienanalyse,” 276.

surrounded by the completely questionable, the unknown, where one can only here and there see the first clues.

In marked contrast to his followers, for whom “everything is always so known and fixed, so well tidied up, that one really has to become suspicious,” her father’s thought reflected continuously on its own limits.<sup>94</sup> “If we cannot see things clearly,” as he put it in his 1926 essay, “than we at least want to see clearly what the obscurities are.”<sup>95</sup>

The attitude of grounded circumspection that Sigmund Freud deployed against Rank’s far-reaching claims would establish a prototype for his daughter’s critique of Klein in her lectures on child psychoanalysis later that year. Like Rank’s contention that separation from the mother, in the form of expulsion from the womb, was the ultimate determinate of neurotic illness – the variable strength of the trauma accounting for the individual’s disposition to either psychical equilibrium or pathogenic anxiety – Klein’s eagerness to push beyond the classical Oedipus complex was bound-up with a search for a unitary explanation for neurotic illness. For Klein, this lay in the severity of the early superego, itself a reflection of the differential strength of the infant’s innate aggression. Underlying Klein’s theory was the concept of the death drive, an instinctual impulse to return to the tensionless stasis of inorganic matter that, in the course of development, was projected outwards in the form of aggression and subsequently introjected as a sense of guilt and a need for punishment, impulses represented by the psychical agency of the superego.<sup>96</sup> Despite initially advancing the idea of the death drive in a self-consciously speculative vein in 1920, Sigmund Freud increasingly found it indispensable for understanding both the individual’s resistance to the therapeutic effects of psychoanalysis and the apparently self-destructive patterns

---

<sup>94</sup> Anna Freud to Max Eitingon, 20 August 1925, Anna Freud Papers, Box 24, Library of Congress.

<sup>95</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 155 (translation modified).

<sup>96</sup> See especially, Klein, “Early Stages of the Oedipus Complex.”

of modern civilization.<sup>97</sup> For his daughter, however, it remained an unproductive hypothesis, one that encouraged analysts to abandon the path of careful observation and circumspect theorizing and embark on a search for final causes.<sup>98</sup> Recognizing the same danger, her father cautioned against elevating a single factor – in particular, the role of the superego – to the place of the exclusive cause of neurotic illness. By “tak[ing] abstractions too rigidly” – by reifying the concepts of id, ego, and superego – psychoanalysts ran the risk of producing simplistic schemas that sacrificed the flexibility of the mental apparatus.<sup>99</sup>

Parallel to this risk was a danger of one-sidedness that haunted psychoanalytic accounts. Responding to his 1923 “The Ego and the Id,” an essay in which the ego was portrayed as powerless and dependent in relation to the other psychical agencies, recent publications, Freud averred, were in danger of transforming psychoanalysis into a pessimistic philosophical *Weltanschauung*, one premised on the impotence of an apprehensive, self-deluding ego.<sup>100</sup> By contrast, his 1926 essay sought to restore a sense of the resourcefulness of the ego, of its flexibility and adaptability in the face of manifold challenges, at the same time as it preserved (and indeed deepened) the recognition of the ego’s vulnerability in the face of external dangers. It was this multiperspectival approach to the subject of the ego’s defenses that would leave the strongest imprint on his daughter’s subsequent theorization.

Yet Sigmund Freud’s cautionary critique of the fatalistic *Weltanschauung* that his work had given rise to was not the only protest raised against the nascent orthodoxy that was crystallizing over these years around the new structural model of the mind and the theory of the death instinct.

---

<sup>97</sup> See, for instance, Freud, “Das Unbehagen in der Kultur,” 479.

<sup>98</sup> On Anna Freud’s skepticism regarding the death instinct hypothesis see Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 162.

<sup>99</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 124.

<sup>100</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 95. See also on this subject Whitebook, *Perversion and Utopia*, 91-118.

Far more outspoken than Freud himself was Wilhelm Reich whose work over the late-1920s and early-1930s pioneered a new approach to the question of the ego defenses. In many respects the antithesis of Kleinian thought, Reich's theory – and more importantly, the theory of practice it emerged in tandem with – represented both a vital resource and a fundamental challenge to Anna Freud's developing understanding of the mechanisms of defense.

### Analyzing the Defenses I

Recalling the significant additions and revisions to Freudian theory introduced in “The Ego and the Id,” Reich would later acknowledge that “in practice, it was difficult to know what to make” of the theories that remade the field of psychoanalytic thought. What was clear at the time, however, was that they had a “disturbing effect” on everyday analytic practice. In place of a “vivid and fluid description of facts,” analysts increasingly substituted a “mechanical schema” in the form of the structural model of the mind – clinical investigation stagnated, Reich contended, and “sexuality became something shadowy.”<sup>101</sup> While the full significance of these developments would not become clear to Reich until 1934, the year of his expulsion from the International Psychoanalytic Association, the introduction of the central concepts of Freudian revision marked the onset of a “process of deterioration.” In the wake of the Freudian revision, the air was increasingly “purified” of all traces of sexuality and psychoanalysis was “brought into line” with the very world that “shortly before had threatened to annihilate it.”<sup>102</sup>

The innovations that awakened Reich's mistrust in the 1920s and that he later interpreted as signs of the onset of an irreversible process of decay within the psychoanalytic movement

---

<sup>101</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (New York, 1973), 123-24.

<sup>102</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 124-25.

stemmed, above all, from the introduction of the concept of the death instinct in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle.” By positing a primary instinct to eliminate the tension inherent in organic life, an impulse whose chief expressions were those of sadism and masochism, Freud had opened the floodgates to irresponsible theorizing among his followers. The consequence was “the complete liquidation of the psychoanalytic theory of the neuroses,” Reich contended – where this theory had originally rested on the conflict between the child’s sexual demands and its fear of punishment, now with the postulation of the death instinct, the “neurotic self-injurious intent of the sick psychic organism” could be traced to a “primary biological instinct of the living substance.” “Psychoanalysis,” Reich averred, “never recovered from this.”<sup>103</sup>

In his clinical work, Reich insisted, he “never encountered a death instinct, a will to die, as a primary instinct corresponding to sexuality or hunger.” Destructive impulses, he contended, were either functional attempts to secure the means for the gratification of vital needs or reactions to the frustration of libidinal desires, that is, to the “exclusion of the original goal of love.”<sup>104</sup> The inhibition of “natural sexuality,” which Reich identified with the primacy of the genital function “purified of” perverse partial drives, was the root cause of the “sadistic pleasure of destruction so evident in our times.”<sup>105</sup> Conversely, with every increase in sexual gratification (more specifically, orgasmic potency) brought about by the treatment, sadistic fantasies and perversions diminished. By failing to recognize the derivative importance of aggression and by placing the death instinct at the foundation of psychic life, psychoanalysts not only undermined the classical theory of the

---

<sup>103</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 127-28. The chief targets of Reich’s critique were a series of lectures by the Viennese analyst Theodor Reik titled *Geständniszwang und Strafbedürfnis. Probleme der Psychoanalyse und der Kriminologie* (Vienna, 1925) and an article by the Berlin based analyst Franz Alexander “Neurose und Gesamtpersönlichkeit,” *IZfP* 12/3 (1926): 334-47, an essay that Alexander would expand the following year into *Psychoanalyse der Gesamtpersönlichkeit*.

<sup>104</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 154, 156.

<sup>105</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 158, 132, 158.

neuroses but offered a ready-made excuse for their therapeutic failures. Henceforth, the patient's negative therapeutic reactions could be ascribed not primarily to the technical failures of the analyst but rather to a tendency, on the part of the patient, to cling to suffering, one that reflected an unconscious need for punishment grounded ultimately in the death instinct.

Theoretical deviation thus went hand-in-hand with therapeutic complacency for Reich – intimately connected to his contributions to the theory of the neuroses was thus an attempt to break through the barriers to the practice of psychoanalysis. The procedure he developed in the seminar on technique in the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society was one that sought to restore the patient's capacity for orgasmic gratification through the systematic analysis of her character. If his 1925 essay, *Der triebhafte Charakter* (chapter three), had already positioned the treatment of character at the heart of analytic therapy, his essays over the following years radicalized and deepened the technique he developed during his clinical work with destitute patients at the Viennese Psychoanalytic Polyclinic. While the therapeutic procedure described in the earlier study was designated for lower-class impulsive characters, in the course of developing the views that would later be assembled into his 1933 *Charakteranalyse*, Reich had come to view a dramatically intensified character analysis as the only adequate technique for *all* treatments.<sup>106</sup> This shift reflected his growing conviction that the crux of the cure was not the analysis of the specific conflicts anchored in the patient's neurotic symptoms but rather the total personality – “it was the character as a whole that resisted” in psychoanalysis, he averred.<sup>107</sup>

Character, for Reich, represented a compact, inflexible resistance – “the molded expression of *narcissistic* defense chronically embedded in the psychic structure” – that had to be

---

<sup>106</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *Charakteranalyse. Technik und Grundlagen für Studierende und praktizierende Analytiker* (Vienna, 1933). All translations (unless otherwise noted) are from Wilhelm Reich, *Character Analysis*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (New York, 1972).

<sup>107</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 138. Compare to Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 166.

systematically deconstructed over the course of analysis.<sup>108</sup> Initially developed as a protection against external stimuli and as a means of gaining control over the libido, character functioned as a kind of “armor” encasing the vulnerable ego, he explained. Fashioned as a result of the fear of punishment and at the expense of energy from the id, character armor contained the “prohibitions and standards” instilled by a sexually repressive culture in the course of the child’s development.<sup>109</sup> While its chief function was thus to ward off sexual drives and bind the child’s anxiety, it also channeled the aggression generated by frustration against the self and provided a substitute gratification for the distorted libido.

Situating character at the heart of the cure meant, in the first instance, a dramatic expansion of the analyst’s authority (see chapter three). No longer were the patient’s verbal associations the focal point for the analyst’s interpretations but rather her entire behavior – “not only *what* the patient says” has to be interpreted, “but *how* he says it,” Reich argued.<sup>110</sup> While the form of the ego’s reactions could be traced back to infantile experiences in the same way as symptoms or fantasies, it not through their content (their symbolically encoded meaning) that character resistances expressed themselves but rather through the specific mannerisms of the person under analysis – his gestures, mode of speech, posture, and expressions.<sup>111</sup> Despite its origin and function, character was fundamentally ego-syntonic. While neurotic symptoms were experienced as something alien, neurotic character “is organically incorporated into the personality” – “*his character was the person himself,*” as Reich put it later.<sup>112</sup> The task of analysis, for Reich, was thus to disrupt this identification by isolating the defensive character trait and repeatedly putting it

---

<sup>108</sup> Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 65.

<sup>109</sup> Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 169.

<sup>110</sup> Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 62.

<sup>111</sup> Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 65.

<sup>112</sup> Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 60 and Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 148 (emphasis in original).

before the patient, in the process, enabling him to break clear of it and to view it “as he would a vexatious compulsive symptom.” Through “consistent and logical interpretation” of the ego defenses sedimented in the patient’s character and by systematically uncovering the manifold resistances he deployed, analysis could penetrate to the heart of the infantile conflicts more effectively and assuredly.<sup>113</sup>

Where classical psychoanalysis had leveraged the therapeutic alliance of analyst and patient against the latter’s resistances, Reich came to see the patient not as internally divided between adherence and opposition to the fundamental rule of free association, but as an opponent of analysis whose defenses were to be systematically uncovered and deconstructed – it was “the patient’s whole personality, his *character*, his individuality [that] resisted analysis.”<sup>114</sup> Even the positive transference (the essential vehicle of the cure, for Sigmund Freud) served only to conceal a deeper negative transference, for Reich – behind the patient’s compliance and docility (“his submissive, confiding attitude”) lay “hate, fear, and distrust.”<sup>115</sup> Because it entailed dismantling the patient’s “entire being,” Reich’s systematic defense analysis often led to “dangerous situations,” creating at times a “temporary condition...which approximates a breakdown of the ego.”<sup>116</sup> While Reich insisted that the dangers entailed in character analysis meant that the analyst must have technical mastery of the treatment at all times, the condition of breakdown that his technique produced was understood to be merely the prelude to the restoration of a more natural form of sex-economic regulation.

Underpinning Reich’s procedure was a conception of anxiety grounded not in psychology but in biophysical sexology. Against Freud’s 1926 revision, Reich adhered to the earlier theory of

---

<sup>113</sup> Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 68, 70.

<sup>114</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 148.

<sup>115</sup> Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 109.

<sup>116</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 148 and Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 95.

the “actual neuroses” in which undischarged sexual excitation functioned as a toxic disturbance leading directly to anxiety and neurosis. “The central problem of anxiety” revolved, for Reich, around the damming up of sexuality and the consequent “overloading of the vasovegetative system” of the organism.<sup>117</sup> Since character armor served to bind the undischarged libido that would otherwise manifest as pathogenic anxiety, its dismantling through the systematic analysis of the defenses left the ego temporarily helpless and flooded by extreme, acute anxiety.<sup>118</sup> While, for Freud, such a situation represented the very prototype of anxiety (the primal trauma) that the development of the ego served to overcome, for Reich, it was only by returning the ego to its original condition of helplessness that a non-neurotic mode of managing sexual excitation could be established. At the core of this therapeutic process was the aim of restoring orgasmic potency through the liberation of libido “from its pathological moorings” and its concentration “in the genital zone.”<sup>119</sup> The activation of genitality, Reich argued, represented the indispensable foundation for the non-neurotic regulation of sexual excitation – “every discharge of sexual tension through genital gratification” during the treatment, he contended, “immediately mitigated the effect of the breakthrough of pathological impulses.”<sup>120</sup>

Reich’s work over the latter half of the 1920s and the early 1930s represented a strange marriage of opposites, in particular, of social critique with normative theory and of anti-authoritarianism with a disciplinary therapeutic technique. As committed as Reich was to emancipatory social politics and to undoing the sexual repressiveness of contemporary culture, the most striking feature of his therapeutic practice was its combative, aggressive quality. Framing the ego defenses as a form of armoring that analysis had to penetrate and dismantle lent Reich’s

---

<sup>117</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 133-34.

<sup>118</sup> See Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 135.

<sup>119</sup> Reich, *Charakteranalyse*, 140.

<sup>120</sup> Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 80.

systematic analytic technique a hostile, mistrustful character.<sup>121</sup> Beneath the belligerence Reich demonstrated towards the patient, Richard Sterba has argued, lay a denial of ambivalence as an irreducible and ineradicable aspect of human emotional life: as suspicious as he was of the libidinal impulses that emerged in the transference, for Reich, “our drives originally have only positive and loving aims” – “hatred and destructiveness are the result of frustration by reality.”<sup>122</sup> Together with his desire to rescue a pure (genital) libido from the dross of perversion, the insistence on the secondary place of aggression in psychic life lent his work a simultaneously utopian and authoritarian aspect.

The denial of instinctual ambivalence and the rejection of the theory of the death instinct that characterized Reich’s work situated it at an opposite extreme from Melanie Klein’s on the spectrum of interwar psychoanalytic thought. Where Kleinian theory and practice were premised on the radical disjuncture between inner and outer, on the fundamental importance of unconscious fantasies with no significant relation to the external world, Reich’s analytic technique increasingly resolved the psychic into the social and biological. In its uniformity and rigidity, Reich’s character analysis voided the inner world of the subject.

The profound discrepancy between Reich and Klein reflected the gap that Anna Freud would seek to straddle in her seminal study *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*.<sup>123</sup> Written ten years after “Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety” and presented as a gift to her father on his eightieth birthday, Freud’s study continued the line of inquiry staked out in the earlier essay. Like her father’s 1926 essay, Anna Freud’s study distinguished itself from rival approaches by its

---

<sup>121</sup> See on this subject Richard Sterba, “Clinical and Therapeutic Aspects of Character Resistance,” *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 22 (1953): 1-20

<sup>122</sup> Sterba, “Clinical and Therapeutic Aspects of Character Resistance,” 10-11.

<sup>123</sup> Anna Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, in *Die Schriften der Anna Freud. Bd. I* (Frankfurt a. M., 1987 [1936]), 197-351.

avoidance of explanations that relied on a hypostatized “‘ultimate cause’ of neurotic illness.”<sup>124</sup> While Klein identified the guilt and anxiety engendered by the primitive superego, itself the product of the child’s instinctual aggression, as the fundamental source of neurotic conflict, and Reich insisted that the origin of the neuroses lay in the sexual repressiveness of the social environment into which the child was reared, Anna Freud resisted the temptation to posit “concrete and uniform” causes.<sup>125</sup> Even as she avoided the stringent logic that informed their theories, Freud was forced to mediate between the approaches Klein and Reich staked out, taking seriously the problems they raised while casting off their more one-sided assumptions and conclusions. At the heart of her work was an impossible task that linked her work directly to her father’s revision of analytic technique in 1918 – namely, that of reframing psychoanalytic thought and practice around the vulnerable ego while preserving the liberal principles of classical analytic therapy.

## Analyzing the Defenses II

“Somehow or other,” Freud wrote at the outset of her 1936 study, “many analysts had conceived the idea that, in analysis, the value of the scientific and therapeutic work done was in direct proportion to the depth of the psychic strata upon which attention was focused.”<sup>126</sup> From such a perspective, any transfer of attention from deeper strata to more superficial layers appeared to signal the “beginning of apostasy from psychoanalysis as a whole.” Unconscious mental life, and specifically, the infantile fantasies contained within it, represented the exclusive domain of psychoanalytic investigation. Recapitulating the very critique leveled against her by Joan Riviere, Freud wrote, “with problems such as that of the adjustment of children or adults to the outside

---

<sup>124</sup> Freud, “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 184.

<sup>125</sup> Like the preceding quote, the words “concrete and uniform” are from Sigmund Freud’s critique of Rank in “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” 184 (translation modified).

<sup>126</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 197.

world [and] concepts of value such as those health and disease, virtue and vice” psychoanalysis – in this rigid conception of analytic orthodoxy – “was not properly concerned.”<sup>127</sup>

In the past, when psychoanalysis had been “preeminently a psychology of the unconscious” (specifically, the id), such a view had possessed a certain justification, Freud acknowledged. As a practice, however, psychoanalysis had “from the beginning” been intimately and inextricably “concerned with the ego and its disturbances.” The investigation of the psychical depths in the therapeutic setting was always “only a means to an end” – namely, the correction of these “disturbances” and the restoration of the ego’s integrity. Furthermore, since the postwar revision, “the odium of analytic unorthodoxy” that previously attached to the study of the ego and its institutions had been overcome. At present, Freud wrote, psychoanalysts would probably define their task as that of acquiring “the fullest possible knowledge of all the three institutions” that constitute the psychical personality and of learning “their relations to one another and to the outside world.”<sup>128</sup>

By disclaiming any concern with the external world as well as any responsibility for the ego’s adaptation to its environment, the form of orthodoxy embraced by Klein and her followers thus appeared to Anna Freud to be out-of-touch with the most significant recent developments within psychoanalysis. Perhaps more importantly, however, it demonstrated a lack of insight into the basic operations of the very pure analytic technique Klein claimed to uphold.<sup>129</sup> “From the beginning” – from the moment her father dispensed with the help of hypnosis – psychoanalysis had been ego analysis, Anna Freud contended. As the agency that governed access to motility – to action and expression – the ego was also the “proper field” for observation in analysis, she

---

<sup>127</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 197.

<sup>128</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 198 (translation modified).

<sup>129</sup> Klein, “Symposium on Child Analysis,” 346.

insisted, “the medium through which we try to get a picture of the other two institutions.” The ego, however, was anything but a neutral medium for observation. In its constant interventions into the process of free association and its transgressions of the fundamental rule, the ego forced the analyst to direct her attention to the resistances. “Only when observation is focused now on the id and now on the ego and the direction of interest is twofold” can we “speak of psychoanalysis,” Freud insisted.<sup>130</sup>

As Freud recognized, however, the redirection of analytic observation from the id to the resistances put up by the ego altered the relationship between analyst and patient, displacing the latter into a new role. “With this change of object,” she wrote, “the situation in the analysis has suddenly changed.” In contrast to the analysis of the id, that of the ego’s defensive operations was characterized by the dissolution or abrogation of the “community of aim” established by the fundamental rule, since unlike the id, the unconscious elements of the ego “have no inclination to become conscious,” Freud argued. It was the analysis of the patient’s defenses as they manifested in the transference that thus generated the majority of technical difficulties that arose in the course of the treatment, she contended. While “more fruitful” than the interpretation of the positive, erotic attachments that emerged in the transference, defense analysis, because it dealt with reactions that appeared to the patient to be part of her personality, changed the dynamic of the analytic encounter, putting an end to the patient’s “willing cooperation.” “Whenever interpretation touches on unknown elements of the ego,” she wrote, the latter became “wholly opposed to the work of analysis” – what resulted “was a situation which we commonly describe by the not very felicitous term, ‘character analysis.’”<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>130</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 198-99, 208.

<sup>131</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 207, 213-14.

Anna Freud's insistence on the centrality of the ego to the analytic encounter thus led her to the same conclusions Ferenczi had first explored in his work on analytic "activity" and that Reich had subsequently developed in his papers on technique. It was a perspective that, because it emphasized the coercive alteration of the patient's ego, profoundly unsettled the liberality of classical psychoanalysis. But where Freud followed Ferenczi and Reich to the point of exposing the crisis of authority within analytic practice, she then diverged markedly from their technical guidelines. Where Ferenczi, in his joint work with Rank, had insisted on the necessity of acting-out repressed impulses in analysis, Freud cautioned against intensifying the transference to the point that the patient would overstep the bounds of analysis – the "therapeutic gain" of such acting-out was "generally small," she insisted, and it was natural for analysts "to try to restrict it as far as possible."<sup>132</sup> More significant, however, was her departure from Reich whose "consistent analysis of resistance" represented a measure of last resort for Freud. Where Reich viewed the patient's bodily attitudes as "residues of very vigorous defensive processes from the past," ones that had become dissociated from their original situations and had developed into fixed and permanent character traits, Freud viewed resistance in more capacious and generous terms. Rather than a kind of armor, a petrified structure encasing and suppressing the individual's vital drives, the ego's resistances represented a creative repertoire of defenses that evolved together with the patient's symptoms.<sup>133</sup>

While it inherited Reich's focus on the ego defenses, Freud's method thus dispensed with the aggressive single-mindedness that distinguished his analytic technique. Where this emerged most strikingly was in her insistence on a new fundamental rule for psychoanalysis, one that, in

---

<sup>132</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 216.

<sup>133</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 225-26.

this case, pertained to the work of the analyst. “It is the task of the analyst to bring into consciousness that which is unconscious, no matter to which psychic institution it belongs,” Freud wrote, “he directs his attention equally and objectively” to the unconscious elements in all three institutions. The emphasis in this new formulation was on the objectivity and impartiality of the analyst – the analyst, she contended, was to take his stand “at a point equidistant from the id, the ego and the superego.”<sup>134</sup> While the different relations of the three mental agencies to the work of analysis continually threatened to undermine the equanimity of the analyst and to draw her away from the point of impartiality, the new regulative ideal furnished an implicit critique of the rival methods developed by Klein and Reich. In this new vision of analytic practice, the danger that confronted the analyst was, above all, that of a tendentious one-sidedness, one in which the complex, multivalent perspective essential to analytic thought was at risk of collapsing into inflexible dogmatism and reductive theorizing.

Among the dangers of a one-sided therapeutic procedure was that it would inevitably yield a “distorted or at least an incomplete picture of the psychic personality.”<sup>135</sup> Where this risk was most apparent for Anna Freud was in the theoretical tendency, one she associated with Klein and her followers, to view the superego as “the root of all neurotic evil.” Pivoting from Klein to Reich, Freud argued that this misguided notion had inspired “high hopes” for the prophylaxis of the neuroses – if the severity of the superego lay at the origin of all forms of neurotic conflict, then those tasked with the upbringing of children “have only to avoid everything which may contribute to the formation of a super-ego of excessive strictness.” Such hopes, however, had been shown in educational practice to be unfulfillable, Freud insisted, and from a theoretical point of view, were

---

<sup>134</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 221.

<sup>135</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 217.

“thoroughly ruined as soon as we take our next step in analytic research” – namely that into the “real” world inhabited by the infant.<sup>136</sup>

Yet in a work characterized by a tone of conciliation and caution, Freud’s dismissal of the aspirations for the prevention of the neuroses struck a discordant, uncharacteristically vehement, note.<sup>137</sup> The rejection of the far-reaching hopes for prophylaxis – hopes that found their most “uncompromising exponent” in Reich but that were apparently shared by many – point to the unspoken aims behind her project. Freud’s rehabilitation of analytic impartiality at the outset of *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen* was intended to unify a rapidly expanding and fracturing profession on a new basis. What it offered was kind of reconstructed psychoanalytic liberalism, one grounded in disillusionment and circumspection and distinguished by a consistent avoidance of extremes. In the middle ground Freud staked out, the liberal anxiety that *les extrêmes se touchent* was apparent in the conflation of the conservative fatalism of Klein and her followers with the utopian aspirations of Reich – the former’s insistence on the primary role of the punitive superego in the genesis of neurotic suffering providing the theoretical justification for the far-reaching optimism of the latter.<sup>138</sup> By integrating and reconciling what she saw as the one-sided perspectives of her rivals, Freud was engaged in fashioning a new hegemonic vision of psychoanalytic politics, one centered on the psychological agency of the ego.

The reconstruction of a liberal psychoanalysis that Anna Freud undertook was by no means merely a return to the prewar orthodoxy of “classical” Freudian thought and practice. It marked

---

<sup>136</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 246-47 (translation modified).

<sup>137</sup> Freud’s caution and moderation were noted by reviewers of study, in particular Ernest Jones. See Jones, “Review of *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 19 (1938): 115. Jones’s review was published along with two much more substantive essays on Freud’s study by Otto Fenichel and Ernst Kris.

<sup>138</sup> This pivot from Klein to Reich was an oversimplification – bordering on travesty – of both of their views. Reich, after all, was concerned not with the superego but with the defenses erected by the ego, while the Kleinians insisted that the superego developed largely independent of external (educative) influences.

instead an attempt to adapt the latter to the more threatening circumstances that emerged between the wars. In the vision of a new orthodoxy that Freud offered, social circumstances – the impact of a painful external reality – figured far more prominently than they had in prewar psychoanalysis. Perhaps more important, however, was the very trajectory of her thought – the fact that Freud’s theory of the defense mechanisms developed out of work with children signaled a shift in the normative foundations of analytic thought. Where classical psychoanalysis had privileged the ideal of a mature, autonomous, cultivated subject, Anna Freud’s reconstructed orthodoxy was founded on the model of an anxious, vulnerable child. In the face of this quasi-ontological vulnerability, a new way forward was needed for psychoanalysis, one that pushed beyond the limits of classical analytic therapy that Klein and her followers upheld without seeking to explode them entirely, as Reich aimed to do. Renegotiating borders and boundaries would be central to the educational and therapeutic politics Anna Freud developed over these years.

#### Education in a New Light

In 1930, in the lectures she delivered to nursery educators in the municipal *Jugendamt*, Anna Freud offered something of a preliminary sketch of the pedagogical politics she would develop over the coming years. “So far,” she wrote, psychoanalysis “has stood for limiting the efforts of education.” In their dealings with adult neurotics – with patients who gave abundant testimony to the dangers of *Erziehung* taken too far – analysts had learned to “see education from its worst aspect,” Freud insisted. But education, she noted, “appears to us in a very different light” when the subject being considered is not neurotic inhibition but youth delinquency. “No one [had] offered the love” that would have shielded the child from a brutal reality and enabled it to relinquish the primitive gratifications obtained from its own body. The result was a “short-circuiting” of development in

which the inability to internalize cultural prohibitions and the lack of restraint imposed on the child left it fundamentally estranged from a hostile social world. Reflecting the twin dangers that lay on either end of the educational spectrum, Freud argued that the task of an upbringing based on analytic understanding was to find a middle road between these extremes – that is to say, “to find for each stage in the child’s life the right proportion between drive gratification and drive control.”<sup>139</sup>

In framing the tasks of psychoanalytic pedagogy in such terms, Freud was essentially laying out a negative conception of the aims of such an upbringing, one premised on the avoidance of extremes. Yet at the close of her final lecture, she supplemented this vision with a positive task. Citing a note, titled “The Wrong Things Grown-People Do,” by an eight-year-old boy fed up with the educational interference he was subjected to, Freud argued that the child’s protestations would be viewed completely differently by traditional educators and modern ones. While the former would see the child’s indignity as a sign of a budding rebelliousness to be squashed, the latter would celebrate the independence it exhibited, seeing in the child a possible “future leader and liberator of the masses.” Both, however, would be equally mistaken, Freud wrote. The child was, in reality, a “harmless little coward,” terrified and resentful of all authority out of guilt at his “intense” masturbation and corresponding fear of castration, a fear compounded, Freud explained, by a “necessary surgical intervention that acted as a severe shock.” What the child needed was neither admonition nor admiration, but an abatement of his anxiety. “Only this could release him from his neurotic behavior, and enable him to fulfill his capacity for enjoyment and work as an adult.”<sup>140</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Psychoanalyse für Lehrer und Eltern,” 127, 129-32.

<sup>140</sup> Freud, “Vier Vorträge über Psychoanalyse für Lehrer und Eltern,” 135-37.

In her publications on education over the coming years, Freud deepened and nuanced this argument – that the task for a psychoanalytically informed upbringing was neither liberation nor discipline but the regulation of anxiety.<sup>141</sup> The two places in which a “pedagogy of the future” can accomplish something, as she argued in her fullest exposition of analytic education in 1937, are the reduction of anxiety and the influencing of the defensive mechanisms with which the drives are combatted.<sup>142</sup> It was the development of the ego that thus took center stage, and as it did so, old questions were reframed and answered, at times, in strikingly novel ways. Above all, the question of what it meant to have a healthy ego led to a rethinking of the principles behind an analytically informed upbringing of the child.<sup>143</sup>

In an address to a psychoanalytic summit in Budapest in 1937, a symposium whose central theme was “revisions in psychoanalytic pedagogy,” Dorothy Burlingham, Anna Freud’s closest collaborator over the previous decade, offered a striking critique of the earlier efforts of analytic educators. In their desire to place the child in an environment that spared it “overly strict, cruel demands (*Realforderungen*)” they only produced new problems – precisely these children had become, by virtue of their understanding education, “particularly over-sensitive” and difficult to manage. Far from creating optimal conditions for their development, an environment adapted to their needs had prevented them from acquiring the “power to resist” (*Widerstandskraft*) – the protection granted them had thus resulted in the development of impoverished and fragile egos. Here, Burlingham wrote, emerges a new task for education, namely that of a “gradual habituation

---

<sup>141</sup> See for instance, “Die Erziehung des Kleinkindes vom psychoanalytischen Standpunkt aus,” in *Die Schriften der Anna Freuds, Bd. 1* (1934 [1932]), 179-90.

<sup>142</sup> Anna Freud, “Kurs für Pädagogen: 5. Kursabend,” 1937, Archive of the Freud Museum London.

<sup>143</sup> “Die psychoanalytisch gebildeten Erzieher verfolgen ein bestimmtes Erziehungsziel: sie wollen dem Kind ein optimal gesundes Ich vermitteln,” were, for instance, the opening words of Steff Bornstein-Windholz’s 1937 essay “Mißverständnisse in der psychoanalytischen Pädagogik.” *ZfpP* 11 (1937): 81-90, at 81. See also the discussion of the change in priorities within psychoanalytic pedagogy in Hoffer’s 1945, “Psychoanalytic Education,” 302-4.

to the demands of an external reality that was no longer harmonized with the needs of the individual.”<sup>144</sup>

Burlingham’s emphasis on the power of the ego to resist the disappointments and hardships imposed by reality both harkened back to Sigmund Freud’s rearticulation of the aims of analytic therapy in his own address in Budapest almost two decades earlier and reflected the changing circumstances in which analysts worked. In criticizing the attempts of modern educators – and psychoanalytic pedagogues, in particular – to create environments adapted to the child’s needs, Burlingham was formulating a critique that could be extended to the entire project of Red Vienna and the progressive educational ethos that animated it. As her logic implied, the efforts of the architects of Red Vienna to create an urban environment centered on the developing subject may only have severed the individual from reality and undermined her capacity to resist. Underneath her intervention, with its implicit critique of the politics of pedagogy of the Social Democratic project, was the question of how education could best engage the intractable reality beyond its artificially constructed protective spaces. It was a question that had assumed increasing salience over the preceding years.

By the time Burlingham offered her critical revision of analytic education, Red Vienna had long ceased to exist. In 1934, a succession of authoritarian revisions of the Austrian constitution by the Christian Social party and the machinations of far-right paramilitary organizations sparked a desperate uprising by radical socialists that was swiftly and violently suppressed. In its aftermath, Red Vienna was dismantled, the Social Democratic party abolished, and the democratic First Republic replaced by an authoritarian corporate state presided over by Austrofascist dictatorship. A far greater threat, however, loomed beyond the borders of the Austrian state. The

---

<sup>144</sup> Dorothy Burlingham, “Probleme des psychoanalytischen Erziehers,” *ZfpP* 11 (1937): 91-97, at 96.

year prior to the destruction of the First Republic, the National Socialist party had seized the reins of power following the appointment of Adolf Hitler as chancellor. Over the coming months, the Nazis would viciously suppress political opposition within Germany and unleash a far-reaching assault on the civil liberties of German Jews.

“Even Anna [gets] depressed,” were her father’s words to Lou Andreas-Salomé.<sup>145</sup> Despite being, like her father, inwardly distanced from Social Democracy and skeptical of its radical politics, Anna Freud saw the destruction of Red Vienna as the loss of a vital foundation for her work. It was a loss that prompted a disillusioning revision, one perhaps most evident in her study of the defense mechanisms, a work she began in the months following the 1934 Civil War.<sup>146</sup> Confronted by a far harsher reality, Freud felt compelled to assimilate psychoanalysis to the circumstances taking shape around it and to work-through the disappointment engendered by the contemporary events, above all, by reflecting on the relationship of psychoanalysis to the world around it. Having begun with the study of the conflicts between the id and the institutions of the ego, psychoanalysis, Freud wrote, had passed on to those between the ego and superego, before ultimately directing its attention to the study of the conflicts between the ego and the outside world.<sup>147</sup>

Theories of child development, Anna Freud argued, had hitherto failed to “sufficiently appreciate” the infantile ego’s “determination to avoid ‘pain’,” a failure, she contended, that had contributed to the disappointing outcome of a number of educational experiments over recent years. While modern pedagogical methods emphasized granting the child “greater liberty of

---

<sup>145</sup> Sigmund Freud to Andreas-Salomé, 14 May 1933,

<sup>146</sup> See Anna Freud to Max Eitingon, 4 October 1934, Library of Congress. In another letter to Eitingon from 26 March 1934, Freud described how the meetings and courses of the *WPV* had been interrupted by the imposition of martial law, before reporting, with remarkable equanimity, how the life of the society had begun to resume its normal course.

<sup>147</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 257.

action” and leaving it free to pursue its interests and determine its own activities, the results of this liberal approach had defied the progressive educators’ expectations. The fact that children in the latency phase often attached more importance to avoiding anxiety and pain than to gratifying their instinctual impulses, Freud explained, meant that rather than pursuing activities that would enable the sublimation (and indirect gratification) of their drives, children often retreated from actively engaging reality, withdrawing ever more into passivity. “To the surprise of the educationist the result of this freedom of choice is, in such cases, not the blossoming of the personality but the impoverishment of the ego.”<sup>148</sup>

What educators and psychoanalysts had lost sight of, Freud contended, was the immaturity and dependence of the infantile ego in its relations with the external world. “Too weak to oppose the outside world actively, to defend itself against it...or to modify it in accordance with its own will,” the child was also “too helpless physically to take flight” and too limited intellectually to grasp the necessity behind the dissatisfactions imposed by reality and thus “to submit to it.” In its utter dependence on the significant others in its life, the child was all the more vulnerable to the pain the external world could cause. In response, it developed a means of avoiding pain and anxiety through the denial of unpleasant external impressions. The refusal of the infantile ego to become aware of some disagreeable reality – its turning away from or disavowal of anxiety-inducing perceptions – was the most primitive of defense mechanisms, Freud explained. While it belonged wholly to the sphere of normal psychology, the persistence of the defensive process of denial into later years was an indication of a disturbance of development. What once had spared the ego pain and thus created the conditions for its acceptance of reality, would later inevitably interfere with the development of one of the ego’s most important functions – its capacity for

---

<sup>148</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 287-88.

reality testing. The question that this posed – a question that Freud saw as central to the perennial conflicts between different approaches to education – was how far it was permissible to encourage children to turn away from reality and construct a world of fantasy and how far education was tasked with inducing the child to devote its efforts to assimilating an often painful reality.<sup>149</sup>

The balance, following years of progressive, child-centered pedagogical reform, had clearly shifted towards the latter, in Freud's estimation. If the simplest method of sparing the child objective anxiety was that of influencing reality, the limitations of such a procedure had become increasingly apparent to Freud and her intimate collaborator, Burlingham. The child, Freud wrote, must learn to tolerate larger and larger quantities of 'pain' if it was to develop an ego capable of assimilating reality.<sup>150</sup> In the wake of the destruction of the progressive experiment that had flourished around them over the preceding years, adaptation to reality had assumed a far darker aspect in Freud's thought.

"Everything in psychoanalysis is still so unsteady and maintained by so few reliable hands," Anna Freud wrote Eitingon, "sometimes one can grow anxious about it."<sup>151</sup> Freud's admission, coming as it did in the same April 1934 letter in which she announced she was undertaking her study of the ego defenses, suggests how closely her work was connected to her intention of stabilizing and preserving her father's creation. A mistrust of politics and, in particular, a deep ambivalence towards all forms of political radicalism – but also of therapeutic and educational radicalism – was central to this effort.<sup>152</sup> It is a "crude misuse (*grober*

---

<sup>149</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 258, 266-67, 271.

<sup>150</sup> Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 254.

<sup>151</sup> Anna Freud to Max Eitingon, 4 October 1934, Library of Congress.

<sup>152</sup> As Anna Freud wrote to Ernest Jones in 23 February 1934, "Our one wish is for peace and quietness. But reality is not very eager to fulfill our wishes just now." Quoted in Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 199. Her father's reaction to the upheavals in February of 1934 was, despite some sympathy for the "rebels," above all, that of resolute neutrality, reflecting an attitude of irritable disillusionment. Quoting Mercutio, he summed up his attitude with the declaration "A plague on both your houses." See especially the discussion in Gay, *Freud*, 594-95.

*Mißbrauch*),” Anna Freud argued in her 1937 lectures, to “live out one’s dissatisfaction with present culture in pedagogy” – “such pedagogues educate the child for a world that does not exist.”<sup>153</sup> Without naming the object of her critique, Freud’s words unmistakably echoed her earlier objections to Reich’s radical therapeutic and pedagogical politics. The same year that she began her work on the defense mechanisms, Freud was instrumental in bringing about Reich’s expulsion from IPA, a measure formalized at the international psychoanalytic congress in Lucerne in August. Bemoaning the fact that the entire controversy had become contaminated by politics, Freud expressed the hope the previous year to Eitingon that it could be resolved on a “purely scientific” basis.<sup>154</sup> Rather than giving Reich, an unorthodox communist, the opportunity to play the role of “political martyr,” Freud wrote in 1933, the more promising path was simply “showing him” that he had “become a bad analyst.”<sup>155</sup> Perhaps more significant than her explicit belief that the scientific and the political could be separated was the latent one that radical politics was inseparable from bad psychoanalysis.

“Being a revolutionary requires more than being maladapted to reality (*als die Nichtineinpassen in der Realität*),” Freud wrote in a pointed barb at her former colleague.<sup>156</sup> Yet at a time when reality itself appeared to be careening in unpredictable, increasingly threatening ways (“What is still true today can in no time become nonsense,” she noted in 1933), the emphasis on adaptation to reality in Freud’s work strikes an odd note.<sup>157</sup> Far from distinguishing her thought,

---

<sup>153</sup> Anna Freud, “Kurs für Pädagogen: 5. Kursabend,” 1937, Archive of the Freud Museum London. Three years prior, Anna Freud’s ally, Robert Wälde, would offer a similar assessment in a paper, “Die Freiheitsproblem in der Psychoanalyse und das Problem der Realitätsprüfung,” read before the 1934 Lucerne congress of the IPA: “Die psychoanalytische Pädagogik ist im Gegensatz zu diesen ein Ansatz einer menschlichen Pädagogik. Sie nimmt ihr Objekt als Wesen mit existierenden, wenn auch mit eingeschränkten Freiheitsgraden, sie berücksichtigt die jeweilige Unfreiheit oder Freiheitsbeschränkung, sucht mit den vorhandenen Freiheitsgraden zu operieren und sie allmählich zu erweitern.” *Imago* 20 (1936): 467-484 (at 484).

<sup>154</sup> Anna Freud to Max Eitingon, 17 May 1933, Library of Congress.

<sup>155</sup> Anna Freud to Max Eitingon, 16 April 1933, Library of Congress.

<sup>156</sup> Anna Freud, “Kurs für Pädagogen: 5. Kursabend,” 1937, Archive of the Freud Museum London.

<sup>157</sup> Anna Freud to Max Eitingon, 22 February 1933, Library of Congress.

however, it was an emphasis that characterized the entire current of ego-psychology that took shape around her in 1930s Vienna and one that reached its apogee in Heinz Hartmann's 1937 study *Ich-Psychologie und Anpassungsproblem*.<sup>158</sup> An increasing focus on the process of individual adjustment to and assimilation of reality and a corresponding emphasis on normal adaptation to the external world as the basic criterion of health strangely coincided with the emergence of increasingly pathological forms of social reality and political life.

However out of touch with reality it seemed, such an emphasis was intimately connected to the redirection of analytic attention towards the task of defending the vulnerable ego, the agency responsible for upholding social and cultural standards. What was taking shape amid this reorientation was a new kind of psychoanalytic politics, one that defined itself against all forms of radicalism and extremism in the name of a mature appreciation of psychic and social complexity. Paradoxically, the plunge into political irrationality may only have increased the importance of adaptation – and thus the normative and normalizing direction of their thought – in the eyes of Anna Freud and her fellow Viennese ego-psychologists. Faced as they were by what appeared to be a massive collective pathology, normality came to appear all the more precious. But where psychoanalysts in the wake of the war had sought to recover social stability and reconstruct the normal sphere through ambitious forms of psychoanalytic activism – by creating a psychoanalysis for the masses – analysts in 1930s Vienna took a markedly different approach, one premised on the formation of mature individuals. If the therapies that sought to expand the social reach of analysis in the early 1920s had emphasized the purging of pathogenic affects and the, at times coercive, alteration of the patient's character, the liberal politics of Anna Freud and her followers

---

<sup>158</sup> Heinz Hartmann, *Ich-Psychologie und Anpassungsproblem*, *IZfP* 24 (1939 [1937]): 62-135.

looked to the construction of durable, flexible egos capable of regulating the manifold conflicts inherent to socialized subjectivity.

Adaptation to reality, Anna Freud suggested, was a precondition for effective – non-pathological – social and political engagement. But by presupposing, a perhaps impossible, adjustment to reality, such a politics inevitably precluded the positing of far-reaching, transformative political aims. Not the abolition of conflict, but its more humane regulation was the task of the psychoanalytically informed educator, Freud argued.<sup>159</sup> As if striving to preserve the vanishing model of a pluralist polity on the more intimate stage of the psyche, the educator, Freud insisted, was to remain objective and neutral in the conflict between the ego and drives – rather than helping one to triumph over the other, the educator was enjoined to see that the two parties remain civil (*anständig bleiben*).<sup>160</sup> Lost in this reformulation was the precisely the hope of liberation that underpinned so much psychoanalytic social activism and critical thought over the preceding years. In her hypostatization of conflict, Freud decisively rejected a politics of emancipation. Objectivity and rationality were the hallmarks of this politics; its aim the recovery of a vanished normalcy through the production of mature, socially adapted subjects.

While the more circumspect and pragmatic approach to the politics of psychoanalysis that emerged in 1930s Vienna channeled the attention of analysts away from mass (collective) interventions back towards individual psychotherapeutic work, the experiments of the preceding years nonetheless left a decisive imprint on this new theory of practice that Anna Freud and others developed. Above all, it reflected the rethinking of selfhood that unfolded in psychoanalysis in the wake of the war as the new subject at the heart of ego-psychology was an immature and

---

<sup>159</sup> Anna Freud, “Kurs für Pädagogen: 5. Kursabend,” 1937, Archive of the Freud Museum London.

<sup>160</sup> Anna Freud, “Kurs für Pädagogen: 5. Kursabend,” 1937, Archive of the Freud Museum London.

vulnerable ego struggling to adapt to the demands of a disillusioning, unsatisfying, and often overwhelming reality. At the same time, this reorientation was evident in the more modest forms of social activism that Freud and her colleagues undertook over these years. Unlike the Kleinians, Anna Freud and her followers never renounced the social application of psychoanalysis beyond the formal clinical context. Over the last year before the annexation of Austria by the Nazis in 1938, Freud organized and oversaw a day nursery for a dozen Viennese children from predominately proletarian backgrounds, a project that represented the immediate precursor to the Hampstead Nursery she and Dorothy Burlingham would organize in wartime London.<sup>161</sup> As she and her colleagues studied the complex, fraught process by which children adapt to reality, their own deteriorated rapidly. The politics of disabused, circumspect liberalism and modest social activism that consolidated in the aftermath of Red Vienna would nonetheless be transplanted to the United States and England following the Anschluss, and it would come to form the central, stabilizing component of the international culture of psychoanalysis over the coming decades.

---

<sup>161</sup> This undertaking, as Young-Bruehl notes, was one that Freud framed in resolutely non-utopian, anti-experimental terms. “The Jackson Nursery is neither an experiment in pedagogy nor an experimental psychology laboratory,” Freud wrote in the first – and also last – annual report on the nursery’s creation and progress. Quoted in Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*, 218 (see also 223).

– Conclusion –

What some saw as stabilizing and integrating, however, others viewed as deadening and stultifying. The ego psychology that emerged in 1930s Vienna and that was transplanted to America and England at the end of the decade would be beset by a number of formidable opponents. Though they had assumed a more civil tone over the 1930s, the hostilities that had flared up between Anna Freud and Melanie Klein in the mid-1920s had never died down. Following the emigration of many Viennese analysts to London in 1938, the stage was set for a monumental intellectual and professional battle within the British Psychoanalytic Association. While reprising many of the themes of the earlier disputes, the series of heated debates known as the “Controversial Discussions” (1941-45) between the Viennese school, the Kleinians, and a Middle (later the Independent) Group – debates that unfolded in the midst of the Second World War and the bombing of London – deepened the split in the identity of psychoanalysis that had opened up in the wake of the First World War.<sup>1</sup>

In France, the years following the Second World War saw the development of another current of psychoanalysis that framed itself polemically against ego psychology, both that of the American school and that of the group around Anna Freud. In his celebrated “return to Freud,” Jacques Lacan sought to recuperate the radical potential of Freud’s discoveries through an insistence on the otherness of the unconscious in place of what he saw as the normalizing tendency of ego psychology. While the latter emphasized the synthetic, adaptive qualities of the ego and sought to strengthen its capacity to rationally test psychic and social reality, for Lacan, the ego was always fundamentally alienation and self-deception. Against the current he saw embodied in ego

---

<sup>1</sup> On these debates, see the monumental *The Freud-Klein Controversies in the British Psychoanalytic Society*, ed. Pearl King and Riccardo Steiner (London, 1991).

psychology, Lacan sought to deepen Freud's discovery that the ego was not master in its own house.<sup>2</sup>

What this project has aimed to show, however, is that the turn to the ego in psychoanalytic theory and practice in the 1920s was anything but a repression of Freud's revolutionary discoveries. In fact, it was the new perspective opened up by the recognition of the vulnerability of the ego that most profoundly reflected the situation of crisis that loomed over the *Zwischenkriegszeit*. By turning to the ego, psychoanalysts were drawn into the broader state of exception that marked the interwar political conjuncture and that forced to rethink their theories and practices. The rupture within psychoanalysis that this moment precipitated opened onto a period of far-reaching experimentation and revision, one in which psychoanalysis was harnessed to the tasks of social and political renovation and in which new subjects and types of suffering came to displace the bourgeois norm of prewar analytic therapy. The rise of the masses and the violence and uncertainty of the interwar generated a crisis of authority within psychoanalysis that laid bare the aporia of analytic therapy and lent an insurmountable undecidability to the debates that surrounded the practice and theory of psychoanalysis.

Nevertheless, it has become a common trope in the historical scholarship that the emergence of ego psychology in Vienna represented a moment when psychoanalysis diverted its attention from the unconscious, and thus from the irreducible alterity of psychic life, to become an increasingly rational-scientific, normative, and disciplinary theory and practice. "Two options were available after Freud's 1920 revision of his theories," Elisabeth Roudinesco has written,

---

<sup>2</sup> This polemical engagement was most marked in Lacan's early seminars. See, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I, Freud's Papers on Technique (1953-1954)*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester (New York, 1988) and *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II, The Ego in Freud's Theory and the Technique of Psychoanalysis (1954-1955)*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York, 1991). Of the extensive literature on Lacan's "return to Freud," see especially, Samuel Weber, *Return to Freud: Jacques Lacan's Dislocation of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Michael Levine (New York, 1991) and Carolyn J. Dean, *The Self and Its Pleasures: Bataille, Lacan, and the History of the Decentered Subject* (Ithaca, NY, 1992).

One was to see the ego as the product of a gradual differentiation of the id, acting as a representative of reality and responsible for controlling the drives (ego psychology); the other rejected any idea of making the ego autonomous and instead looked to find its genesis in identification. The first alternative meant trying to extract the ego from the id and making it the instrument of the individual's adaptation to external reality, while the second option moved the ego closer to the id and sought to show itself structuring itself in stages by means of images borrowed from 'the other.'

It was this second path, Roudinesco argues, that Melanie Klein and Jacques Lacan would chart, while Anna Freud and her fellow Viennese ego psychologists opted for the former alternative.<sup>3</sup>

Yet as Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg has argued, the two options Roudinesco lays out were never mutually exclusive in the structural theory Anna Freud inherited from her father – on the contrary, they presupposed one another.<sup>4</sup> Strengthening the ego meant not extricating it from the id and blindly shoring-up its resistances, as some critics assumed, but rather investigating its development from out of the id – in Freud's own words, the ego was at its most resilient and resourceful when it was able to maintain "free intercourse" with the other regions of the psyche.<sup>5</sup> The aim of psychoanalytic therapy conveyed by Freud's dictum *wo es war soll ich werden* ("where it was, I shall become") was thus, as Cornelius Castoriadis has argued, not equivalent to the subjugation of the id by the ego but rather the alteration of the relationship between the mental agencies. It was by opening to the "uncontrolled and uncontrollable...flux of representations, affects, and desires" from the unconscious that the individual developed a "self-reflecting and deliberating subjectivity. In Castoriadis's Kantian reading, the psychoanalytic "project of autonomy" elaborated in Freud's structural theory paradoxically hinged on the recognition of

---

<sup>3</sup> Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York, 1997), 111. An even broader (if underdeveloped) critique of Freudian structural theory can be found in Adam Philips, *Becoming Freud: The Making of a Psychoanalyst* (New Haven, 2014). In his essay "Sociology and Psychology," Theodor Adorno criticized the tradition of ego psychology and, in particular, the analysis of the resistances, for its conformism and authoritarianism. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology (Part II)," trans. Irving N. Wohlfarth, *New Left Review* 1/47 (1968).

<sup>4</sup> Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity*, 29, 162-63.

<sup>5</sup> Freud, "Hemmung, Symptom und Angst," 125.

heteronomy.<sup>6</sup> Against the reductive readings of its manifold critics, ego psychology was thus always premised on thinking in different directions simultaneously.<sup>7</sup>

If ego psychology as it developed over the interwar was thus more nuanced and complex than its detractors have recognized, there is little question that a more “normative and normalizing” form of psychoanalysis emerged within it.<sup>8</sup> From the chaotic end of the Great War to the rise of fascism two decades later, restoring stability and recovering normalcy assumed new urgency for central European psychoanalysts. What prevented this desire – at least before 1934 – from lending Viennese ego psychology a conservative character was its connection to the social democratic project of constructing democracy and fashioning a more equitable society. In Freud’s seminal 1918 address, the equation of mental suffering with social deviance and the aim of defending society against this deviance went hand-in-hand with a program for the massive expansion of individual rights – “some time or other,” Freud wrote, “it must come to this.”<sup>9</sup> Throughout the interwar history of Viennese psychoanalysis, the aim of adapting the individual to society was inseparable from the aim of transforming the social to meet the needs of the individual. Conformism was always counterbalanced by critique.

This balance would shift in the wake of exile, however, and the psychoanalytic ego psychology that developed in Britain and America was of a considerably more conservative character. Yet even here something of the spirit of interwar experimentation survived, most notably in Anna Freud’s Hampstead War Nursery for vulnerable children in London and her

---

<sup>6</sup> Cornelius Castoriadis, “Psychoanalysis and Politics,” in *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, edited and translated by David Ames Curtis (Stanford, 1997 [1987]), 127-29. Along with the social theory of Jürgen Habermas, Castoriadis’ interpretation of the psychoanalytic “project of autonomy” informs Joel Whitebook’s powerful reinterpretation of the tradition of ego psychology in *Perversion and Utopia: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory* (Cambridge, MA, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> As Eli Zaretsky has astutely noted, the ego, in Freud’s theory, was never more vulnerable than when it denied its own vulnerability. Zaretsky, *Political Freud*, 147.

<sup>8</sup> The description is from Herzog, *Cold War Freud*, 36.

<sup>9</sup> Freud, “Wege,” 193.

Bulldogs Bank Home for Jewish orphans from Theresienstadt concentration camp. Both undertakings, however, defined themselves in predominately pragmatic terms, aiming to deepen empirical knowledge of child development through direct observation while facilitating the child's healthy adaptation to social norms. Mid-century America would prove even less hospitable for the survival of a politically progressive and socially critical psychoanalysis. While the radical agendas of the heterodox interwar psychoanalysts this project has discussed – in particular, Reich and Ferenczi – were exorcised from mainstream psychoanalysis in the United States, the crisis of authority their work reflected and amplified persisted albeit in an attenuated form. For all the normative assumptions and reifying descriptions in their classic essays, K. R. Eissler's study of the role of parameters in analytic treatment and Leo Stone's discussion of the "widening scope of indications for psychoanalysis" reflect a perspective on the social role of analytic therapy fundamentally similar to Sigmund and Anna Freud's, one in which the need to think beyond the classical paradigm was inseparable from an appreciation of the socially marginal and purely "hypothetical" character of the "normal" ego.<sup>10</sup>

Far more than the Lacanian and Kleinian traditions, ego psychology departed from and internalized an awareness of the social and political conditionality – and thus the historicity – of psychoanalytic thought and practice. Often against the reifying and hypostatizing tendencies of their own discourse, ego psychologists were committed to thinking the relationship between psyche and social at a moment of profound upheaval. If, as Herbert Marcuse has argued, "at the time of its maturity, Freud's theory comprehended...a vanishing rather than a prevalent image of man," namely that of the relatively autonomous ego formed within the confines of the Oedipal

---

<sup>10</sup> K. R. Eissler, "The Effect of the Structure of the Ego on Psychoanalytic Technique," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 1 (1953): 104-143 and Leo Stone, "The Widening Scope of Indications for Psychoanalysis," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 2 (1954): 567-94. On the significance of these two contributions to mid-century psychoanalysis in the United States, see Schechter, *Illusions of a Future*, 41-46.

family matrix, ego psychology valorized and sought to restore this vanishing type while simultaneously reflecting on what might be called its conditions of (im)possibility.<sup>11</sup> It is this internal division that lent Viennese psychoanalysts their critical purchase on the interwar conjuncture. Faced with subjects more vulnerable than any they had previously confronted and with a sociopolitical order in endemic crisis, Viennese Freudians were forced to think beyond their established theories, to refashion their practices, and thus to grapple with the profound open-endedness of the historical moment.

---

<sup>11</sup> Quote from Herbert Marcuse, “The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man,” from *Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics and Utopia* (Boston, 1970), 45. Similar ideas were developed by Marcuse’s fellow critical theorist, Theodor Adorno, in his 1941 essay “The Problem of a New Type of Human Being,” reprinted in *Current of Music: Elements of a Radio Theory*, edited by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Cambridge, 2009), 461-68.

## Primary Sources

### *Archival*

Anna Freud Papers, Archive of the Freud Museum London

Columbia University. Oral History Research Office, Oral History Collection (1979). Library of Congress.

Paul Federn Papers, Library of Congress

Anna Freud Papers, Library of Congress.

### *Printed*

#### Correspondences and Minutes:

“...als käm ich heim zu Vater und Schwester.” *Lou Andreas-Salomé – Anna Freud, Briefwechsel 1919-1937*. Edited by Daria A. Rothe and Inge Weber. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001.

*Briefe an Eva Rosenfeld*. Edited by Peter Heller. Basel: Stroemfeld Verlag, 1992.

*'Die Psychoanalyse kann nur dort Gedeihen, wo Freiheit des Gedankens herrscht'. Briefwechsel 1921-1949*. Edited by Aichhorn, Thomas. Frankfurt a. M.: Brandes & Apsel, 2012.

*Die Rundbriefe des 'Geheimen Komitees'*, 4 volumes. Edited by Gerhard Wittenberger and Christfried Tögel. Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 1999.

*Protokolle der Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung*, 4 volumes. Edited by Herman Nunberg and Ernst Federn. Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 1976-1981.

*Psycho-analysis and Faith: The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Oskar Pfister*, edited by Heinrich Meng and Ernst L. Freud. Translated by Eric Mosbacher. London: Hogarth Press, 1963.

*Sigmund Freud-Karl Abraham. Briefe, 1907-1926*. Edited by Hilda C. Abraham and Ernst L. Freud. Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 1965.

*Sigmund Freud. Briefe an Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*. Edited by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Michael Schröter. Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 1986.

*Sigmund Freud—Oskar Pfister, Briefe, 1909-1939.* Edited by Ernst L. Freud and Heinrich Meng. Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 1980.

*Sigmund Freud und Sandor Ferenczi – Briefwechsel,* 6 volumes. Edited by Eva Brabant, Ernst Falzeder, Patrizia Giampieri-Deutsch. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 1993.

### Works by Sigmund Freud:

All works by Sigmund Freud are from *Gesammelte Werke (GW)* 18 vols. Edited by Anna Freud, E. Bibring, W. Hoffer, E. Kris, O. Isakower. Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 1961-1983.

All translations of passages from *GW* are from *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.* 24 vols. Translated by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1975.

Freud, Sigmund. "Die Abwehr-Neurose. Versuch einer psychologischen Theorie der akquirierten Hysterie, vieler Phobien und Zwangsvorstellungen und gewisser halluzinatorischer Psychosen," *GW I* (1894): 57-74

———. "Studien über Hysterie," *GW I* (1895): 75-312.

———. "Über die Berechtigung von der Neurasthenie einen bestimmten Symptomkomplex als 'Angst-Neurose' Abzutrennen," *GW I* (1895): 315-42.

———. "Weitere Bemerkungen über die Abwehr-Neurose," *GW I* (1896): 379-403.

———. "L'Hérédité et L'Étiologie des Névroses," *GW I* (1896): 407-22.

———. "Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie," *GW I* (1896): 423-460.

———. "Inhaltsangaben der wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten des Privatdozenten Dr. Sigm. Freud (1877-1897)," *GW I* (1897): 469-88.

———. "Die Sexualität in der Ätiologie der Neurosen," *GW I* (1898): 491-518.

———. "Über Psychotherapie," *GW V* (1904): 13-26.

———. "Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie," *GW V* (1905): 29-145.

———. "Meine Ansichten über die Rolle der Sexualität in der Ätiologie der Neurosen," *GW V* (1905): 149-159

———. "Bruchstück einer Hysterie-Analyse," *GW V* (1905): 163-286.

- . “Zur sexuellen Aufklärung der Kinder,” *GW VII* (1907): 19-27.
- . “Die ‘kulturelle’ Sexualmoral und die moderne Nervosität,” *GW VII* (1908): 143-167
- . “Über infantilen Sexualtheorien,” *GW VII* (1908): 171-188.
- . “Analyse der Phobie eines fünfjährigen Knabens,” *GW VII* (1909): 243-377.
- . “Über Psychoanalyse,” *GW VIII* (1909),
- . “Beiträge zur Psychologie des Liebeslebens, II: Über die allgemeinste Erniedrigung des Liebeslebens,” *GW VIII* (1910)
- . “Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci,” *GW VIII* (1910):
- . “Die Zukünftigen Chance der psychoanalytischen Therapie,” *GW VIII* (1910): 104-115
- . “Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens,” *GW VIII* (1911): 230-39.
- . “Zur Dynamik der Übertragung,” *GW VIII* (1912): 364-74.
- . “Ratschläge für den Ärzten bei der psychoanalytischen Behandlung,” *GW VIII* (1912): 376-87.
- . “Das Interesse an der Psychoanalyse,” *GW VIII* (1913): 390-420.
- . “Totem und Tabu,” *GW IX* (1913): 3-195.
- . “Geleitwort zu *Die psychoanalytische Method*,” *GW X* (1913): 448-50.
- . “Zur Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung,” *GW X* (1914): 44-113.
- . “Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten,” *GW X* (1914): 126-36.
- . “Zur Einführung des Narzismus,” *GW X* (1914): 137-70.
- . “Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse,” *GW XI* (1916/17): 3-484.
- . “Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose,” *GW XII* (1918): 29-157.
- . “Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie,” *GW XII* (1919): 183-94.
- . “Einleitung zu *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen*,” *GW XII* (1919): 321-24.
- . “Jenseits des Lustprinzips,” *GW XIII* (1920): 3-69.

- . “Gutachten über die elektrische Behandlung der Kriegsneurotiker,” *GW: Texte aus den Jahren 1885 bis 1938* (1920): 704-10.
- . “Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse,” *GW XIII* (1921): 73-161.
- . “Vorwort,” *GW XIII* (1923): 441.
- . “Das Ich und das Es,” *GW XIII* (1923): 237-89.
- . “Dr. Sandor Ferenczi (Zum 50. Geburtstag),” in *GW XIII* (1923): 443-45.
- . “Geleitwort zu *Verwahrloste Jugend*,” *GW XIV* (1925): 565-67.
- . “Hemmung, Symptom und Angst,” *GW XIV* (1926): 113-205.
- . “Die Frage der Laienanalyse,” *GW XIV* (1926): 209-86.
- . “Zukunft einer Illusion,” *GW XIV* (1927): 325-80.
- . “Das Unbehagen in der Kultur,” *GW XIV* (1930): 421-506.
- . “Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse,” *GW XV* (1933): 3-170.
- . “Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse,” *GW XVI* (1937): 59-99.
- . “Abriss der Psychoanalyse,” *GW XVII* (1938): 64-138.

#### Works by Other Authors:

#### Abbreviations:

*IZfP* – *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*  
*ZfpP* – *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik*

- Abraham, Karl. “Über die Bedeutung sexueller Jugendtraumen für die Symptomatologie der Dementia praecox.” In *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1. Edited by Johannes Cremerius, 125-31. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982 [1907].
- . “Das Erleiden sexueller Traumen als Form infantiler Sexualbetätigung.” In *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, 165-79 [1907].
- . “Erstes Korreferat.” In *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1919.

- . “Über eine besondere Form des neurotischen Widerstandes gegen die psychoanalytische Methodik.” *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 5 (1919), 173-80.
- . *Versuch einer Entwicklungsgeschichte der Libido auf Grund der Psychoanalyse seelischer Störungen*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924.
- Adler, Adler. “Das sexuelle Probleme in der Erziehung.” In *Alfred Adler Studienausgabe: Persönlichkeit und neurotische Entwicklung. Frühe Schriften (1904-1912)* vol. 1. Edited by Almuth Bruder-Bezzel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007 [1905].
- . “Das Zärtlichkeitsbedürfnis des Kindes.” In *Studienausgabe*, vol. 1 [1908].
- . *Über den nervösen Charakter. Grundzüge einer vergleichenden Individualpsychologie und Psychotherapie*. In *Alfred Adler Studienausgabe: Über den nervösen Charakter (1912)*, vol. 2. Edited by Almuth Bruder-Bezzel.
- . “Die Frau als Erzieherin.” In *Alfred Adler Studienausgabe: Schriften zur Erziehung und Erziehungsberatung (1913-1937)*, vol. 4. Edited by Wilfried Datler and Johannes Gstach.
- . “Das Problem der Homosexualität.” In *Alfred Adler Studienausgabe: Gesellschaft und Kultur (1897-1937)*, vol. 7. Edited by Almuth Bruder-Bezzel, 88-100. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009 [1917].
- . “Die neuen Gesichtspunkte in der Frage der Kriegsneurosen.” In *Praxis und Theorie der Individualpsychologie*, 207-16. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965 [1918].
- . “Über die Homosexualität.” In *Praxis und Theorie der Individualpsychologie*, 123-34. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965 [1918].
- . “Über individualpsychologische Erziehung.” In *Studienausgabe*, vol. 4, [1918].
- . “Bolschewismus und Seelenkunde.” In *Studienausgabe*, vol. 7, 111-19. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009 [1919].
- . “Die andere Seite. Eine massenpsychologische Studie über die Schuld des Volkes.” In *Studienausgabe*, vol. 7, 120-30 [1919].
- . “Verwahrloste Kinder.” In *Studienausgabe*, vol. 4 [1920].
- . “Diskussionsbemerkungen zum Vortrage des Prof. Max Adler im Verein für Individualpsychologie.” In *Studienausgabe*, vol. 7, 158-62 [1925].

- . “Salvaging Mankind by Psychology.” Reprinted as “Rettung der Menschheit durch Psychologie.” In *Studienausgabe*, vol. 7, 163-68 [1925].
- Adler, Alfred and Carl Furtmüller eds. *Heilen und Bilden. Ärztliche-pädagogische Arbeiten des Vereins für Individualpsychologie*. Munich: Reinhardt, 1914.
- Adler, Max. “Sozialismus und Erziehung.” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 1 (1921): 1-10.
- . “Erziehung als Beruf.” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 2 (1922): 236-45.
- . *Neue Menschen. Gedanken über sozialistische Erziehung*. Berlin: Laub, 1926 [1924].
- Adler, Viktor. “Neue Aufgaben,” *Der Kampf. Sozialdemokratische Monatsheft* 1 (1907): 6-9.
- Aichhorn, August. “Über die Erziehung in Besserungsanstalten.” *Imago. Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften* 9 (1923): 189-211.
- . *Verwahrloste Jugend. Die Psychoanalyse in der Fürsorgeerziehung*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1925.
- . *Psychoanalyse und Erziehungsberatung*. Munich: Reinhardt, 1970.
- Alexander, Franz. “Referat: Dr. S. Ferenczi und Dr. Otto Rank, *Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse*,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* XI (1925): 113-22.
- . *Psychoanalyse der Gesamtpersönlichkeit. Neun Vorlesungen über die Anwendung von Freuds Ichtheorie auf die Neurosenlehre*. Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1927.
- Austerlitz, Friedrich. “Die Arbeitermörder freigesprochen. Der Bluttag von Schattendorf ungesühnt.” *Arbeiter-Zeitung* 40/193 (15 July 1927), 1.
- Bauer, Otto. “Der Weg zum Sozialismus.” Berlin: Verlagsgenossenschaft “Freiheit,” 1919.
- . “Schulreform und Klassenkampf. Ein Vortrag über die Funktionen der Schule in der Gesellschaft.” In *Otto Bauer. Werkausgabe* vol. 2. Vienna: Europaverlag, 1976, 405-426 [1921].
- . *Die österreichische Revolution*. Vienna: Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1923.
- . “Sozialdemokratie, Religion und Kirche. Ein Beitrag zur Erläuterung des Linzer Programms.” Vienna: Weinz Volksbuchhandlung, 1927.
- Bernfeld, Siegfried. “Drei Reden an die Jugend: II. Der Kampf der Jugend gegen Familie und Schule.” In *Jugendbewegung – Jugendforschung*. Edited by Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 2 of *Siegfried Bernfeld: Werke* (Giessen, 2011 [1914]), 52-85.

- . “Die neue Jugend und die Frauen.” In *Theorie des Jugendalters*. Edited by Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 1 *Werke* (1914), 9-42.
- . “Die Jugendgemeinde.” In vol. 2 of *Werke* (1914), 91-98.
- . “Über den Begriff der Jugend.” In vol. 1 of *Werke* (1915), 43-137.
- . *Das jüdische Volk und seine Jugend*. In *Zionismus und Jugendkultur*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann, Werner Föllig, and Maria Fölling-Albers, vol. 3 of *Werke* (1919), 19-171.
- . *Kinderheim Baumgarten. Bericht über einen ernsthaften Versuch mit neuer Erziehung*. In *Sozialpädagogik*. Edited by Daniel Barth and Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 4 of *Werke* (1921), 9-155.
- . *Sisyphos, oder die Grenzen der Erziehung*. In *Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung/Pädagogik und Psychoanalyse*. Edited by Ulrich Herrmann, Wilfred Datler, and Rolf Göppel, vol. 5 of *Werke* (1925), 11-130.
- . *Die Psychologie des Säuglings*. In *Psychologie des Säuglings und der frühen Kindheit*. Edited by Wilfred Datler, Rolf Göppel, and Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 9 of *Werke* (1925), 3-338.
- . “Über sexuelle Aufklärung.” *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* 1 (1926): 195-99.
- . “Der Irrtum des Pestalozzis.” In vol. 5 of *Werke* (1926), 191-200.
- . “Die Psychoanalyse in der Erziehungswissenschaft.” In vol. 5 of *Werke* (1926/27), 155-66.
- . “Der Erzieher.” In vol. 5 of *Werke* (1927), 131-54.
- . “Das Massenproblem in der sozialistischen Pädagogik.” In *Sozialistische Pädagogik und Schulkritik*. Edited by Ulrich Herrmann, vol. 8 of *Werke* (1927), 29-42.
- . “Die Schulgemeinde und ihre Funktion im Klassenkampf.” In vol. 8 of *Werke*, 75-186.
- . “Die männliche Großstadtjugend.” In vol. 4 of *Werke* (1928), 227-38.
- . “Der soziale Ort und seine Bedeutung für Neurose, Verwahrlosung und Pädagogik.” In vol. 4 of *Werke* (1929), 255-72.
- . “Die Tantalus-Situation. Bemerkungen zum ‘kriminellen Über-Ich’.” In vol. 4 of *Werke* (1931), 303-21.

- . “On Psychoanalytic Training.” *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 31 (1962 [1952]): 453-82.
- Bernfeld, Siegfried ed. *Vom Gemeinschaftsleben der Jugend. Beiträge zur Jugendforschung*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1922.
- Bornstein, Berta. “Beziehungen zwischen Sexual- und Intellektenwicklung,” 5 *ZfpP* (1930): 445-54.
- . “Zur Psychogenese der Pseudodebilität.” *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 16 (1930): 378-99.
- Bornstein-Windholz, Steff. “Mißverständnisse in der psychoanalytischen Pädagogik.” *ZfpP* 11 (1937): 81-90
- Blüher, Hans. “Führer und Volk in der Jugendbewegung.” Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1918.
- Bühler, Charlotte. *Kindheit und Jugend. Genese des Bewußtseins*. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1928.
- Bühler, Karl. *Die geistige Entwicklung des Kindes*. Jena: Fischer, 1918.
- Burlingham, Dorothy. “Probleme des psychoanalytischen Erziehers.” *ZfpP* 11 (1937): 91-97
- [D. J. H.] “Referat,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 5 (1919): 125-29.
- Fadrus, Viktor. “Zehn Jahre Schulreform und Schul-Politik in Österreich. Rückblick und Ausblick.” In *Zehn Jahre Schulreform in Österreich*, edited by Viktor Fadrus. 9-59. Vienna: Gerin, 1929.
- Federn, Paul. *Zur Psychologie der Revolution. Die vaterlose Gesellschaft*. Leipzig: Anzengruber Verlag, 1919.
- Federn, Paul and Heinrich Meng eds. *Das psychoanalytische Volksbuch*. Stuttgart: Hippokrates, 1926.
- Ferenczi, Sándor. “Entwicklungsstufen des Wirklichkeitssinnes.” In *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse: Band I. Theorie*, 62-83. Bern: Verlag Hans Huber, 1927 [1913].
- . “Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik,” in *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band III: Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1908-1933*, 9-21. Bern: Verlag Hans Huber, 1939 [1908].
- . “Über zwei Typen der Kriegshysterie.” In *Bausteine. Band III*, 58-79 [1916].
- . “Die Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen.” In *Bausteine. Band III*, 95-118 [1918].
- . “Technische Schwierigkeiten einer Hysterieanalyse (Zugleich Beobachtungen über larvierte Onanie und ‘Onanie-Aequivalente’).” In *Bausteine. Band III*, 119-28 [1919].

- . “Zur psychoanalytischen Technik.” In *Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse. Band II: Praxis*, 38-54. Bern: Verlag Hans Huber, 1984 [1919].
- . “Zur Frage der Beeinflussung des Patienten in der Psychoanalyse.” In *Bausteine. Band II*, 58-61 [1919].
- . “Weiterer Ausbau der ‘aktiven Technik’ in der Psychoanalyse,” In *Bausteine. Band II*, 62-86 [1921].
- . “Kontraindikationen der aktiven psychoanalytischen Technik.” In *Bausteine. Band II*, 99-115 [1926].
- . “Zur Kritik der Rankschen ‘Technik der Psychoanalyse.’” In *Bausteine. Band II*, 116-28 [1927].
- . “Die Anpassung der Familie an das Kind.” In *Bausteine. Band III*, 347-66 [1927].
- . “Die Elastizität der psychoanalytischen Technik.” In *Bausteine. Band III*, 380-98 [1927-28].
- . “Kinderanalysen mit Erwachsenen.” In *Bausteine. Band III*, 490-510 [1931].
- . “Sprachverwirrung zwischen den Erwachsenen und dem Kind (Die Sprache der Zärtlichkeit und der Leidenschaft). In *Bausteine. Band III*, 511-25 [1932].
- Ferenczi, Sandor and Otto Rank, *Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse. Zur Wechselbeziehung von Theorie und Praxis*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924.
- Fischl, Hans. “Die Lebenslüge der wissenschaftlichen Pädagogik,” *Der Kampf* 19 (1926): 280-85, reprinted in *Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung*, 497-506.
- Freud, Anna. *Einführung in der Technik der Kinderanalyse. Vier Vorträge am Lehrinstitut der Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung*. Reprinted as *Vier Vorträge über Kinderanalyse*. In *Die Schriften der Anna Freud. Band I, 1922-1936*, 9-75. Frankfurt a. M., Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980 [1927].
- . *Einführung in die Psychoanalyse für Pädagogen. Vier Vorträge*. Reprinted as *Vier Vorträge über Psychoanalyse für Lehrer und Eltern*. In *Die Schriften der Anna Freud. Band I*, 78-138 (1930).
- . “Zur Theorie der Kinderanalyse.” In *Die Schriften der Anna Freud. Band I*, 165-78 (1928).
- . “Die Erziehung des Kleinkindes vom psychoanalytischen Standpunkt aus.” In *Die Schriften der Anna Freud. Band I*, 179-90.

- . *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*. In *Die Schriften der Anna Freud. Band I*, 191-355 (1936).
- . *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*. In *The Writings of Anna Freud. Vol. 2*. New York: International Universities Press, 1966 (1936).
- . “A Short History of Child Analysis.” *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 21 (1966), 7-14.
- Friedjung, Josef Carl. “Erziehung der Eltern.” Leipzig: Anzengruber-Verlag, 1916.
- . “Die geschlechtliche Aufklärung im Erziehungswerke. Ein Wegweiser für Eltern, Erzieher und Ärzte.” Vienna: Julius Springer, 1926
- . “Was bietet die Psychoanalyse dem sozialistischen Erzieher?” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* (1926), 159-62
- Fromm, Erich. “Die gesellschaftliche Bedingtheit der psychoanalytischen Therapie.” In *Erich Fromm Gesamtausgabe* in twelve volumes, ed. Rainer Funk, vol. 1 *Analytische Sozialpsychologie* (Stuttgart, 1999), 115-38.
- Furtmüller, Karl. “Otto Glöckel und die Schulreform.” In *Zehn Jahre Schulreform in Österreich. Eine Festgabe*, 1-8. Vienna, 1929.
- Geiringer, Hilda. “Eine proletarische Schulgemeinde,” *Die junge Schweiz. Zeitschrift der Jugend* 2 (1920)
- Glöckel, Otto. “Das Tor der Zukunft.” In *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, edited by Erik Adam. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1983 [1916].
- . “Schulreform und Volksbildung in der Republik.” Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung Ignaz Brand & Co., 1919.
- . “Selbstbiographie. Sein Lebenswerk: die Wiener Schulreform.” In *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, edited by Erik Adam.
- Golias, Edward. “Krieg und Jugendverwahrlosung.” Leipzig: Neue Akad. Verlag, 1919.
- Häberlin, Paul. “Psychoanalyse und Erziehung,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 2 (1914): 213-222
- Hartmann, Heinz. *Ich-Psychologie und Anpassungsproblem*. *IZfP* 24 (1939 [1937]): 62-135.

- Hoffer, Willi. "Psychoanalytic Education." *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 1 (1945): 293-307.
- Homburger, Erik. "Die Zukunft der Aufklärung und die Psychoanalyse." *ZfpP* 4 (1930): 201-16
- Hug-Hellmuth, Hermine. *Aus dem Seelenleben des Kindes. Eines psychoanalytische Studie.* Leipzig: F. Deuticke, 1913.
- . "Kinderpsychologie, Pädagogik," *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschung* 6 (1914): 393-404.
- . "Zur Technik der Kinderanalyse," *IZfP* 7 (1921): 179-97.
- Jalkotzy, Alois. "Referat," *Die sozialistische Erziehung*, 5 (1925), 283-87. Reprinted in Siegfried Bernfeld, *Werke*, vol. 5, 473-79.
- Jones, Ernest. "Psycho-Analysis and Education." In *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, 393-415. New York: Wood, 1913 [1910].
- . "Review of *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 19 (1938): 115-16.
- . "The Value of Sublimating Processes for Education and Re-Education." In *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, 416-32.
- Kanitz, Otto Felix. "Kampf and Bildung." Vienna: Verband der sozialistischen Arbeiterjugend, 1924.
- . "Alfred Adler und die sozialistische Erziehung." *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 10 (1930): 49-51.
- . "Erziehung, Schule, Klassenkampf." *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 3 (1923): 48-51.
- . "Geschlechtliche Erziehung," *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 2 (1922).
- . *Das proletarische Kind in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft.* Jena: Urania Verlag, 1925.
- Kerlów-Löwenstein, Kurt. *Das Kind als Träger der werdenden Gesellschaft.* Vienna: Jungbrunnen, 1928 [1924].
- . "Schulreform und Klassenkampf." *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 3 (1923), 57-61.
- Klein, Melanie. "Eine Kinderentwicklung." *Imago* 7/3 (1921): 251-309.
- . "Zur Frühanalyse." *Imago*. 9/2 (1923): 222-59.

- . “Symposium on Child Analysis: I.” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 8 (1927): 339-70
- . *The Psycho-Analysis of Children*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1932.
- . “A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States.” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 16 (1935): 145-74.
- Lazarsfeld, Sofie. “Referat,” *Vorwärts. Sozialdemokratische Zeitung*, October 2, 1927, reprinted in Siegfried Bernfeld, *Werke*, vol. 5, 511-13
- . “Sexuelle Erziehung.” Vienna: Leipzig Perles, 1931.
- Leichter, Käthe. *Käthe Leichter. Leben und Werk*, edited by Herbert Steiner. Vienna: Europaverlag, 1973.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston, 1955).
- Meng, Heinrich and Ernst Schneider. “Zur Einführung.” *ZfpP* 1 (1926): 1-2.
- . “Sexuelles Wissen und sexuelle Aufklärung.” *ZfpP* 2 (1927): 223-24.
- Neurath, Otto. *Lebengestaltung und Klassenkampf*. In *Gesammelte philosophische und methodologische Schriften*, vol. 1, edited by Rudolf Haller et. al. (Vienna, 1981), 227-93.
- Pollack, Marianne. “Ein Argument für die sozialistische Erziehung” *Die sozialistische Erziehung* 3 (1922).
- Rank, Otto. *Das Trauma der Geburt und seine Bedeutung für die Psychoanalyse*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924.
- Rank, Otto and Hans Sachs. *Die Bedeutung der Psychoanalyse für die Geisteswissenschaften*. Wiesbaden: J. F. Bergmann, 1913.
- Reich, Wilhelm. *Der triebhafte Charakter. Eine psychoanalytische Studie zur Pathologie des Ich*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1925.
- . “Eltern als Erzieher II. Die Stellung der Eltern zur kindlichen Onanie.” *ZfpP* 1, no. 7/8/9 (1926): 263-269.
- . “Eltern als Erzieher. I. Der Erziehungszwang und seine Ursachen.” *ZfpP* 1, no. 3 (1926): 65-74.
- . *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy*. Translated by Vincent R. Carfagno. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973 [1942].

- . *Geschlechtsreife, Enthaltensamkeit, Ehemoral. Eine Kritik der bürgerlichen Sexualreform.* Vienna: Münster, 1930.
- . *Charakteranalyse. Technik und Grundlagen für Studierende und praktizierende Analytiker.* Self-published, 1933.
- Reik, Theodor. *Geständniszwang und Strafbedürfnis. Probleme der Psychoanalyse und der Kriminologie.* Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1925.
- Riviere, Joan. "Symposium of Child Analysis: II." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 8 (1927): 370-77.
- Seitz, Karl. "Die Jungen," "Thesen zu pädagogischen Themen." In *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, edited by Erik Adam, 242-50. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1983 [1899].
- Schlesinger, Therese. "Wie will und wie soll das Proletariat seine Kinder Erziehen." Vienna: Verlag des Frauen - Reichskomitees, 1921.
- Schmidt, Vera. "Psychoanalytische Erziehung in Sowjetrussland. Bericht über das Kinderheim-Laboratorium in Moskau." Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924.
- Simmel, Ernst. *Kriegsneurosen und 'psychisches Trauma'. Ihre gegenseitige Beziehung, dargestellt auf Grund psychoanalytischer, hypnotischer Studien* (Leipzig, 1918).
- . "Zweites Korreferat," in *Zur Psychoanalyse der Kriegsneurosen*, 42-60.
- . "Psychoanalyse der Massen," in *Psychoanalyse und ihre Anwendungen. Ausgewählte Schriften* (Frankfurt a. M., 1993 [1919]), 36-42.
- Tandler, Julius. "Krieg und Bevölkerung." Vienna: W. Braumüller, 1916.
- Tesarek, Anton. *Das Kind ist entdeckt: Beitrag zu einer volkstümlichen Seelenkunde.* Vienna: Verlag Jungbrunnen, 1933.
- Wexberg, Erwin. "Sexuelles und erotisches Problem." *Technik der Erziehung. Ein Leitfaden für Eltern und Lehrer.* Edited by Sofie Lazarsfeld. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1929.
- Wittels, Fritz. *Die Befreiung des Kindes.* Stuttgart: Hippokrate, 1927.
- Wolffheim, Nelly. "Psychoanalyse und Kindergarten." *ZfpP* 4 (1930): 18-27.
- Zulliger, Hans. *Psychanalytische Erfahrungen aus der Volksschulpraxis.* Bern: Ernst Bircher Verlag, 1921.
- . "Eltern, Schule und sexuelle Aufklärung," *ZfpP* 1 (1926): 228-39.

———. *Gelöste Fesseln. Studien, Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen.* Dresden: Alwin Huhle, 1927.

### Secondary Sources

- Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception.* Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Achs, Oskar and Albert Krassnigg. *Drillschule, Lernschule, Arbeitsschule. Otto Glöckel und die österreichische Schulreform in der Ersten Republik.* Vienna: Jugend-und-Volk-Verlag, 1974.
- Adam, Erik. “Austromarxismus und Schulreform.” In *Die Schul- und Bildungspolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*, edited by Erik Adam. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1983.
- Aichhorn, Thomas ed. *Wer war August Aichhorn: Briefe, Dokumente, unveröffentlichte Arbeiten.* Vienna: Verlag Löcker & Wögenstein, 1976.
- Aichhorn, Thomas. “Bausteine zu einer Biographie August Aichorns.” In *Die österreichische Reformpädagogik, 1918-1938. Symposiumsdokumentation*, edited by Erik Adam, 33-52. Vienna: Böhlau, 1981.
- Andresen, Sabine. *Sozialistische Kindheitskonzepte. Politische Einflüsse auf die Erziehung.* Munich: Ernst Reinhardt, 2006.
- Barth, Daniel. *Kinderheim Baumgarten. Siegfried Bernfelds ‘Versuch mit neuer Erziehung’ aus psychoanalytischer und soziologischer Sicht.* Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2010.
- Benetka, Gerhard. *Psychologie in Wien. Sozial- und Theoriegeschichte der Wiener Psychologischen Instituts, 1922-1938.* Vienna: WUV-Univ.-Verlag, 1995.
- Bersani, Leo. *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Bittner, Günther and Rolf Göppel. “Die Burlingham-Rosenfeld-Schule – ein Versuch progressiver Schulerziehung im psychoanalytischen Milieu Wiens.” In *Das Kind ist Entdeckt. Erziehungsexperimente im Wien der Zwischenkriegszeit*, edited by Charlotte Zwiauer and Harald Eichelberger. Vienna: Pincus, 2001.
- Boyer, John W. *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

- . “Freud, Marriage, and Late Vienna Liberalism: A Commentary from 1905.” *The Journal of Modern History* 50 (1978): 72-102.
- . “Silent War and Bitter Peace: The Revolution of 1918 in Austria.” *Austria History Yearbook* 34 (2003): 1-56.
- Bottomore, Tom. *Austro-Marxism*, ed. Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Braunthal, Julius. *Victor und Friedrich Adler. Zwei Generationen Arbeiterbewegung*. Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1965.
- Britzman, Deborah P. *After Education: Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, and Psychoanalytic Histories of Learning*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.
- . *The Very Thought of Education: Psychoanalysis and the Impossible Professions*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009.
- Bruder-Bezzel, Almuth. *Geschichte der Individualpsychologie*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999.
- Brunner, José. *Freud and the Politics of Psychoanalysis*, second edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2001.
- Cabanes, Bruno. *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Canning, Kathleen. “Between Crisis and Order: The Imaginary of Citizenship in the Aftermath of War.” In *Ordnungen in der Krise. Zur politischen Kulturgeschichte Deutschlands 1900-1933*, edited by Wolfgang Hardtwig, 215-228. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007.
- Cifali, Mirielle and Francis Imbert, *Freud und die Pädagogik. Mit Texten von Sigmund Freud, August Aichhorn und Hans Zulliger*. Translated Beat Marz. Frankfurt a. M.: Brandes et Apsel, 2013.
- Coles, Robert. *Anna Freud: The Dream of Psychoanalysis*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1992.
- Dachs, Herbert. *Schule und Politik: Die politische Erziehung an den österreichischen Schule 1918 bis 1938*. Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1982.
- Dahmer, Helmut. *Libido und Gesellschaft. Studien über Freud und die Freudsche Linke*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973.

- Danto, Elizabeth Ann. “‘The Environment as a Cause of Disease in Children’: Josef Friedjung’s Transnational influence on Modern Child Welfare Theory.” *Child Welfare* 92 (2013): 159-179.
- . *Freud’s Free Clinics: Psychoanalysis and Social Justice, 1918-1938*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Davidson, Arnold. “How to Do the History of Psychoanalysis: A Reading of Freud’s ‘Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality.’” *Critical Inquiry* 13 (1987): 252-277.
- Davis, Belinda. *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Decker, Hannah S. *Freud in Germany: Revolution and Reaction in Science, 1893-1907*. New York: International Universities Press, 1977.
- Dickinson, Edward Ross. “Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse About ‘Modernity’.” *Central European History* 37 (2004): 1-48.
- . *The Politics of German Child Welfare: From the Empire to the Federal Republic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- . *Sex, Freedom, and Power in Imperial Germany, 1880-1914*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Donson, Andrew. *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914-1918*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Dudek, Peter. “Er war halt genialer als die anderen”. *Biografische Annäherungen an Siegfried Bernfeld*. Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2012.
- . *Grenzen der Erziehung im 20. Jahrhundert. Allmacht und Ohnmacht im pädagogischen Diskurs* (Bad Heilbrunn, 1999)
- . *Jugend als Objekt der Wissenschaft. Geschichte der Jugendforschung in Deutschland und Österreich 1890-1933*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990.
- . “Versuchsacker für eine neue Jugend.” *Die Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf 1906-1945*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2009.
- Ekstein, Rudolf and Rocco L. Motto. “Psychoanalysis and Education – An Historical Account.” In *From Learning to Love to Love of Learning: Essays on Psychoanalysis and Education*, edited by Rudolf Ekstein and Rocco L. Motto. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1969.

- Elliot, Anthony. "Psychoanalysis and the Theory of the Subject." In *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and its Epistemological Others*, edited by George Steinmetz, 427-50. Durham: Duke UP, 2005.
- Engelbrecht, Helmut. *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesen. Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs*, vol. 5, *Von 1918 bis zur Gegenwart*. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1988.
- Erös, Ferenc. "Some Social and Political Issues Related to Ferenczi and the Hungarian School." In *Ferenczi and His World: Rekindling the Spirit of the Budapest School*, edited by Judit Szekacs-Weisz and Tom Keve. London: Karnac Books, 2012.
- Etkind, Alexander. *Eros of the Impossible: The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia* trans. Noah and Maria Rubins. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997.
- Fallend, Karl. "Historische Aspekte zur psychoanalytischen Massenpsychologie. 'Prof. Freud wünscht, die Psychologie der Revolution von vielen Gesichtspunkten aus zu betrachten.'" In *Das Werden der Ersten Republik*, edited by Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Maderthaner, 251-62. Vienna: Carl Gerold's Sohn, 2008.
- . *Sonderlinge, Träumer, Sensitive. Psychoanalyse auf dem Weg zur Institution und Profession. Protokolle der Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung und biographische Studien*. Vienna: Verlag Jugend & Volk, 1995.
- Federn, Ernst. *Witnessing Psychoanalysis: From Vienna Back to Vienna via Buchenwald and the USA*. London: Karnac Books, 1990.
- Fletcher, John. *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.
- Föllmer, Moritz. "Führung und Demokratie in Europa." In *Normalität und Fragilität. Demokratie nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, edited by Tim B. Müller and Adam Tooze, 177-97. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2015.
- Forrester, John. "Contracting the Disease of Love: Authority and Freedom in the Origins of Psychoanalysis," in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry*, vol. 1, edited by W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter, Michael Shepherd, 255-70. London: Tavistock Publications, 1985.
- . "Justice, Envy, and Psychoanalysis," in *Dispatches from the Freud Wars: Psychoanalysis and its Passions*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- . *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan and Derrida*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1979.

- Friedman, Lawrence J. *Identity's Architect: A Biography of Erik H. Erikson*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Fritzsche, Peter. "Did Weimar Fail?" *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 3 (1996): 629-53.
- . "Historical Time and Future Experience in Postwar Germany." In *Ordnungen in der Krise. Zur politischen Kulturgeschichte Deutschlands 1900-1933*, edited by Wolfgang Hardtwig, 141-64. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007.
- Fuechtner, Veronika. *Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Gay, Peter. *Sigmund Freud: A Life for Our Time*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.
- . *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
- Geissmann, Claudine and Pierre Geissmann. *A History of Child Psychoanalysis* (London, 1998 [1992])
- Geyer, Martin H. "'Die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen.' Zeitsemantik und die Suche nach Gegenwart in der Weimarer Republik." In *Ordnungen in der Krise. Zur politischen Kulturgeschichte Deutschlands 1900-1933*, edited by Wolfgang Hardtwig, 165-87. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007.
- . *Verkehrte Welt. Revolution, Inflation und Moderne, München 1914-1924*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998.
- Glaser, Ernst. *Im Umfeld des Austromarxismus. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des österreichischen Sozialismus*. Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981.
- Göllner, Renate. "Die Grenzen der Erziehung im roten Wien. Zur psychoanalytischen Kritik der Individualpsychologie bei Siegfried Bernfeld." *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Neuzeit*, 6, no. 1 (2006): 57-72.
- . "Psychoanalytisch-pädagogische Praxis ohne Ideologie vom 'Schädling': August Aichhorns Erziehungsberatung zwischen Jugendamt und Psychoanalytischer Vereinigung." *Luzifer-Amor* 16 (2003): 8-36.
- Graf, Rüdiger. *Die Zukunft der Weimarer Republik. Krisen und Zukunftsaneignungen in Deutschland, 1918-1933*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008.
- . "Optimismus und Pessimismus in der Krise. Der politisch-kulturelle Diskurs in der Weimarer Republik." In *Ordnungen in der Krise. Zur politischen Kulturgeschichte Deutschlands 1900-1933*, edited by Wolfgang Hardtwig, 115-40. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007.

- Graf-Nold, Angela. *Der Fall Hermine Hug-Hellmuth*. München: Verlag Internationale Psychoanalyse, 1988.
- Grosskurth, Phyllis. *Melanie Klein: Her Work and Her World*. New York: Knopf, 1986.
- . *The Secret Ring: Freud's Inner Circle and the Politics of Psychoanalysis*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1991.
- Gruber, Helmut. *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture, 1919-1934*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Grubrich-Simitis, Ilse. "Innenwelt des Kindes. Eine Skizze von Anna Freuds Lebenswerk." In *Die Schriften der Anna Freud*, xix-xxxii
- . "Trauma or Drive – Drive and Trauma: A Reading of Freud's Phylogenetic Fantasy of 1915." *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 43 (1988): 3-32.
- Gulick, Charles A. *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler*, 2 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948.
- Hacohen, Malachai. *Karl Popper, the Formative Years, 1902-1945: Politics and Philosophy in Interwar Vienna*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Hake, Sabine. *Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Handlbauer, Bernhard. *Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Individualpsychologie Alfred Adlers*. Vienna: Geyer, 1984.
- Hanisch, Ernst. *Der grosse Illusionist. Otto Bauer (1881-1938)*. Vienna: Böhlau, 2011.
- Healy, Maureen. *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I*. New York: Cambridge, University Press, 2004.
- Herrmann, Ulrich. "Die Jugendkulturbewegung. Der Kampf um die höhere Schule." In "Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit." *Der Mythos Jugend*, edited by Thomas Koebner, Rolf-Peter Janz, and Frank Trommler, 224-243. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1985.
- , ed. 'Neue Erziehung' 'Neue Menschen'. *Ansätze zur Erziehungs- und Bildungsreform zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur*. Weinheim: Beltz, 1987.
- Herzog, Dagmar. *Cold War Freud: Psychoanalysis in the Age of Catastrophes*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

- Hofer, Hans-Georg. *Nervenschwäche und Krieg: Modernitätskritik und Krisenbewältigung in der österreichischen Psychiatrie (1880-1920)*. Vienna: Böhlau, 2004.
- Hoffer, Willi. "Siegfried Bernfeld and Jerubbaal: An Episode in the Jewish Youth Movement." *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 10 (1965): 150-67.
- Homans, Peter. *The Ability to Mourn: Disillusionment and the Social Origins of Psychoanalysis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Hsia, Ke-chin. "War, Welfare, and Social Citizenship: The Politics of War Victim Welfare in Austria, 1914-1925." PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2008.
- Ernest Jones. *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 3 vols. New York: Basic Books, 1953-1957.
- Jacoby, Russell. "The Lost Freudian left." *The Nation*, October 15, 1983.
- . *The Repression of Psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Freudians*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Jonsson, Stefan. *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
- Kotlan-Werner, Henriette. *Otto Felix Kanitz und der Schönbrunner Kreis. Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft Sozialistischer Erzieher 1923-1934*. Vienna: Europaverlag, 1982.
- Laermann, Klaus. "Der Skandal um den 'Anfang'. Ein Versuch jugendlicher Gegenöffentlichkeit im Kaiserreich." In *"Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit." Der Mythos Jugend*, edited by Thomas Koebner, Rolf-Peter Janz, and Frank Trommler,
- Lamberti, Marjorie. *The Politics of Education: Teachers and School Reform in Weimar Germany*. New York, Berghahn Books, 2002.
- Laplanche, Jean. *Essays on Otherness*, edited by John Fletcher. London: Routledge, 1999.
- . "From the Restricted to the General Theory of Seduction." In *Seduction, Suggestion, Psychoanalysis*, edited by Philippe Van Haute and Jozef Corveleyn. Translated by Jeffrey Bloechl. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001.
- . *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*. Translated by David Macey. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989.
- Laplanche, Jean and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: W. W. Norton, 1973.

- Lappin, Eleanore. "Pädagoge, Psychoanalytiker, Psychologe und Marxist. Siegfried Bernfeld (1892-1953)." In *Jüdische Wohlfahrt im Spiegel von Biographien*, edited by Sabine Hering. Frankfurt a. M.: Fachhochschulverlag, 2007.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul F. "Eine Episode in der Geschichte der empirischen Sozialforschung: Erinnerungen," in *Soziologie autobiographisch. Drei kritische Berichte zur Entwicklung einer Wissenschaft*, edited by Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, Paul Felix Lazarsfeld. Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1975.
- Lerner, Paul. *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Leser, Norbert. *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus. Der Austromarxismus als Theorie und Praxis*. Vienna: Böhlau, 1985.
- Lethen, Helmuth. *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*. Translated by Don Reneau. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Leys, Ruth. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Linse, Ulrich. "'Geschlechtsnot der Jugend'. Über Jugendbewegung und Sexualität." In *"Mit und zieht die neue Zeit,"* edited by Thomas Koebner, Rolf-Peter Janz, and Frank Trommler. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1985.
- Luxon, Nancy. *Crisis of Authority: Politics, Trust, and Truth-Telling in Freud and Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- McGrath, William J. *Freud's Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Mackenthun, Gerald. *Gemeinschaftsgefühl. Wertpsychologie und Lebensphilosophie seit Alfred Adler*. Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2012.
- Maderthaner, Wolfgang. "Die eigenartige Größe der Beschränkung. Österreichs Revolution im mitteleuropäischen Spannungsfeld" in *Das Werden der Ersten Republik: ...der Rest ist Österreich. Band I*, edited by Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Maderthaner, 187-206. Vienna: Carl Gerold's Sohn, 2008.
- . "Austro-Marxism: Mass Culture and Anticipatory Socialism." *Austrian Studies* 14 (2006), 21-36.
- Maderthaner, Wolfgang and Lutz Musner. *Unruly Masses: The Other Side of Fin-de-Siecle Vienna*. Translated by David Fernbach and Michael Huffmaster. New York: Berghahn Books, 2008.

- Makari, George. *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008.
- Matysik, Tracie. *Reforming the Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890-1930*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Mayer, Andreas. *Sites of the Unconscious: Hypnosis and the Emergence of the Psychoanalytic Setting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- McEwen, Britta. *Sexual Knowledge: Feeling, Fact, and Social Reform in Vienna, 1900-1934*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.
- Mergel, Thomas. "High Expectations, Deep Disappointment: Structures of Public Perception of Politics in the Weimar Republic." In *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, edited by Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire, 192-210. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.
- Millot, Catherine. *Freud Anti-Pädagoge*. Translated Monika Metzger. Berlin: Medusa, 1982.
- Mitchell, Juliet. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women*. New York: Vintage, 1974.
- Mommsen, Hans. "Social Democracy on the Defensive: The Immobility of the SPD and the Rise of National Socialism." In *From Weimar to Auschwitz: Essays in German History*. Translated by Philip O'Connor. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Müller, Tim B. *Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Lebensversuche moderner Demokratien*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2014.
- Oelkers, Jürgen. *Reformpädagogik. Eine kritische Dogmengeschichte*. Munich: Juventa-Verlag, 1989.
- Papanek, Ernst. *The Austrian School Reform: Its Bases Principles and Development – The Twenty Years Between the Two World Wars*. New York: F. Fell, 1962.
- Perloff, Marjorie. *Edge of Irony: Modernism in the Shadow of the Habsburg Empire*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Perner, Achim. "Psychoanalyse und Pädagogik." In *Die Wiener Jahrhundertwende. Einflüsse, Umwelt, Wirkungen*. Edited Jürgen Nautz and Richard Vahrenkamp, 360-73. Vienna: Böhlau, 1993.
- Peukert, Detlev J. K. *Grenzen der Sozialdisziplinierung. Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Jugendfürsorge von 1878 bis 1932*. Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1986.

- . *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992.
- Pfabigan, Alfred. *Max Adler. Eine Politische Biographie*. Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 1982.
- Phillips, Adam. *Becoming Freud: The Making of a Psychoanalyst*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.
- Plänklers, Tomas. “Mit Kupfer zu legieren: Zur Erinnerung an Heinrich Meng.” *Luzifer-Armor: Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Psychoanalyse* 6 (1990): 87-130.
- Rabinbach, Anson, ed. *The Austrian Socialist Experiment: Social Democracy and Austromarxism, 1918-1934*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985.
- . *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism: From Red Vienna to Civil War, 1927-1934*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- . *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals Between Apocalypse and Enlightenment*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Rechter, David. “‘Bubermania’: The Jewish Youth Movement in Vienna, 1917-1919.” *Modern Judaism* 16 (1996): 25-45.
- . *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*. London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001.
- Rehm, Willy. *Die psychoanalytische Erziehungslehre. Anfänge und Entwicklung*. Munich: Piper, 1968.
- Reichmayer, Johannes. *Spurensuche in der Geschichte der Psychoanalyse*. Frankfurt a.M., Nexus, 1990.
- Rieff, Philip. *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*. New York: Viking, 1959.
- . *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.
- Robinson, Paul. *The Freudian Left: Wilhelm Reich, Geza Roheim, Herbert Marcuse*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969.
- Rose, Louis. *The Freudian Calling: Early Viennese Psychoanalysis and the Pursuit of Cultural Science*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998.
- Rosenblum, Warren. *Beyond the Prison Gates: Punishment and Welfare in Germany, 1850-1933*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

- Roudinesco, Élizabeth. *Freud: In His Time and Ours*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Rozenblit, Marsha L. *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Rudnytsky, Peter L. *Reading Psychoanalysis: Freud, Rank, Ferenczi, Groddeck* (Ithaca, 2002)
- Sablik, Karl. *Julius Tandler. Mediziner und Sozialreformer, eine Biographie*. Vienna: A. Schendl, 1983.
- Sadoff, Dianne F. *Sciences of the Flesh: Representing Body and Subject in Psychoanalysis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Santner, Eric L. *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- . *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Schechter, Kate. *Illusions of a Future: Psychoanalysis and the Biopolitics of Desire*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Scheibe, Wolfgang. *Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung, 1900-1932. Eine einführende Darstellung*. Weinheim: Beltz, 1969.
- Schneck, Peter. "Sozialistische Erziehung im Austromarxismus. Der Beitrag der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie zur Pädagogik in den Jahren 1918-1938." PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1975.
- Scheu, Friedrich. *Ein Band der Freundschaft. Schwarzwald-Kreis und Entstehung der Vereinigung sozialistischer Mittelschüler*. Vienna: Böhlau, 1985.
- Schimek, Jean G. "Fact and Fantasy in the Seduction Theory: A Historical Review." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 35 (1987): 937-965.
- Scholing, Michael and Franz Walter, "Der 'Neue Mensch'. Sozialistische Lebensreform und Erziehung in der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung Deutschlands und Österreichs." In *Solidargemeinschaft und Klassenkampf. Politische Konzeptionen der Sozialdemokratie zwischen den Weltkriegen*, edited by Richard Saage. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1986.
- Schorske, Carl E. *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*. New York: Vintage, 1980.
- Sharaf, Myron R. *Fury on Earth: A Biography of Wilhelm Reich*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.

- Silverman, Lisa. *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Spector, Scott. *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siècle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Stadler, Friedrich. "'Spätaufklärung' und Sozialdemokratie in Wien, 1918-1938. Soziologisches und Ideologisches zur Spätaufklärung in Österreich." In *Aufbruch und Untergang. Österreichische Kultur zwischen 1918 und 1938*, edited by Franz Kadrnoska, 441-73. Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981.
- Stepansky, Paul. *In Freud's Shadow: Adler in Context*. Hillside, NJ: Analytic Press, 1983.
- Stewart-Steinberg, Suzanne. *Impious Fidelity: Anna Freud, Psychoanalysis, Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- . *Sublime Surrender: Male Masochism at the Fin-de-Siècle*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Tenorth, Heinz-Elmar. "Erziehungsuotpien zwischen Weimarer Republik und Dritten Reich." In *Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit*, ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig, 175-198. Munich, 2003.
- Tidl, Georg. *Die sozialistischen Mittelschüler Österreichs von 1918 bis 1938*. Vienna: Österr. Bundesverlag, 1977.
- Toews, John E. "Historicizing Psychoanalysis: Freud in His Time and for Our Time." *The Journal of Modern History* 63 (1991): 504-545.
- Treptow, Rainer. "'Schaffung kultureller Tatsachen'. Siegfried Bernfelds Beitrag zur pädagogischen Struktur- und Prozessreflexivität." In *Welten der Bildung in der Pädagogik der frühen Kindheit und in der Sozialpädagogik*, edited by Ludwig Liegle and Rainer Treptow, 167-80. Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus, 2002).
- Turner, Christopher. *Adventures in the Orgasmatron: How the Sexual Revolution Came to America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.
- Uitz, Helmut. *Die österreichischen Kinderfreunde und roten Falken 1908-1938. Beiträge zur sozialistischen Erziehung*. Vienna: Geyer-Edition, 1975.
- Utley, Philip. "Siegfried Bernfeld's Jewish Order of Youth, 1914-1922." *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 24 (1979): 349-368.
- . "Siegfried Bernfeld: Left-Wing Youth Leader, Psychoanalyst and Zionist, 1910-April, 1918." PhD diss., University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1975.

- Wandruska, Adam. "Österreichs politische Struktur. Die Entwicklung der Parteien und politischen Bewegungen." In *Geschichte der Republik Österreich*, edited Heinrich Benedikt. Munich, R. Oldenbourg, 1954.
- Wassermann, Janek. *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918-1938*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2014.
- Weber, Kaspar. "Es geht ein mächtiges Sehnen durch unsere Zeit": Reformbestrebungen der Jahrhundertwende und Rezeption der Psychoanalyse am Beispiel der Biografie von Ernst Schneider, 1878-1957. Bern: Peter Lang, 1999.
- Weber, Samuel. *The Legend of Freud*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000.
- Weidenholzer, Josef. *Auf dem Weg zum 'Neuen Menschen'. Bildungs- und Kulturarbeit der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie in der Ersten Republik*. Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981.
- Weindling, Paul. *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Weiss, Heinz. *Das rote Schönbrunn. Der Schönbrunner Kreis und die Reformpädagogik der Schönbrunner Schule*. Vienna: Echomedia, 2008.
- Wegs, Robert J. *Growing Up Working Class: Continuity and Change Among Viennese Youth, 1890-1938*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1989.
- Whitebook, Joel. *Freud: An Intellectual Biography*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- . *Perversion and Utopia. A Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995.
- Wiesbauaer, Elisabeth. *Das Kind als Objekt der Wissenschaft. Medizinische und psychologische Kinderforschung an der Wiener Universität*. Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1981.
- Williams, John Alexander. "Ecstasies of the Young: Sexuality, the Youth Movement, and Moral Panic in Germany on the Eve of the First World War." *Central European History* 34 (2001): 163-89.
- Winter, Sarah. *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalytic Knowledge*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Wittenberg, Lutz. *Geschichte der Individualpsychologische Versuchsschule in Wien. Eine Synthese aus Reformpädagogik und Individualpsychologie*. Vienna: WUV-Univ.-Verlag, 2002.

- Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth. *Anna Freud: A Biography*. New York: Summit Books, 1988.
- Zagorac, Diana. *Wie die Psychoanalyse zur Pädagogik kam. Psychoanalytische Pädagogik damals und heute*. Marburg: Tectum, 2008.
- Zahra, Tara. *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Zaretsky, Eli. *Political Freud: A History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- . *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis*. New York: Vintage, 2004.
- Zeps, Michael J. *Education and the Crisis of the First Republic*. Boulder: East European Monographs, 1987.
- Zimmermann, Elisabeth. “Heinrich Meng (1887-1972): Psychohygiene und Pädagogik.” PhD diss., University of Zürich, 1994.