Person of the Issue: Anna Freud (1895-1982)

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Abstract:

The name Freud is most often associated with Sigmund, the Austrian doctor who founded the school of thought known as psychoanalysis. But his youngest daughter, Anna, was also an influential psychologist who had a major impact on psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, and child psychology. Anna Freud did more than live in her father’s rather long shadow. Instead, she becomes one of the world’s foremost psychoanalysts. She is recognized as the founder of child psychoanalysis, despite the fact that her father often suggested that children could not be psychoanalyzed.

Anna Freud was born December 3, 1895 in Vienna, Austria. As the daughter of Sigmund Freud, she was inescapably steeped in the psychoanalytic theories of her famous father; however, she did more than simply live in his shadow, pioneering the field of child psychoanalysis and extending the concept of defense mechanisms to develop ego psychology. After finishing her secondary education in 1912 at Cottage Lyceum in Vienna, she completed teachers’ training and worked at her alma mater as a classroom teacher for five years. Of her school years she declared that she learned far more at home from her father and his guests. Indeed, she acquired knowledge of psychoanalysis from this group to which few others had access, and this grounded her life-long contributions to the field.
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