



Memories of Melanie Klein: an interview with Hanna Segal

Hanna Segal, born in Poland in 1918, was psychoanalysts analysed by Melanie Klein herself. Segal, who died in 2011, was in her own right one of the most distinguished contemporary thinkers and writers in the Kleinian tradition. She was known both for her lively and readable expositions of Klein's work, and for her own seminal contributions to psychoanalysis. She published five books and numerous papers. Her work was recently celebrated in a two volume *Festschrift* edited by David Bell.[1]

The clinical encounter is at the heart of Hanna Segal's work, and informs her many psychoanalytical contributions to fields as diverse as aesthetics, literature, the psychology of war and the nature of psychosis. She has developed Klein's conceptualisations of the way unconscious phantasy underpins mental life, and has importantly enhanced our understanding of the nature of symbol formation. Segal's work on symbolisation has in turn shed much light both on the creative use of symbols in ordinary life and works of art, and also on the plight of individuals who are unable to symbolise.

This interview with Hanna Segal took place in London in August 2001. The principal interviewer is Daniel Pick, with some supplementary questions put by Jane Milton, who has also compiled the introduction and footnotes. Both are psychoanalysts belonging to the British Psychoanalytical Society. The purpose of this interview and others that are to follow in the series is to gather reminiscences about Klein as a person, as well as personal reflections on Klein's clinical and theoretical contributions.

In what follows the taped interview has been edited slightly for clarity and confidentiality, although the conversational and informal style of the original have been retained.

Daniel Pick: I wanted to start by asking you about your arrival in England in 1940, and then your first encounter with Melanie Klein. What were your impressions?

Hanna Segal: I'll tell you how I found Klein. I had wanted to be an analyst for a very long time and got all sorts of advice which was no good at all until I landed in Edinburgh and that's when I first heard about Klein from Fairbairn[2]. I had read as much Freud as I could. I did not read much English to begin with but I read what was translated into Polish or French and I knew nothing about the existence of Anna Freud or Melanie Klein at all and it was Fairbairn who gave me to read Anna Freud's *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*[3] and Melanie Klein's *Psychoanalysis of Children*. [4] And I fell very much for *Psychoanalysis of Children*. He explained to me something, not much, about the divergences in the Society and I made up my mind that I wanted to train with Klein. He gave me a letter to Winnicott[5] and I worked for a time as houseman with him. Winnicott arranged for me to meet Klein. She struck me then as quite old. (Now I would have thought her quite young!) I explained to her about reading her book and wanting to train with her and she said she wasn't sure she would have a vacancy and tried to send me to a student of hers, Paula Heimann.[6] But I was young and obstinate and said 'no, I wouldn't' and she decided to take me on. Now, the problem was the fees at the time – Fairbairn quoted a fee of £1 a session - £5 a week – and my total scholarship was £2.50 a week. So it



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wouldn't pay for half a week! But Klein actually took me on as a clinic patient^[7] and made very little fuss about it. So that was my first contact with her. I found her very insightful in things that she said, and so on.

So that is where we started. Actually, there is something that remains in my mind, and it remained very much in her mind because she felt very bad about it later. When I turned up for my first session her first communication to me was 'you may smoke in the consulting room' - because I had put my cigarette out to go to the consulting room. That was the first message I got!

So that was the first contact. And then it falls into two different pictures of her that I have. There's the time I was in analysis with her, and the time later when I knew her quite well. They are not very divergent. I found her – and I often emphasise it – people often say that she overdid the negative but one thing that struck me was that she was extremely balanced and, at least in my experience, very un-persecuted. I meant to say un-persecuting but I think the two go well together. I had quite a long analysis - I think around nine years and towards the end three times a week. I found her extremely respectful of psychoanalytic limits. It was at the time of the Controversial Discussions^[8] and terrible turmoil in the British Psychoanalytical Society. I knew nothing about it. Rosenfeld^[9] knew a lot more. I don't know how; perhaps because he was a year ahead of me in the training. I knew hardly anything at all.

I don't know if it's worth talking about this, but it throws some light on the situation then. I first arranged and started analysis with Klein. Then I applied for the psychoanalytical training and one of my interviewers was Glover^[10]. I was very impressed by Glover's writing, particularly his writing about war and things like that, and very much wanted to meet him. I came in – he was a very handsome man with white hair. He said all the preliminary things about why I had come into analysis and then he asked me 'have you thought who you would like for your analyst?' I said, 'I just started with Melanie Klein'. He jumped out of his chair and said 'In that case I have nothing to do with you! They've got their people; we've got our people. Goodbye'. I really couldn't believe it because he was acting on behalf of the Society. I came back to Klein and said 'look somebody's mad in this outfit and I don't think it's me' but she told me nothing about the background or anything. She just took it up as a bad experience and said the Society would probably arrange for another interview, and that was that. It didn't influence her analytical attitude at all.

As I knew her after, she was an extremely warm person and very very generous. One of the things that annoyed me most about this play on Klein^[11], (where the author seems to want to send up three successful women), is that she is always portrayed as exploiting Heimann in the play, financially. Getting her to do things – taking drinks and so on- but nothing could be further from her temperament. She was extremely generous and very little concerned about money. She was very good fun. She had a good sense of humour. I only remember her once saying something bitchy. It was about two candidates of the same analyst, and she said; 'the trouble is that x is nice but isn't clever, y is clever but he's not at all nice!' She was tremendously focussed on her work and both tolerant and intolerant. In things that she felt were genuine developments she was very tolerant. For instance, she had a lot of disagreement with Bion^[12] but she never respected him less or thought less of



him or tried to influence him. I remember her comment when he spoke of mothers bearing projective identification. She threw her hands up and said, 'what ever will the mother have to do next?' But she didn't interfere with that. But when it came to what she felt was betrayal of psychoanalytic principles, or when she felt Kleinians departed from her work, she could be quite intolerant. For instance, although she understood it, she found it difficult in a way to forgive Jones for bringing over Freud and his family here rather than to America, because of the troubles that Anna Freud produced[13]. This was absurd, of course. Jones wanted to find the best place for them. And Klein could be very very demanding of her ex-analysands and pupils.

DP In what way?

HS Well, she never missed a scientific meeting or a congress and she didn't like it if one wasn't there. If one didn't work. But she was, I think, pretty devoid of narcissism. In my view one of the reasons why the Society didn't split like other Societies is that neither Anna Freud nor Melanie Klein were driven excessively by personal ambition. They fought because they disagreed. Most splits happen because of analysts' narcissism and grandiosity.

Jane Milton: So you felt both women were passionate about psychoanalysis and that's simply what they were disagreeing about?

HS That's right.

DP Did Klein actually meet Freud on his arrival in London, just before the Second World War? Do you know anything about their personal encounters?

HS I wouldn't know at all. I know what her general attitude to Freud was, of course. Immense admiration and respect. I had a conversation with Dinora Pines[14] which was very amusing. Dinora was living next door to Klein. This was before Dinora had even become an analytic candidate. There was some way in which Mrs Klein protected Dinora's kids from some other kids that were attacking them or something. They started chatting and Dinora asked Mrs Klein 'What's your profession?' and she said 'I'm an analyst' and Dinora Pines said 'my brother is also an analyst but he's a Freudian.' Mrs Klein drew herself up to her full height (which was not considerable) and said, 'My dear, we are *all* Freudian only I am not an Anna Freudian.'

DP You have referred to Klein's relationship to Freud, Bion and some others. What about figures further afield? For instance I believe that Jacques Lacan[15] was a very ambivalent admirer of Klein from quite an early stage.

HS Like his love for me. To begin with he was an admirer of mine. It was unreturned affection. But she was interested in Lacan.

DP Did she read his work and express views about it?

HS She did early on, but not after a time, no. She was friends with Lagache[16]. There was an International Congress in London in 1953, at the time the French Society was about to split. Lacan and Lagache were allowed to give a 10 minute



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paper to a business meeting to make their case for being allowed to stay in the International Psychoanalytical Association. I met Lagache at tea at Mrs Klein's house, and he was worried that neither of them had good enough English to do it. My husband and I invited Lagache over to translate his paper for him. But instead of Lagache, Lacan turned up, and kept us up all night over his 10 minute paper! I don't know if Klein ever met Lacan. But one of the things she was adamant about was technique. When she heard about Lacan cutting sessions and things he did, that wiped him out. As to his voluminous writings I don't think she paid much attention to them. Anyway, why associate from Bion to Lacan? They have nothing in common! Bion's setting and technique was strict, and he was a Kleinian.

About her relation to Freud I was going to say that on the one hand she had this immense admiration. On the other hand a *tremendous* disappointment that he didn't take an interest in her work. The problem of rivalry between Anna Freud and Klein was more about who was really Freud's daughter. She felt very disappointed and hurt in his totally ignoring her work. And again, she couldn't quite admit to the fact that, after all, Anna was his daughter. He made the point to Jones, I think, in a letter, saying 'what do you expect me to do? Anna is my daughter.'

DP Do you know much about Klein's experience of living in England during the 1920s and 1930s, before your first encounter with her? How did she find England as a place to come to?

HS She was immensely grateful to England and to the British Society. Whenever, in bad times, there was talk about the Kleinians splitting from the Society her position was that it was the British Society that gave her a home and a place to teach and that she would not do anything that would damage the Society. I think she liked England.

DP Do you think English culture importantly affected her ideas and her interests in early childhood or other aspects of psychic life?

HS Here I'd refer you to Riccardo Steiner's work.^[17] Of his two recent books, one is very much devoted to English influences on Klein. I would associate her more with French culture, but that may be pure projection. She spoke quite fluent French. But also, I think Slovene. (She told me later it amused her when I was struggling for the translation of something from Polish which she could understand perfectly well! Slovene is very close to Polish.) I think her husband was in Slovenia, before they divorced. This was before the war. You know, a continental educated person would have influences from various cultures. She certainly liked England – she never grumbled about it (as I do!). But then England before the war was, apart from the dictatorships, the most reactionary, snobbish and class-ridden system. I don't think it would have affected her in the circles she was. But during the war and after the war it was a transformed country and was a developing country. The effects of the war in some ways were profoundly beneficial, not just to the development of analysis but in terms of the democratisation of England.

DP Is that her view or yours?

HS That's my view.



DP And hers?

HS I don't think she talked about it much. What she would talk about was analysis quite a lot, but also current cultural events, which were largely English. She used to go a lot to the theatre and the cinema.

DP Later on, did you come to learn much from Klein about her own earlier history?

HS Not an awful lot. She talked about her analysis with Ferenczi[18] and with Abraham[19]. She said she learned from Ferenczi about the existence of the unconscious. Complete conviction about it. But he never analysed the negative transference and she felt she didn't get anywhere much with him but that her analysis with Abraham is really what she felt identified with. She talked a bit about difficulties she had in Germany. About the children.

DP What kind of difficulty are you referring to?

HS Well, her work was totally unaccepted in Germany, except by Abraham. When Abraham died she just didn't exist at all. No one would take any interest in her work. Hence her great gratitude to the British who took her up so enthusiastically.

DP I don't imagine you interviewed her in the way that we're interviewing you. But did you get a sense of what brought her to psychoanalysis? And did she ever refer to the origins of her interest in early childhood?

HS I think that she certainly went into analysis for depression. She was a very depressed woman and I suspect that she must have been rather hysterical because of all the symptoms but she attached so much importance to what she called the epistemophilic instinct – what we now call 'K' from Bion[20]. She was just passionate about discovering human nature. An insatiable interest in that, hence her interest in literature. She originally wanted to study medicine and she didn't because of falling in love rather unfortunately and marrying an extremely unsatisfactory man. But when she had a year to wait – I don't know exactly how long – between her marriage or between the time they had to leave – there was no point in starting medicine – then I think she started a degree in literature. I think she was just fantastically interested.

DP What kind of things did she like to read? Was she more interested in central European literature? French? English fiction?

HS You could ask me that about Klein or about me and I couldn't answer. We were interested in good books. Some were Russian, some were English and some were French. She was also very fond of theatre and of music too. She played the piano and she went to concerts.

JM What sort of music did she like?

HS Mostly classical. That was her favourite. But she was also very jolly. She liked a good laugh, she liked wine. Somewhere once – I think it was in the Dordogne



– she won a wine tasting competition. A very rare achievement for a woman! And once, at a Hungarian exposition, we got a big box of real genuine Tokai and she liked it so much we kept it for her special usage. She was extremely sociable, she liked a good party, a good drink, a good laugh. In that way very different from Anna Freud. There was nothing prim or school marmish about her. She remained quite flirtatious until her very old age. She was a very beautiful woman when she was young. In Budapest, Balint[21] told me, she was called ‘the black beauty’ because she was so attractive, and dark. She was quite flirtatious.

DP: Were you able to compare her writings on children with her actual practice and way of relating to them?

HS: She had an extraordinary way of being in contact with babies and young children. One of my sons was about six months old when she died so she knew him quite well as a small baby. I remember when he was under three months, she would just sit and have long conversations. Really one had a feeling they were conversing.

DP: Baby observation has long been part of the psychoanalytic training. Do you know what she made of such techniques, and the issue of what one can or cannot infer from such observation?

HS: There are two things. She had herself made extensive observations of her own babies. She was very interested in the work of Merrill Middlemore, who wrote about the observation of babies, very early on, what she noticed. And she was very enthusiastic about Esther Bick’s[22] research work on baby observation. But she became very suspicious of analytical theories like those of Meltzer[23] and Bick based on observation. She had to admit that we don’t know what goes on in a baby’s mind, only the ‘infantile aspect’ of the adult or child in an analytical situation. It may confirm or disprove things but you cannot base analytical theories only on observations of behaviour.

DP: Was she very interested specifically in the issue of training? What precisely it should consist in, beyond a personal analysis?

HS: You know we are in a Messianic Society. We are always expecting the new generation – Jesus - all analysts are obsessed with training. All splits, all differences eventually revolve around training. What kind of analysis, what kind of supervision, what kind of training, how long, how many times a week? We are over-devoted to training.

DP: *A propos* of that, I was interested when you mentioned earlier that at the end of your analysis you were going three times a week. It surprised me to hear that. Did she have a more general view about the relationship of five times a week psychoanalysis to less intensive forms of analysis or psychotherapy?

HS: She would be adamant on five times a week. Three times a week came when she was about to retire and finishing. Or sometimes at the ending but she was very strict about that.



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DP Did Klein give you much sense of the origins of her own interest in very early primitive states and early childhood?

HS That I suppose came from her family and her own analysis.

DP And her own experience of children?

HS Yes.

JM That makes me wonder about her daughter, Melitta Schmideberg,^[24] what went on there; how tragic the relationship was.

HS The whole relationship to her children was terribly interfered with by her mother. She was very dominated by her mother. Her mother constantly wanted her to send the children away and to go and take a cure here, there and everywhere and Melanie would write desperate letters that she was worried about the children and missed the children and her mother would say, 'Everything is all right. You stay and complete your cure.' This type of thing. Now what happened with Melitta I think is this. Melitta was very gifted and, of course, Klein did analyse her own children like all analysts did at that time, including Freud. I don't know what went on with her and Melitta then, but she [MS] certainly started as an analyst and continuing very much her mother's work. Then she went into analysis with Glover who was also enthusiastic about Klein to begin with and they made a sort of total alliance against her. Klein was convinced that Glover actually had an affair with Melitta, though she never voiced it except to me and perhaps to other intimate friends. And also there is a paper of Glover that I cannot trace in which he says that with very paranoid people sometimes the best thing is to fix the paranoia on one member of the family that leaves the rest free.

DP In a way that brings us back to the Controversial Discussions in which both Melitta and Glover were closely involved.

HS Very closely involved. That was much more personal and much more dirty. On one side because Klein never spoke against Melitta or against Glover. Never took part in that.

DP Looking back now on that period, what stands out for you most about the Controversial Discussions?

HS This was a conflict which did actually bring out what the differences were but on the whole, to tell you the truth, I very seldom think about it. It's not very relevant now, I think. But certainly it forced Klein, with the help of Susan Isaacs^[25] and at that point Paula Heimann, actually to be more precise about her theories, but it's a bit irrelevant. There's no Anna Freudian now who doesn't believe that there is a significant relationship before the time Freud described. There have been all sorts of changes. Technique in child analysis is nothing like at the time of the Controversial Discussions. So I don't consider it very relevant except insofar as the past is always relevant because it will change attitudes.



DP Can you convey to us the flavour of discussions in the Klein group in those years? Did Klein actively discuss the evolution and shifts in her ideas or did she work in a more solitary way, then presenting her findings when they were complete?

HS It was both. I don't know how much she discussed with Joan Riviere[26] and Susan Isaacs and that generation, but later there was a group of people who were closest to her - Bion, after his analysis, Elliott Jaques[27], Betty Joseph[28] (who wasn't an analysand), myself.

JM Rosenfeld?

HS Rosenfeld I think attended a seminar with her which also contained Joan Rivière. She very much respected his thinking and I am sure often discussed things with him. She did discuss her work but there were certain points at which she didn't discuss it with anyone, for instance the envy paper, until right to the end. If she discussed ideas about the paper on schizoid mechanisms I don't know who it was with, because none of us – the group that I described, more or less my contemporaries – were there by that stage.

DP Looking back, can one detect the clear influence of other members of the group on her, or beyond that, can one register other psychoanalytic influences on her own changes in perception?

HS She was influenced originally by Fairbairn. She usually acknowledged her influences. Fairbairn gave her the idea of the paranoid schizoid position, though they later differed very much. I think the major influence was Abraham's work on early depression. She would very willingly listen to criticism and discuss sometimes her cases but I remember, with the envy papers, she very much kept it to herself for quite a time. Later, once she had a theory, she would discuss it and be open to criticism.

DP And what did she make of some of the developments that her younger followers/students made – I'm thinking of you and Rosenfeld and Bion – and the kinds of work being pursued, for instance in the psychoanalytic treatment of very ill patients

HS Oh, she was extremely enthusiastic about it and over-generous. I'll tell you for instance, in relation to me, I used a term about concrete symbolisation. She was very pleased with this paper of mine[30] – absolutely accepted my criticism of what she said about the autistic child, Dick, that the problem was not excessive sadism but excessive projective identification and concretisation. She was very pleased with that. She said she used my term afterwards, but in fact, as I pointed out, it was her term - she already speaks of concrete thinking in many places. But she was very ready to give credit and to encourage. She was very impressed by Rosenfeld's work. Also by Bion. Some of his later developments, as I say, she didn't take to – she was old now – counter-transference – she didn't take very kindly to that. She said we should think of counter-transference in the good old way Freud described it. If you have a strong counter-transference reaction first you've got to analyse what's the matter with you! A beautiful thing – there was an analyst who died very young - David Davidson – and he came to her one day, full of stuff, and said 'and the patient projected into me all that confusion' and Mrs Klein said, 'No, dear, the patient didn't



project into you all that confusion – you were very confused!’ But I think she never really cottoned on to the positive aspects of counter-transference that do exist. Even if it is pathological, the issue is what did the patient do to stimulate it. Now we pay a lot of attention to countertransference and the information it gives us.

DP Coming back to your memories of Klein as a live presence, what would someone who had only encountered her ‘on paper’ not be able to pick up about her personal qualities as thinker and a clinician? Do you think there are important aspects that don’t come through in the written record?

HS I think what doesn’t come through, it strikes me, is her good counter-transference disposition. Because I differentiate between counter-transference reaction and the basic counter-transference predisposition. She must have had a very good counter-transference predisposition. She was, I think, very warm – she never spoke disparagingly like some people do about her patients, never complained about this or that. One always had a feeling that she actually listened. Sometimes she misunderstood and tried again to understand. And that doesn’t come through in her writing. Her early writings, in particular, look as though she was over-emphasising aggression or this or that. It wasn’t, at least in my experience, either in analysis or when I had a child supervision with her, at all. She was warmly disposed and pretty objective.

DP Did the process of writing come easily to her?

HS I don’t know, because I don’t know how it was in German. In English she found it difficult and her early writing is very indigestible. I think her English improved with time- *Envy and Gratitude*^[31] is very readable – but she didn’t have Freud’s gift of just the right expression.

JM Do you think that’s why some people have been put off – they’ve got the wrong end of the stick somehow because she’s not writing in her own mother tongue and she’s not got such a gift for writing?

HS It could be that when you’re writing English with German in mind it doesn’t work well. She had a capacity for languages – her spoken English was very good – and she picked up Slovene very easily – but she wasn’t primarily a writer.

DP What about as a public speaker? What sort of presence did she have?

HS She was good. And in the room, no matter what the situation, one had the feeling of a very powerful presence.

DP I’m wondering what she might have made of the direction of psychoanalysis in Britain after her death. Did she make any predictions about what the fate of the psychoanalytic movement might be in the long run?

HS It’s difficult to say. Older people tend to be pessimistic. Freud was pessimistic and then she became more pessimistic after her work on envy- was it constitutional and intractable? Though she herself shows in many ways it can be tractable. But she had no reason really to be worried about the future of Kleinian development. It



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started as such a little group in the Society and she had many gifted pupils who carried on. But she was very shaken by Paula Heimann [who left the group].

DP Did she have a view about the fact that it was 'a group'? Presumably there may have been a dilemma about whether this was the best way to advance her thinking. Whether to have a specific group or rather to try and diffuse her ideas more generally in the Society?

HS She never resolved that conflict. To begin with, she just wanted her ideas to spread. Then she become more intent after a time to say that there was something like a Kleinian technique and Kleinian theory – it was pretty coherent and she wanted it identified and *yet* she wanted it that we are all analysts and there must be no discrimination. She wanted it both ways.

DP What do you think she might have made of later developments in technique within the Kleinian tradition?

HS Yes, I was thinking about that. I think there are things she would like very much. For instance, the fact that we've sorted out much more the pathology of the paranoid schizoid position. For her, people would regress to the paranoid schizoid position but now I think we have much more knowledge about the details of the paranoid schizoid position and the related pathology. The difference between regression to a normal or to a pathological paranoid schizoid position. We now realise it is very important to go back and to be able to reintegrate more and more. So this she would appreciate very much. She would appreciate some of the work on envy and its relation to perversions, for instance. The work on envy became much more elaborate.

I don't think she would like You see, she certainly over-interpreted phantasy and with some patients it worked, with patients who were themselves in the depressive position, with other patients it would be used as a collusion- they would both slip into the phantasy world. We certainly interpret less phantasy. But I think some people go to extremes and almost become like classical analysts again – they just analyse defences. She would also not agree, I think, completely – of course, she brought in the here and now and the extraordinary importance of the daily transference – but I think she might have considered that it's too much 'here and now' now. She was more of an integrator. She wanted a complete interpretation. She wanted phantasy, reality, past, future. She probably over-interpreted. But I think she would think some of us under-interpret.

DP: In the post-war period, was she interested in the reaction to her work beyond England?

HS Not immediately post war because there were few contacts but she was very interested when the travelling started. Thorner^[32] travelled to Germany; Rosenfeld and I started travelling quite extensively. The Argentinians visited her. She was very interested in all that, and in the developments of her work in other countries.



DP: Beyond the question of the psychoanalytic institution itself, can you also tell us something about her influence; for instance her impact in the Health Service or perhaps in the culture more generally?

HS There was an enormous influence on education through Susan Isaacs. I think after the war the nursery and primary school education in England were certainly the best in Europe, maybe in the world. And those were taking into account the role of phantasies, the necessity of allowing creative development. All that we're losing now, and we have to turn children into swots, reading facts and numbers. She had an enormous influence on education in this country. I think the National Health Service was budding in her time but she was very interested in the developments of the Tavistock[33]. Riccardo Steiner, who is more of an historian, uncovered quite a few things that she did for the French radio on evacuation and things like that. She was certainly politically quite aware of what was going on and sort of liberal Left. But her work had an impact much later on. When it was combined with Bion's theories of groups one could really apply analytic thinking of a Kleinian kind. But she was familiar with Fornari[34] and his work on wars being often determined by failed mourning in previous wars – she was very interested in all that. It's curious about the difficulty of her writing putting people off. *Envy and Gratitude* became extremely popular with artists and intellectuals. It appealed to them immediately.

DP: Did she think there was a place for her ideas and clinical technique in other settings, for instance in work with groups or more generally in psychotherapy?

HS: She was a bit suspicious of it. On the one hand she knew that to influence psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, mental health generally, was important. She would be aware of that but temperamentally, what she wanted to do was to continue analysis and she didn't want her more creative students to do too many other things.

DP: One thing we haven't yet explicitly discussed is her attitude to the relationship between the internal and external world. Can you tell us your perspective on Klein's perspective?

HS: I think it's a total red herring. Only an idiot would think that the environment has no influence on the fate of the child and only an idiot would think all children are the same. But in fact I think, although I may be biased, that other people are far more extreme. When we pressed Winnicott – does a child's temperament have nothing to do with the development? – Is it all the bad mother? – finally he acknowledged that something that eventually becomes the IQ probably has an influence. That's it. Whereas Klein – obviously she over-emphasised the role of phantasy because that was her discovery and new – but she also constantly speaks of the environment.

Take 'Richard'[35]. There is a raid in London, his father is coming, he met his cousin – she was extremely aware of the impact. In my own analysis, I know that she was interested and very careful about trying to sort out what was phantasy and reality in childhood. Dick's[36] analysis starts by saying mother rejected him from birth. It comes very little in her work because practically all the children are children of analysts. I know an awful lot about Dick's parents from her – but she couldn't possibly put it in print. She had Ernest Jones'[37] children in analysis. She was very restricted in all that. But she always emphasised the fact that any reality is



interpreted by the child in phantasy. Actually, I emphasise that in my work, following Klein – much of the work is trying to see the interaction. There is no such thing as pure phantasy. And the very fact that she brings in object relationships from birth – if there's an object relationship then obviously the behaviour of the object is very important. The contrast is with people who think that mental life starts at two or something like that. This is not the case now with most analysts, but was then.

Klein always emphasised that there is a primary powerful phantasy, and the younger the child the more dominating it is. I have a formulation about it, which I'm sure she would agree with. In opposition to some people who say she's not sympathetic or empathetic with the child – I say, on the contrary, other people imagine the poor child suffering from the badness of the adult. Klein thinks that the poor bugger not *only* suffers from the badness of the adult but also guilt from having produced it! Because it comes from an omnipotent part of the child's mind. She speaks of frustrating mothers or cold mothers or events in her various case accounts.

Even theoretically speaking, in Klein's description of the depressive position it is the regular return of the mother that enables the child to build his internal world. But in those days Freud thought of phantasies as discrete phenomena – a phantasy here and there. Not as a fount of things and the constant interaction between the two. So I think it's a totally false accusation [that Klein ignored the external world]. But certainly some people think that the internal is more important, some that the external is more important. But it became clear since Bion's work about pathological and normal projective identification exactly why certain mothers who appear as marvellous mothers actually make very bad mothers because they couldn't bear saying 'no'. We could go into the detail of the interaction but you have to take into account both factors, with the internal *meeting* the external. And they both affect one another. To me the battleground is the depressive position – the projections are withdrawn and then more and more the external reality is recognised by the child. So a complete red herring and non-starter – unless one goes all the way with the theory that it's all in the genes and the environment doesn't matter.

DP: What was most striking to you about Klein's style as a supervisor of your own clinical work? What stays with you most vividly?

HS: Well, her originality and how much she could see in the material that one hadn't seen. And she wasn't severe - at least as I experienced her. She wasn't as severe as Joan Riviere who couldn't stand fools. She could stand fools quite well, even like them!

JM: I was wondering about the sort of language she used. Presumably, she was using much body, part-object language. I think that's what you've been implying.

HS: That's right. It's the same thing, you see. She overdid it and then Meltzer did too- we used to call it the school of flying breasts and penises. On the other hand there is a danger of losing touch with phantasy, with corporeal phantasy. She wouldn't have liked that. She was ever so conscious about it. You know there's a joke - an old lady listening to young people discussing sex and she carefully pulls a young man aside and asks him, 'doesn't anybody ever do it the old fashioned way?' And when I hear cases now I sometimes ask myself 'does nobody ever do it the old



fashioned way? Does nobody ever interpret envy as envy?' We have become too cautious in relation to interpreting actual impulses. 'How do we know', people say? 'Isn't it better to go very cautiously? Isn't it better not to use part-object language?' But I think that [naming things concretely] has become a bit taboo. You don't call envy envy, and you don't call a breast a breast. And I agree with some criticisms that Egle Laufer[38] makes- that it's always a thought meeting a thought. 'Does the lower part of the body never get mentioned?' she asked once, in criticising a too-clever post-Kleinian paper, and she was right! As usual it goes to and fro. Because we overdid those direct interpretations of impulses, and corporeal phantasies, which didn't work in a state of massive projective identification, and because we got too fascinated by details of phantasy, now the tendency is to pull too much away from it and I'm sure she wouldn't like that.

DP Let's turn to Klein's last phase and the work underway and incomplete at the end. Are there 'unwritten papers' of Klein's, ideas that you are aware she was pursuing but that never actually materialised in articles or books?

HS: Her last papers that were published were really not finished. I think the one on Loneliness[39] was in manuscript. Certainly, the other paper about one of the Greek tragedies is, to my mind, not worked through. What she was working on, on the last day before she died, were the proofs of 'Richard'.

DP: Could you say a bit about the period of her old age and death. What do you remember about the final phase?

HS: She was extremely vigorous. Right to the end she never missed a meeting or anything like that. But she was rather depressed and she felt very lonely. Of course, her son had died – and she suffered very much from the Melitta thing – she wrote to her and tried to make up. Eric was a very faithful son. She was very attached to her grandchildren. Towards the end she felt particularly attached to Michael, the eldest. But it was family visits now and then. I am lucky – I live with my family. She had lots of friends but she did feel very lonely and quite often depressed. But she was working and left very careful disposition about what was to happen to her patients and all that. She must have been ill for quite a long time. She was very very tired and not feeling well and her G.P. just dismissed it as old age and tiredness. But she was bleeding. She didn't tell him – she thought it was haemorrhoids and I don't know why she didn't tell him she was bleeding quite a lot and getting very anaemic. Then she got ill on holiday and had to be brought back. And then it went fairly quickly. She recovered very well from her operation. But what happened is actually in a way her fault. She insisted that she didn't need a night nurse and she got up at night, confused, and fell, which opened her wound and it bled. But the night before she was still working on 'Richard'.



NOTES

[1] *Reason and Passion* and *Psychoanalysis and Culture*, Both: London: Duckworth 1997.

[2] W. D. Fairbairn (1889-1964), working independently in Edinburgh, was developing an object-relations theory at the same time as Klein, which came to differ from hers in important respects. He was one of the key founders of what has come to be known as the 'British Object Relations School'.

[3] Anna Freud (1895-1982), daughter of Sigmund Freud, held very different views to Klein, centring particularly around the theory and technique of child analysis. Dissent between London and Vienna in the 1930s became concentrated fiercely within the British Society, after Freud and Anna, fleeing the Nazis, were given sanctuary in London from 1939. Disputes within the Society culminated in a series of lecture/discussions between 1942 and 1944, in which the followers of Klein had to justify their new theories as true to psychoanalysis, and thus their right to remain in the Society. These became known as the Controversial Discussions. [See R. Steiner and P. King (eds) *The Freud-Klein Controversies 1941-45*, London: Routledge (1991)].

The book referred to by Segal here is Anna Freud's *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* London: Hogarth 1986 (first published 1936).

[4] *The Psychoanalysis of Children*. (1932) In *The Writings of Melanie Klein, Vol. 2*. London: Hogarth 1975.

[5] Donald Winnicott (1896-1971), came to psychoanalysis as a paediatrician. An early supporter of Klein, he came to differ from her theoretically and clinically in important respects. He became a prominent member of the so-called 'Middle Group' within the British Society from the 1950s.

[6] Paula Heimann (1899-1982) was analysed by Klein, and was initially one of her key friends and supporters in the hostile climate surrounding her and her ideas in the 1940s. However Heimann later came to repudiate much of Klein's work and alter her allegiance, a source of great distress to Klein.

[7] This was (and remains) a subsidised scheme provided by the London Clinic of Psychoanalysis under the auspices of the Institute of Psychoanalysis.

[8] Controversial Discussions. See note 3.

[9] Herbert Rosenfeld (1910-1986) was analysed by Klein. He made seminal contributions, (as did Hanna Segal and Wilfred Bion around the same time), concerning the psychoanalytical understanding of, and clinical technique with, psychotic and other severely ill patients.

[10] Edward Glover (1888-1972) was a powerful member of the British Psychoanalytical Society in the 1930s and 40s until his resignation in 1944. Initially a supporter of Klein and her ideas, he took her daughter Melitta Schimberg into analysis in 1933. Subsequently he joined his patient in making fierce public attacks



on Klein. This was an important contribution to the acrimony surrounding the Controversial Discussions (see 2).

[11] *Mrs Klein*, a play by Nicholas Wright, first performed in London in 1989.

[12] Wilfred Bion (1897-1979) was analysed by Klein. He became one of the most innovative and influential psychoanalysts of the twentieth century. He theorises both about group functioning, and about the fundamental elements of individual psychic functioning. Segal is here referring to Bion's theory of communicative projective identification and maternal 'containment'. See also note 6.

[13] See note 2.

[14] Dinora Pines is a member of the British Psychoanalytical Society, now retired. Her work is in the Contemporary Freudian tradition, which in turn has its 'familial roots' in the Anna Freudian tradition. She is distinguished for her psychoanalytic work on pregnancy.

[15] Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). A French psychoanalyst who developed his own version of Freudian psychoanalysis based on structuralist and post-structuralist linguistic ideas. He made radical changes to the psychoanalytic setting (for example allowing the analyst to vary the length of the session at will). His ideas have been particularly influential in non-clinical, academic psychoanalysis.

[16] Daniel Lagache (1903-1972). A founder and first President of the French Psychoanalytical Society from 1964, Lagache was an important French psychoanalyst. He was a distinguished teacher and prolific writer who was interested in a synthesis between psychoanalysis and social psychology.

[17] Riccardo Steiner, a psychoanalyst and historian of the psychoanalytical movement, has been Honorary Archivist of the British Psychoanalytical Society since 1994. The books referred to here are *Tradition, Change, Creativity: Repercussions of the New Diaspora on Aspects of British Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac (2000) and *'It is a New Kind of Diaspora': Explorations in the Sociopolitical and Cultural Context of Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac (2000). Steiner is also co-author with Pearl King, of *The Freud-Klein Controversies*. (see note 3).

[18] Sandor Ferenczi (1873-1933) was Klein's first analyst, in Budapest. One of Freud's close original collaborators, he later moved away from orthodoxy in his radical experimentation with the analytic setting.

[19] Karl Abraham (1877-1925) was Klein's second analyst, in Berlin. He was a major theoretical influence through his discoveries about primitive development and phantasy. A strong early supporter of her work, he died very young, so that her analysis was interrupted after barely a year.

[20] See note 9. Bion's 'K' link concerns the necessity of emotionally based knowing/learning and of being known- as vital for psychic integrity as loving and being loved (the 'L' link). See *Learning from Experience* (1962) London: Heinemann.



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[21] Michael Balint (1896-1971) was a contemporary of Klein's, now seen as a well-known member of the 'British Object Relations School' (see note 1).

[22] Esther Bick (1902-1983) is best known for her child psychotherapy work at the Tavistock Clinic (see note 30), her introduction of infant observation into analytic training, and her ideas on the proto-mental functions of the skin.

[23] Donald Meltzer was like Segal, an analysand of Klein's. He has left the British Psychoanalytical Society, but is still in clinical practice in Oxford, England. His work is unusual in the use it still makes of the direct interpretation of primitive phantasy.

[24] Melitta Schmideberg (1904-83), the only daughter of Melanie Klein. She and her mother were famously and tragically at odds, personally and professionally, throughout the tempestuous times of the Controversial Discussions and beyond. See notes 2 and 7.

[25] Susan Isaacs, (1885-1948) one of Klein's most staunch and creative supporters during the 'Controversial Discussions' (see note 2) years and beyond, is well known for her paper 'The Nature and Function of Phantasy' (1948) *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 29: 73-97. She brought Kleinian psychoanalytic ideas into her work in education.

[26] Joan Riviere (1883-1962), working in the Kleinian tradition, made important contributions, which are collected, in *The Inner World and Joan Riviere* (1991) London: Karnac.

[27] Elliot Jaques is particularly noted for his work on group and institutional dynamics, and for his paper 'Death and the Mid-Life Crisis' (1965) *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 46:502-14. He has now retired as an analyst and is involved in the field of sociology.

[28] Betty Joseph is a former supervisee of Klein's, and, like Segal, became a close colleague of Klein. She has made major contributions to psychoanalytic clinical theory and has had an important influence on contemporary post-Kleinian technique. See *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected Papers of Betty Joseph*. (1989) London: Routledge.

[29] 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms' (1946) In *The Writings of Melanie Klein Vol. 3*, London: Hogarth Press, (1975).

[30] 'Notes on Symbol Formation' (1957) *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 38: 391-7.

[31] *Envy and Gratitude* (1957) In *The Writings of Melanie Klein Vol. 3* 176-235. London: Hogarth Press (1975)

[32] Hans Thorner was an émigré to the British Society from Berlin when Hitler came to power, at first working as a GP. He was analysed by Klein and later Bion, and became a prominent member of Klein's group of followers.



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[33] The Tavistock Clinic, London, was founded in 1920 as a psychotherapy clinic, and has become prominent as a training centre for psychoanalytical psychotherapists, adult and child, within the British Health Service. It was also influential in the treatment of war neuroses, and in the development of group relations theory.

[34] Franco Fornari (1921-85), an Italian psychoanalyst, published among other things an important work applying Kleinian ideas to the psychology of war. Published in Italian in 1966, the English edition is: *The Psychoanalysis of War*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press 1975.

[35] This refers to Klein's *Narrative of a Child Analysis* (1961) published as Volume 4 of *The Writings of Melanie Klein* London: Hogarth Press 1975. It is the daily account of the four-month-long analysis of a child of 10, whom she called 'Richard'. It was carried out in Pitlochry, where Klein was evacuated for some time during the wartime bombing of London.

[36] 'Dick' was the name Klein gave to an autistic child she analysed and wrote about in *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (1932). In *The Writings of Melanie Klein Vol 2*. London: Hogarth Press 1975.

[37] Ernest Jones (1879-1958), a Welshman, was a key figure in early British psychoanalysis. He was a close friend and correspondent, and the official biographer, of Sigmund Freud. Jones founded the British Psychoanalytical Society, and was its President between 1919 and 1944. He was by and large a great supporter of Klein and her work, and originally invited Klein to London.

[38] Egle Laufer is a prominent British psychoanalyst within the Contemporary Freudian tradition (see note 11). She is particularly noted for her work on adolescence.

[39] 'On the Sense of Loneliness' (1963) In *The Writings of Melanie Klein Vol 3*. London: Hogarth Press 1975.