

# Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein: You Get the Picture

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One branch of the psychoanalytic tree is that of Melanie Klein's object relations theory and technique. While Klein's ideas were looked upon kindly by Freud's close associates Karl Abraham, Sandor Ferenczi and Ernest Jones, Freud himself had his reservations about them but was also a somewhat open minded and feeling he had "no right to any fixed conviction".

While Freud and Klein had no significant direct contact there were a few opportunities when the two may have met. And, as far as I know, there is only one photograph in which the two are seen together. It is a group photo at the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association in The Hague.

## 1918

The first occasion in which Melanie Klein saw Sigmund Freud was the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association in Budapest, Hungary on September 28 and 29, 1918 just as the First World War was coming to an end. It was at that Congress Melanie Klein heard Freud present Lines of Advance in Psychoanalytic Therapy. She recalled, "I remember vividly how impressed I was and how the wish to devote myself to psychoanalysis was strengthened by this impression" (Grosskurth, 1986, p. 71).

## 1920

Melanie Klein saw Freud again at the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association in The Hague on September 8<sup>th</sup> 1920. It was there that Freud delivered a paper entitled Supplements to the Theory of Dreams, in which he broadened his ideas about wish-fulfillment in dreams, and addressed themes of self-punishment and the repetition of traumatic experiences. He was approaching a formulation of the "repetition compulsion" theory (Jones, 1955, p. 221; Jones, 1957, p. 27).

Among other presentations at this Congress was a lecture by Hermine von Hug-Hellmuth, On the Technique of the Analysis of Children. She advocated educational methods for children under 7 or 8 years of age (Dyer, 1983, p. 38). She pointed out that the child does not come to analysis of his own accord and has no desire to change at all. She also suggested the creation of psychoanalytic homes as another form of therapeutic intervention. (Hug-Hellmuth, 1920, 1991, pp. 138-153). Near the end of her presentation, Hug-Hellmuth added, "I consider it impossible for anyone to analyze properly his own child" (Hug-Hellmuth 1920 1991, p. 152). She was speaking from experience, having analyzed her nephew. One wonders what Sigmund and Anna Freud might have been thinking when hearing such an assertion. Surely they agreed with the advice but surely they were going against it themselves. Anna was, at that time, in analysis with Sigmund Freud. And Melanie Klein was analyzing her own children as well (Grosskurth, 1986, p. 92).

In the coming years Melanie Klein and Anna Freud would become involved in what Freud's grandson, W. Ernest Freud, called 'The Psychoanalytic Civil War'. Ostensibly the conflict was over theory and technique. Melanie Klein asserted that the development of the Oedipus complex and superego emerge in early infancy while Anna Freud's observations confirmed her father's view for a later emergence. Melanie Klein said the transference was present from the beginning of a child analysis and that it needed to be interpreted as such. Anna Freud, said that the analyst must cultivate a new and positive relationship with the child analysand and that the child has not yet created an 'old edition' to transfer onto the analyst. Based on these points of view, Anna Freud asserted the importance of employing educational interventions in the treatment of children while Melanie Klein advocated a strict analytical

approach with deep interpretations articulating primitive fantasies. Melanie Klein asserted that analysis does not harm the ego but actually strengthens it, while Anna Freud asserted that the infantile ego is too weak to tolerate classical analysis. Melanie Klein equated child's play with free-association while Anna Freud noted that play and free association are not equivalent at all. Free-association, she pointed out, has the co-operation of an adult psyche trying to enter into a particular kind of dialogue with the analyst and that the child doesn't really have such intentions at all.

Anna Freud disagreed with the Kleinian focus on transference material at the expense of dreams, verbal associations, memories, and so on. Also of concern for her was the importance the Kleinians placed on pre-verbal phantasies at the expense of pathogenic happenings that occurred after the establishment of speech.

In Alex Holder's examination of the differences between Melanie Klein and Anna Freud, he brought several points into high relief. First, Anna Freud abandoned the "educational element" she had originally advocated but replaced it with the importance of offering "developmental help" to assist children with developmental deficits or distortions (Holder, 2005, pp. 33, 34, 90, 91). And she continued to think it important for the child analyst to be mindful of the child's external reality at home and at school as opposed to the exclusively intrapsychic focus of Melanie Klein. Secondly, Anna Freud modified her introductory phase of establishing an alliance with the child to one of interpreting the resistance but she still insisted on the importance of interpreting from the surface and working one's way down rather than starting off with the interpretation of primitive impulses and fantasies as Melanie Klein advocated (Holder, 2005, pp. 59, 66). Thirdly, Anna Freud also came to see that children could indeed see the analyst as both a transference object and a new object. But the fact remained for her that the child's transference was different from the transference of an adult in so far as the child analyst is an active partner in the play, whereas the adult analyst is more of a shadowy figure. Consequently, the child's transference develops differently (Holder, 2005, pp. 70-72). Furthermore, Holder came to see some of the most controversial issues between Melanie Klein and Anna Freud, such as the nature of the child's transference, the onset and nature of the Oedipus Complex and the development of the superego, not so much as disagreements as they were differences in definitions. While Anna Freud applied the definitions, developmental sequences and timetables to these concepts that her father had established, and which Melanie Klein could also recognize, Klein found it useful to keep the terms but change the definitions to include various precursors and initial steps in their development (Holder, 2005, pp. 88, 89, 92, 94-97).

These differences between Melanie Klein and Anna Freud began in the early 1920s and continued for decades.

## 1922

In 1922 Freud and Klein both attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association in Berlin from September 25-27. The Congress welcomed 256 participants and heard papers by Franz Alexander, Karl Abraham, Sandor Ferenczi, Karen Horney, Melanie Klein, Hermann Nunberg, Sandor Rado, Geza Róheim, and Ernest Jones. Melanie Klein's It was the last Congress Freud would attend, and he took the opportunity to present a paper entitled Some Remarks on the Unconscious, which featured new ideas soon to be published in *The Ego and the Id*. Those attending witnessed psychoanalytic history as Freud ushered in the new psychology of the ego (Jones, 1957, pp. 87, 89).

Melanie Klein's paper presented at this Congress was entitled Infant Analysis: on The Development and Inhibition of Natural Gifts. She presented it in the morning session on September 27, 1922 with Dr. Jan E. G. van Emden Chairing the meeting. Klein's biographer, Phyllis Grosskurth wrote that it was "unlikely that [Freud] was present when Klein delivered her paper, but he was undoubtedly aware of the contents of all the papers being produced" (Grosskurth, 1986, p. 105).

### 1925

Karl Abraham presided over the Bad Homburg Congress which Melanie Klein attended in September 1925 but he was clearly not well. Unfortunately, Abraham, whose clinical, theoretical and administrative roles had been of enormous value to psychoanalysis, died on 25 December 1925 of respiratory problems, diagnosed as bronchogenic carcinoma (Jones, 1957, p. 116; Schur, 1972, p. 388). His contributions were many. The most noteworthy were his elaboration of Freud's theory of psychosexual development, and his notion of an early depression in infancy that stands as a prototype for melancholia. On 7 October 1923 Abraham wrote to Freud:

"I have something pleasant to report in the scientific field. In my work on Melancholia, of which Rank has the manuscript, I have assumed the presence of an early depression in infancy as a prototype for later melancholia. In the last few months Mrs. Klein has skillfully conducted the psycho-analysis of a three-year-old with good therapeutic results. This child presented a true picture of the basic depression that I postulated in close combination with oral eroticism. The case offers amazing insight into the infantile instinctual life" (Abraham, 1965, p. 339).

This 'early depression in infancy,' is what Melanie Klein elaborated into her developmental concept of the Depressive Position, which she saw as developmentally following a Paranoid-Schizoid Position.

### 1926

In September 1926 Melanie Klein, was invited to London to give a series of lectures on child analysis. The response to her work was so overwhelming that she decided to relocate to England (Young-Bruehl, 1988, p. 165).

In November 1926 Freud wrote to Eitingon:

"Compared to the opinions of Klein, hers [Anna Freud's] are conservative, one might even say reactionary, but it looks as if she is right" (Young-Bruehl, 1988, p. 163).

### 1931

In July 1931 the IPA Congress in Interlaken was cancelled due to the world economic crisis and the political situation in Germany. Eitingon suggested that they use the crisis as an excuse not to publish a book submitted to the psychoanalytic publishing house by Melanie Klein. Freud agreed:

"If we have a good opportunity to put off the publication of Melanie Klein's book and to finally repudiate it, we should take it. Out of consideration for Anna I am forced to be partisan, but in the latest studies of the development of the female child I nevertheless came to the conviction that the results of Kleinian play therapy are misleading and its conclusions incorrect. There is really no need for us to champion it" (Molnar, 1992, p. 102).

The book in question was probably Melanie Klein's *The Psycho-Analysis of Children* (1932).

### 1935

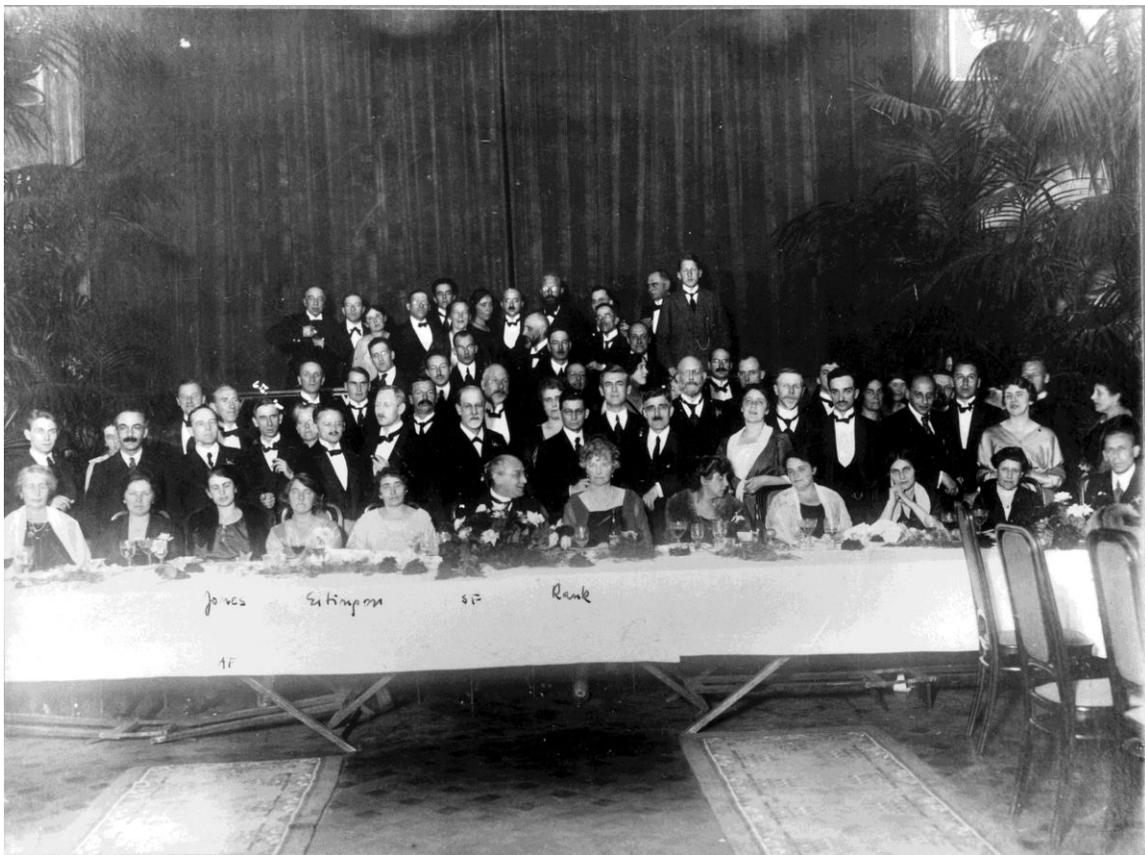
In 1935 as the world was edging toward war on the international stage, a civil war of theory and technique was brewing within the International Psychoanalytical Association. The lines were being drawn between London and Vienna, between Jones and Freud and most particularly between Melanie Klein and Anna Freud. Jones and Freud differed and did so with respect and scholarship. They differed over Freud's conception of the Death Instinct and the phallic stage, especially in the case of the female. Jones conceptualized them differently than Freud. He presented his ideas to Freud and the Vienna group. Freud was not convinced but their relationship was not damaged. The differences between Melanie Klein and Anna Freud, however, were very tense and Freud wrote to Jones:

"I do not estimate our theoretical differences of opinion as slight, but so long as there is no bad feeling behind them they can have no troublesome results. I can say definitely that we in

Vienna have not infused any ill will into the contradiction, and your amiableness has repaired the way in which Melanie Klein and her daughter erred in this respect toward Anna. It is true I am of opinion that your Society has followed Frau Klein on a wrong path, but the sphere from which she has drawn her observations is foreign to me so that I have no right to any fixed conviction” (Jones, 1957, p. 197).

**Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein in 1920: The Photo and the Roster**

The year of The Hague Congress, 1920, was a momentous year for Freud. It began with his patient, friend and patron, Anton von Freund, dying of cancer on January 20<sup>th</sup>. It was a profound loss for Freud and for psychoanalysis. But then only five days later, Freud’s second daughter, Sophie, died from complications of the Spanish Flu, leaving her widowed husband, Max Halberstadt, and two children Ernst and Heinerle, profoundly traumatized by their bitter loss. Beyond the Pleasure Principle was published in 1920 elaborating on the repetition compulsion and game of ‘fort-da’ and introducing the concept of the death Instinct.



There are 67 people seen in the photograph taken at the 1920 International Psychoanalytical Association Congress in The Hague, Netherlands. Those that have been identified in the photo are:

- (front row l. to r.) 3. Anna Freud, 6. Sandor Ferenczi., 12. Karl Abraham.
- (row 2) 3. Ernest Jones, 5. Ernst Simmel, 7. Oskar Pfister, 8. Sigmund Freud, 9. Otto Rank, 11. Melanie Klein, 13. Theodor Reik.
- (row 3) 5. [behind Simmel] Philip Sarasin, 9. [behind Rank] J.H.W. van Ophuijsen.
- (last row) 8. Max Eitingon, 9. Paul Federn, 12. Carl Muller-Braunschweig(?).



In the enlargement above we see Prof. Freud standing at the far left and Melanie Klein standing at the far right. The original photo is in the London Freud Museum Photograph Archive.

Records indicate that sixty-two members of the IPA attended the Congress suggesting that five non-members may have jumped into this historic photo. Despite these numbers only 47 members signed the roster and we can see Melanie Klein's signature as the 4<sup>th</sup> on the list and Prof. Freud's as the 15<sup>th</sup> (Norman, et al., 1991, pp. 77, 78).

What this photo and roster illustrate is that Melanie Klein not only carried on the human tradition of psychoanalysis in her theoretical and clinical work but also that she had direct personal contact with Professor Sigmund Freud. Such contact, while not entirely necessary, is often inspiring and of significant importance to those that wish to trace their lineage to Freud. One can trace this lineage from one couch to the next, from one supervision to the next, from one idea to the next and even from one personal encounter to the next arriving at an idea of how many degrees of separation exist between Freud and the modern student of psychoanalysis.

Tracing one's lineage enables one to say, "I studied with so-and-so who studied with so-and-so who studied with so-and-so who studied with Freud. And in this way, I participate in the human tradition of psychoanalysis, carrying the torch yet another generation, making my own contributions and passing the torch on to the next generation."

Leden.

8 Sept. 9.30

- 1. Adolph Stern
- 2. Edward Hirschmann
- 3. ~~Karl Simon~~
- 4. Melanie Klein
- 5. ~~Andry~~ Endtz.
- 6. J. C. Flügel
- 7. J. H. W. van Opheusden.
- 8. J. E. J. van Emden.
- 9. Dr. Karim Horney
- ~~Paul Michalski~~
- 10. Dr. H. Liebermann
- 11. ~~Simm.~~
- 12. ~~Ch. Meyer~~
- 13. M. Joan Riviere
- 14. ~~Leza Röhren~~
- 15. Prof. Freud
- 16. Dr. J. Ferenczi
- 17. Dr. Theodor Reik
- 18. Dr. Hann Sachs
- 19. Dr. J. J. van der
- 20. Dr. Sarant.
- 21. Dr. Rank
- 22. Dr. Abraham
- 23. ~~W. Stoddard~~

- 24. Dr. Kastingberg
- 25. David Froyth
- 26. Eric Heller
- 27. Dr. Margarete Stegmann
- 28. Barbara <sup>Long</sup>
- 29. ~~Robt. Kitzell~~
- 30. ~~Philene D. ...~~
- 31. Dr. Loko Lucha
- 32. Dr. Hug Hellmann
- 33. Dr. med. S. Spielman
- 34. Dr. H. K. Forder
- 35. Dr. G. Jolly
- 36. ~~J. P. ...~~
- 37. Dr. Westerman Holsting
- 38. Karca
- 39. O. Fren.
- 40. Goddek.
- 41. Amande Lijo
- 42. Dr. Kempner.
- 43. Jan Hoop.
- 44. Douglas Bryan
- 45. E. Dittenberg
- 46. ~~Carl Bondman~~
- 47. Raymond de Sausture
- 48.
- 49.

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