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THE STUDY AND TREATMENT OF MOTHERS AND INFANTS, THEN AND NOW: MELANIE KLEIN'S "NOTES ON BABY" IN A CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYTIC CONTEXT

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This paper draws on Melanie Klein's (unpublished) observational notes of her infant grandson, written primarily in 1938 and 1939. Apart from moving glimpses into a young family's life, the notes contain astute observations of an infant's behavior and emotions. Compared with Klein's published writings, the style is less theoretical and polemical. Later, in his latency years, Klein's grandson was in analysis with Marion Milner, who in 1952 published a paper drawing on the treatment.

The present paper focuses on (1) how observations and treatment of the same child and his family by clinicians in close relationships with each other (Klein, Milner, and Winnicott) fertilized reciprocal influence but also brought into question the validity of Klein's observations, and (2) the relative merits and contributions of various modalities in understanding the infant's psyche, including experimental research, direct observation, parent–infant psychotherapy, and reconstructions from older patients—as occurs, for example, in psychoanalysis.

Keywords: Mother–infant relationship, Melanie Klein, infant observation, D. W. Winnicott, Kleinian theory, Marion Milner, infantile phantasy, guilt, affects, separation anxiety, language, family, latency.

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THE ORIGINS OF INTERACTIVE INFANT–MOTHER STUDIES IN BRITAIN

Although Melanie Klein (1932) had established her child analytic work at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis in London, it would be some years before the observational study of actual mother–infant dyads became part of the curriculum—first at the Tavistock Clinic in 1948, then at the British Institute in 1960 (Bick 1964). Prior to these direct studies of mother–infant dyads, conjectures about early infantile states of mind were deployed in the analyses of young children. One of us (Aguayo 2002) has previously called attention to the prehistory of this period, when analysts such as Klein and Winnicott began experimenting with actual observational studies of infants and their mothers.

In a manner similar to Freud, who in working with adult neurotic patients had posited the crucial role of an early childhood conflictual neurotogenesis, Klein proposed infantile conflict as a key factor in the neurotic disturbances of both young children and adult patients. For instance, Klein (1935) had posited the *depressive position* as central for the infant in the first year of life, attributing theoretical importance to such crucial developmental milestones as weaning. She conceptualized mother's breast as the source of the infant's first pleasure and frustration. The infant was thus faced with a problem that she later (1957) named its *double relation to the breast,* which the infant had to cope with by means of very primitively developed mental capacities. The problem, however, was a paucity of data on what infants were like with their mothers. This lack contributed to what appeared to many analysts to be the far-fetched and speculative nature of her theories.

In the late 1930s, Klein (unpublished) began to remedy this deficiency by making careful observations of three of her own grandchildren as infants. Of particular interest is her observation of the eldest of these, a boy born on October 17, 1937. In contrast with her child analytic method, she observed the boy's developmental milestones and his maturation in early play and in interactions with family members. The differentiating feature of her direct observational method was that it revolved around the infant's unfolding behavior, rather than how it was retrospectively reconstructed.

Interestingly, Klein's notes contain no data on either breast-feeding or weaning. However, in a later publication (Klein 1952) that drew on material from the unpublished notes of 1938–1939 (Klein, unpublished), she wrote that her grandson ("Infant D" in the 1952 publication) had had some problems with breast-feeding, and that it was discontinued after the first few weeks of life: "There had been difficulties in breast-feeding almost from the beginning, since the mother's milk gave out, and when a few weeks old he was entirely changed over to bottle-feeding" (1952, p. 113).

During these years, from 1935 to 1939, Klein supervised Winnicott, who had recently qualified as a psychoanalyst at the British Society. A frank enthusiast for Klein's child analytic technique from 1935 to 1945, he followed her theoretical leads as reflected in the notions of the depressive position and manic defenses. It is quite likely that he also shared his considerable pediatric experiences with her. Perhaps as Winnicott learned more about analytic play technique, Klein, too, learned about the need for empirical and observational bases of what were in fact theoretical conjectures about the early mental life of infants. Thus, there was a relationship of reciprocal influence, one plainly in view by the time Winnicott wrote "The Observations of Infants in a Set Situation" (1941). Klein continued to show her interest in direct observations of infants by offering Winnicott critiques of the paper prior to its publication (Rodman 2004).

In that paper, Winnicott drew upon Klein's postulations about the early origins of a maternally driven superego. He did this by observing mother–infant dyads in a consulting situation in which he was the attending pediatrician. Here at last was the opportunity to provide empirical bases for Klein's hypotheses. An invariant interview method was carried out with mothers and infants from five to thirteen months of age. With the infant in mother's lap, Winnicott sat behind a desk on which a spatula was placed. The observation revolved around how the infant related to this new object. Was he able to approach and handle it, or was he shy and hesitant, turning to his mother for approval?

Winnicott linked the so-called hesitation anxiety of those infants who were fearful of approaching the spatula to early superego manifestations, which could be either self-generated or a reaction to parental

disapproval (Aguayo 2002). According to him—and here he was very close to Klein's thinking—there was now evidence that infants could be tormented by primitive guilt and that they tended to expect mother to be disapproving. In a broader perspective, he thus supported Klein's contention that infants are "minded."

Klein's interest grew and was stimulated further by Winnicott's innovative empirical research with mother–infant dyads, which seemed to be a natural way to test her hypotheses about infant mental life. At this point in Klein's theorizing about infancy, the youngest child she had treated up to that point was Rita, age two and three-quarters (Klein 1932). She would thus have been quite interested in observing infants and toddlers directly to find evidence for the viability of her theories regarding a child's phantasies about the mother's body. For this reason, the opportunity to observe her baby grandson must have ignited her interest.

A SURVEY OF KLEIN'S OBSERVATIONS

A contemporary psychoanalyst who conducts parent–infant therapy can observe mother–infant interactions directly and collect intuitions about the baby's internal world. Klein, in contrast, worked with older children and adults, on whose verbal comments and play she based her interpretations and theories of infant mental life. But in observing her grandson, she had a double advantage: she could monitor him both in solitude and in interaction with his parents. We will see how she exploited this unique situation—and what factors may have jeopardized her efforts.

Metapsychological terms are scarce in this personal document authored by a loving grandmother who nevertheless maintains an analytic eye in observing the boy, his father (Klein's youngest son), and his mother. It contains warm and evocative details of the baby's everyday life and emotions, such as love, longing, rage, jealousy, dishonesty, etc. This gives the reader a sense of "I know this boy."

It is remarkable that Klein's grandmotherly fondness does not distract her from conceptualizing his internal world soberly and objectively. Nevertheless, we discern some blind spots in her report, as will be suggested later in this paper. The style differs from that of her published

papers, in which metapsychological concepts are sometimes stacked on top of each other, in our view, with little room for the reader to reflect or to take a personal stand. Thus, when her grandson was born in October 1937, Klein's publications already revealed her long-standing habit of formulating stark theoretical positions on infantile mental life. By contrast, her observations of her grandson and his family were intended neither for publication nor for collegial discussions.

AFFECTS AND PHANTASY CONTENT

The material from the boy's first four months is presented less systematically than the ensuing observations. During the period that followed, the notes do not cover the boy's assumed phantasy content but center around his behavior and affects. For example, he is reported to recognize faces at six weeks and to look for specific people at nine weeks. Affects are noted from the age of three months; Klein lists his facial affective expressions at this age, though only in retrospect: "distress, contentment, laughter, anger" (unpublished, p. 8). She notes that he has toys that he gets angry with, takes pleasure in, and uses to comfort himself.

Some of Klein's observations appear to foreshadow Winnicott's (1953) notion of the transitional object. She notes, for example, that when the four-month-old is going to sleep, "he often cries, it is difficult to say why. But it seems that the toy replaces the company and gives him comfort" (p. 4). At five months, he displays other behaviors aimed at reducing his frustration, she observes: scratching, caressing mother, and tapping people. He also shows what she describes as the first signs of love for his teddy bear at six months.

A pertinent question is why Klein is otherwise silent on the boy's affects and phantasies during his first half year. We might consider three possible reasons for this: her ongoing theoretical development, her personal involvement with the boy, and the particular setting in which she made these observations. Almost ten years later, she was to publish a work that delineated the infant's phantasy life from birth onward (Klein 1946). There she would focus on precisely that period about which she had been relatively silent in observing her grandson—that is, the period when paranoid-schizoid anxieties are dominant. At the time that she ob-

served the boy, such concepts were unavailable to her. Winnicott (1941), in contrast, had already begun theorizing on this period.

Today we can utilize Klein's 1946 concepts and speculate that the three-month-old baby's anger with a toy stemmed from projective identifications. He experienced the toy as replete with his own anger and bad self, as well as with its ensuing vengeful wishes toward him. Also, his bedtime crying at four months might have been due to schizoparanoid anxieties resulting from such attacks on internal objects and a consequent sense of desertion.

Klein's personal involvement with her grandson might be another reason for her silence on his earliest phantasies. The portrait of her son, the boy's father, is rather vague, whereas one senses her sometime vexation with his mother's low mood and possible tendency to pamper the boy. One intuits the struggle of a grandmother who has her own views about the boy's upbringing but who cautions herself not to meddle in the young family's relationships. The mother is clearly influenced by her mother-in-law's thinking, as when she states that her son seems to work out aggression on his toys. Despite this evidence of Klein's impact on the family's thinking, Klein can hardly have felt that she had the parents' unambiguous or unreserved approval of her studied observations of their son.

According to Rustin (2014), an infant observer should offer the family a "friendly, non-intrusive, interested presence" while being "aware of the thoughts and feelings around her without being swayed by them into intervening" (p. 99). This task is very taxing because the observer learns, "sometimes in shocking and surprising ways" (p. 100), about her unconscious preconceptions and memories of her own family life. Such factors must have even more intensely impacted a grandmother who was taking notes on her grandson toward whom she also felt some concern. As if this obstacle were not enough, there were various other intricacies in the close-knit relationships among family members and patient–analyst pairs.

To illustrate the closeness of these relationships, we might point out that the boy's father was in analysis with Winnicott, who was Klein's supervisee and colleague, and with whom she was developing theories

about the infant's mental life. Winnicott's (1962) critical questioning of her theories appeared only later. These observations were thus written by and dealt with people who were entangled with one another in multifarious ways. This must have constricted Klein's freedom of thought and ability to observe objectively.

To exemplify Klein's challenges in making unbiased observations, we point to her notes' paucity of data on breast-feeding. This is certainly a striking omission for a theorist like Klein, but it may be that she did not want to disturb the intimacy between her grandson and daughter-in-law in a feeding situation that, furthermore, was a difficult one.

Our final explanation of the initial scarcity of speculations is simply Klein's lack of experience in parent–infant observation. We recall that, in contrast to Winnicott, she was not accustomed to dealing with infants in a clinical setting. To summarize, in the beginning of her grandson's life, Klein was a cautious observer in regard to both her own behavior and her conclusions. This would soon change.

SEPARATION ANXIETY, LOSS, AND DESTRUCTIVENESS

When the boy is somewhat older, Klein begins to more clearly describe her notions about his phantasy world. One such theme is separation. Eighteen months old, he is left by the parents for an Easter vacation journey. He becomes distressed, falls, and cries, and begins to eat voraciously. Klein interprets his behavior as indicating his preoccupation with questions such as whether it is his fault that the parents are gone, if he may take out his anger on the nurse—if she can put up with it—or if he is a bad boy who deserves to feel guilty. In Klein's interpretation, his separation anxiety appears to be caused less by the loss per se and more by the destructive phantasies that ensue as a reaction to it.

Shortly after the parents' vacation, the imminent war forces the family to be evacuated from London. This aggravates the separation pain, since the 1½-year-old boy's father must now be away from home for several days at a time, and mother is working as well.

In one moving observation, the boy has been told, at around the time of the parents' vacation, that he must not pick flowers. Standing with his grandmother, Klein, at a flower bed at home, he obeys and merely scratches some earth into the water. The landlady witnesses the scene and wants to laud him for being a good boy. She picks some flowers herself and hands them to him, but he becomes horrified, avoids touching the forbidden flowers, and wants to put them back into the earth. On another occasion, his uncle is playing with him. The boy scratches him and the uncle pretends to cry, whereupon the boy cries inconsolably for hours. In Klein's view, these incidents reflect how easily the boy's guilt is awakened. It is as if he were thinking that every mishap is his fault, whether it is a crying uncle, a flower being picked, or a toy that is broken.

Klein's interpretation of these scenes tell us something important about her views on the dynamics of separation reactions—that is, that they are not driven merely by loss and anguish at the parents' coming and going. If a discussant of today were to claim that the boy reacted as he did because his attachment relationships were being repeatedly ruptured, Klein would probably have taken a different position. She might have contended that if we want to fully understand his ailment, we must also take into account his destructive wishes and ensuing guilt. Granted, the observations reveal that he missed his parents and especially his father, to whom he was strongly attached. But Klein also guessed that he wished to injure them. This reflects an important theme that will reappear later (Klein 1946). The destructive and hated part of the self is split off and projected onto the loved object. The child feels this to be a danger to this loved object, and therefore the sequence gives rise to guilt.

Klein draws this conclusion after the boy plays with some flower pots. According to Klein, the biggest one, which he puts on top of the others, represents the father. When some pots get broken, she interprets this as a wish to injure the father. She reaches a similar conclusion when he knocks down a tower of bricks. These examples show Klein's acuity in intuiting the boy's affects, though we get the impression that her claims about their ideational content exemplify a habit of attributing to a child

the kind of phantasies that her theory suggests he is bound to have. In other words, a problem in validating her speculations emerges—a theme we will return to later in this paper.

Klein assumes that her grandson has a rather advanced knowledge of intercourse and the making of babies. She bases this on previous theories (Klein 1932), whereas again, it is difficult to discern the observations on which such theories rest. This applies to the flower pot game and to his play with two little tables, in which he puts one on top of the other. He then places the two tables side by side, but with the top of one overlapping the other. Klein interprets the underlying phantasy as his wish to keep the parents together, with the father first on top of the mother, as in intercourse, and then the two parents standing arm in arm. Another example can be seen in the episode with a lady who wants to dissuade him from throwing stones at people on the beach. She shows him some "teeny-weeny stones" and he responds by saying, "teeny-weeny babies" (Klein, unpublished). He then starts throwing them into the ocean. Klein understands this as an intercourse scene, with the sea representing the mother, big stones the father, and small stones the babies.

In our view, Klein's interpretations of her grandson's phantasies about intercourse and procreation sound like ready-mades, which one either accepts or waits to form an opinion about until further empirical material is provided. We do not demand "exact data" for validation, since we agree with Klein (1961) that it would result in a "pseudo-scientific approach, because the workings of the unconscious mind, and the response of the psycho-analyst to them, cannot be submitted to measurement nor classified into rigid categories" (p. 12). Instead, we refer to empirical material gleaned from continuing analytic work and reported in a way that allows the reader to follow up how an interpretation is received by the patient and how he responds to it. Needless to say, such a project would have been impossible to pursue given the framework of Klein's observations.

The grandson's separation anxiety slowly recedes, which Klein attributes to several factors: the advent of sphincter control, his increasing mastery of language, and an ability to recruit his parents as good objects. When he is about one and a half years old, he accepts using the

potty. Klein connects this with her observation that he has now begun to show less concern, unhappiness, and guilt about things that get broken. Defecating in the potty seems to have become a way of releasing anger and receiving praise for being a good boy. This diminishes his guilt over having damaged toys and things and, at bottom—as is so often the case in Klein's thinking—the parental objects.

The boy's increasing linguistic capacities clearly helped him tackle separation anxiety. At only eighteen months of age, he fell into a wordless state of anxiety, sadness, and anger when his parents departed for their Easter vacation. At twenty-six months old, he repeated, as his father was leaving for work in London, "Daddy Lunnon"; like a magic formula, these words diminished his anxiety.

The idea that words can help one come to grips with anxiety is an important tenet in child analysis, especially in the Anna Freud tradition (Katan 1961). For example, Balkányi (1964) emphasized the importance of the child's use of linguistic understanding and expression in working through trauma. This idea is also brought out in the Kleinian tradition (Isaacs 1948).

Finally, as for the young boy's recruitment of his loved ones as good objects, Klein's unpublished notes abound with such descriptions. If one may doubt Klein's speculations about his sexual phantasies, one can hardly question her descriptions of his insistent efforts at bringing his parents together in various games. But as always, love is fraught with ambivalence. After Christmas, the father must return to London. His son, fully two years old, misses him badly, which, according to Klein, is due to both love and guilt. In consequence, he wants to be carried around, he trips and falls, becomes passive, and cries at bedtime. His mother acknowledges to her mother-in-law that she is depressed due to her husband's absence and adds that this has had a bad effect on her son. Klein notes that the mother reported her son "cried in such a heartbreaking way, that she took him into her bed at night" (unpublished, p. 95b). This passage brings us to the matter of how external and internal objects impact each other, as reported in Klein's notes. Further on, it will lead us to a general discussion of the relation between empirical observation and psychoanalytic models of infant psychology.

OBSERVATIONS OF FAMILY INTERACTIONS AND SPECULATIONS ABOUT THEIR IMPACT ON THE BABY

At the beginning of 1940, when Klein's grandson is two years old, his mother relates to Klein that her depressive mood, linked to missing her husband, negatively influences the child. *En passant,* in discussing the mother's present problems with "accepting his difficulties," Klein mentions that, once again, she shows "the fear which she had when he was a baby and cried more, that she spoils him through giving in. It is quite clear that her less patient attitude worries him and increases his difficulties" (unpublished, pp. 99-100).

This is a rare occasion when Klein comments on how family interactions might impact the boy. It is perhaps the clearest indication that Klein takes note of the influence of the adult's emotions and behaviors on the child. This is in line with her view that "actual conflicts between parents or people who play an important part in the child's life (such as nurse, maid, or teacher) cause much anxiety in children at any age" (Klein 1961, pp. 52, 76). Consequently, she says that we need to analyze "the interaction of internal and external situations" (p. 105). In our theoretical discussion, we will investigate to what extent her publications actually contain analyses of such interactions.

KLEIN'S GRANDSON IN CHILD ANALYSIS A DECADE LATER

Contemporary psychoanalysts have a unique opportunity to follow up on the subsequent development of the grandson whom Klein so closely observed, something of a rarity in our analytic literature that is still dominated by reconstructed accounts of early mental life. In 1952, Marion Milner published a paper containing vignettes of her analysis of a boy aged eleven. According to Milner's biographer, Emma Letley (2014), this boy was Klein's eldest grandson; Klein also supervised Milner on this case.

Milner's paper's theoretical topic is symbolism. Milner agrees with Klein (1930) that an essential motivation for creating symbols is the

child's fear of his aggressive wish to intrude into the external object—notably, the mother's body. Instead, he transfers his "interest to less attacked and so less frightening substitutes" (Milner 1952, p. 181) and creates symbols.

Milner also emphasizes another ground for symbolism, namely, that a child is driven by "the internal necessity for inner organization, pattern, coherence, the basic need to discover identity in difference without which experience becomes chaos" (p. 182). This kind of symbolism issues from what Fenichel (1946) called *prelogical thinking*. Here the symbol is "an integral or original form of expression. A word itself may be a symbol in this sense, and language a system of symbols" (Milner 1952, p. 183). Milner, in line with Winnicott, defends the necessity of illusion when the child searches for a substitute for the dreaded object. In this view, symbolization is a creative and even an artistic activity.

We wish to connect Milner's analytic vignettes with Klein's infant observations and draw conclusions concerning the child's problems in latency. He was referred to Milner due to a loss of interest in schoolwork, which he had earlier liked a lot. At the time of her vignettes, he is sometimes even refusing to go to school. His play contains many scenes of warfare and bombing between two villages. Milner at first interprets in the Kleinian tradition; she writes that, unconsciously, doing schoolwork implies entering the mother's body, which on the one hand is demanded by "the schoolmaster-father figure but [on the other hand is] forbidden under threat of castration by the sexual rival father" (1952, p. 186). This is tantamount to using symbolism in terms of "a defence, and [to] say that because the school had become the symbol of the forbidden mother's body this was then a bar to progress" (p. 186)—a classical Kleinian interpretation.

But Milner also intuits that the boy has "difficulties in establishing the relation to external reality as such" (p. 186). Unconsciously, doing schoolwork implies suffering the orders of an external world that imposes on him to learn what each symbol should symbolize. Milner links the boy's sense of "the unmitigated not-me-ness of his school life" (p. 187) to the infantile situation, including his father's recruitment to war, the birth of his younger brother, and the loss of a beloved woolly rabbit toy. The sense of union to which a small child is entitled was thus dis-

rupted by these losses. As a result, "subjective unreality and objective reality" cannot fuse harmoniously, and the boy is unable to "allow illusions about what he is seeing to occur" (p. 190).

Milner indicates that this breach relates to his infantile history. She is inspired by an 1839 poem by Thomas Campbell, "The Parrot" (Ingpen 1903), which the boy brings to a session one day. In the poem, a beautiful bird must bid adieu to his homeland in Spain and arrives in a "heathery land and misty sky" (p. 232). His wings grow gray and his voice turns silent, until one day a Spaniard arrives and speaks to him in Spanish. "The bird in Spanish speech replied/Flapped round the cage with joyous speech/Dropped down and died" (p. 232).

Milner links the boy's fascination with the poem with what his parents reported to her about his feeding difficulties in infancy. His mother had too little milk, and the nurse did not give the supplementary food in time, so he was in great distress—as he is now when he has to wait for an analytic session with Milner to begin. This "environmental thwarting in the feeding situation" confronted him with his "separate identity too soon or too continually," and the illusion of union was experienced as "catastrophic chaos rather than cosmic bliss" (1952, p. 192).

Thus, after having first interpreted in a traditional Kleinian trajectory, Milner here emphasizes the influence of the environment. She is now in line with notions submitted by Winnicott (1953) and Bowlby (1951, 1958, 1969), who emphasized the theoretical importance of a total environmental provision and the promotion of a secure attachment. In Milner's view, a healthy symbolic capacity can develop only if the child tolerates the difference between "oneness" and "twoness" (Milner 1952, p. 192). For this to come about, the environment must allow the child "a recurrent partial return to the feeling of being one . . . by . . . providing a framed space and time and a pliable medium" (p. 192). Therefore, it is essential to study the conditions in an environment that might facilitate or interfere with a person's critical experience of fusion.

As Milner speaks of the boy's family environment, she assures the reader that his mother was "very good" (1952, p. 187), and that he had "in general a very good home and been much loved" (p. 191). Similar to our cautionary remarks on Klein's familial involvement with her observational object, a related bias in Milner's case can be identified. She was in

supervision with Klein, whose grandson she was now treating and whose son, the boy's father, had been analyzed by Milner's analyst, Winnicott, who had been supervised by Klein. In parallel with Klein, Milner was in a vulnerable position in needing to maintain a sober analytic stance.

As outsiders two generations later, however, the present authors are less prone to bias based on such relations. We believe Milner downplays a probable nonfacilitating aspect of her young patient's environment, namely, that some signs indicate his mother might have been depressed at times during his infancy. Granted, Milner mentions his early feeding problems, just as Klein (1952) does, but she seems to underestimate the extent to which the boy might have felt that he did not have a good enough mother and at times felt unloved.

Some passages in Milner's and Klein's texts point to distress in the mother–child relationship. We have already mentioned the mother's report to her mother-in-law, Klein, of her depression due to her husband's absence, along with her belief that this negatively affected her son. Furthermore, Klein described the mother's impatient attitude toward the baby's crying and her fear that she would spoil him through giving in. Klein suggests that these factors increased the boy's difficulties. According to Milner, when the parents sought analysis for their son at age eleven, they claimed that there had been feeding difficulties from the start. All in all, we find indications that the mother–infant and mother–toddler relationship was not all sunny.

In our reading, the poem about the parrot that the boy brought to his analyst is a parable of a baby's response to discord between mother and child. The bird lives in a primeval mother-tongue paradise but becomes caged early on and must escape. He arrives in a faraway and forbidding land, where he lapses into silence. In our interpretation, the poem caught the boy's imagination because, unconsciously, it reminded him of his distressing infantile relationship with his mother. One might naively assume that when the Spaniard in the poem addresses the bird in his mother tongue, the bird would rejoice and become well again; but it is too late and he drops dead—either the shock is too much for him, or he is overcome by painful recollections of a vanished Eden.

Perhaps this section of the poem illustrates the breakdown in the boy's symbolization. School has demanded, as it does of every child, that

he abandon his "mother tongue"—that he forgo the erudition he has already acquired and acquire new knowledge. But the boy cannot give up yearning for paradise lost, and therefore school becomes infernal. It is true, as Milner (1952) suggests on a more Kleinian note, that school has come to represent "the destroyed mother's body, so that it had indeed become a desert" (p. 185). But this destructiveness cannot be viewed in isolation. We must also consider the quality of the mother–infant relationship that lay beneath the environmental thwarting in the feeding situation. Milner mentions this factor but seems to shy away from giving it full weight.

MOTHER–INFANT INTERACTION: ITS STATUS IN KLEIN'S THEORY

Earlier, we hinted at a problem with Klein's suggestions about the ideation underlying her grandson's affects and phantasies—a problem, that is, in accepting her attribution of phantasies to a child that her theory suggests he is bound to have. We will now return to this validation challenge: how is one to take a definitive position on a theory of infantile mental life, whether submitted by Klein or by another analyst, that is based on reconstructions of material from older patients? Isn't there a risk that such theories adultomorphize the object of study (Fonagy 1996; Peterfreund 1978; Stern 1985)? And couldn't one criticize our connecting the boy's school problems to a hypothesized disturbance in the mother–infant relationship (Zeanah 2009) for the same reason: that such a connection is based on lofty speculations? These questions force us to take a detour.

We have quoted Klein's (1961) statement that actual conflicts between adults can cause the child anxiety. That being said, we wish to emphasize that her main conceptualizations of pathology focused on what went on in the child's "interior"—that is, what the child internally made of his actual experiences. For example, she writes that "the polarity between the life-instincts and the death-instincts is already coming out in these phenomena of early infancy [feeding problems]" (Klein 1932, p. 180).

In contrast, her descriptions of how family interactions impact internal objects often occur in a shorthand fashion. For instance, problems

with food may arise due to "adverse feeding conditions, whereas difficulties in sucking can sometimes be mitigated by the mother's love and patience" (Klein 1952, p. 96). In a footnote, she adds that "the impact of the environment is of major importance at every stage of the child's development" (p. 96). Similarly, she states that a child's "monstrous and phantastic images of his parents" (Klein 1933, p. 250) result from his projections of aggressive instincts onto the parents and ensuing vengeful attacks, whereas a notion based more on reality perception is exiled to a footnote: "The infant has, incidentally, some real grounds for fearing its mother, since it becomes growingly aware that she has the power to grant or withhold the gratification of its needs" (p. 250).

Klein does not clarify how a mother exerts such power. We speculate that a mother may unconsciously withhold gratification, to which the infant may react with bewilderment, depression, rage, etc., to which the mother might reciprocate with vengefulness and narcissistic hurt. If such a negative circle becomes cemented, we enter the domain of mother–infant relationship disorders.

The scantiness of Klein's descriptions of mother–baby interactions does not imply that she denies the mother's influence on her baby. The mother's love and understanding is the baby's "greatest stand-by in overcoming states of disintegration and anxieties of a psychotic nature" (Klein 1946, p. 10). A decade earlier (Klein 1937), she described the unconscious roots of maternity in terms of reparation and guilt, love, hate, and a mother's relationship with her own mother. Some mothers exploit "the relationship with the baby for the gratification of their own desires" (p. 318). Others put themselves in the child's place; they look at the situation "from his point of view" (p. 318) and use their wisdom "in guiding the child in the most helpful way" (p. 319). Yet we are not told how this is played out in the mother–infant interaction.

An essential question is why Klein downplayed the mother's impact and provided no model of how it works in interaction with the baby. Winnicott (1962) wrote that Klein "claimed to have paid full attention to the environmental factor, but it is my opinion that she was temperamentally incapable of this" (p. 177). Leaving the issue of temperamental influences aside, we would like to refine Winnicott's argument. The problem with Klein's sidestepping of the "environmental factor" is not that she was taciturn about it, a point also noted by Van Buren (1993); rather,

she did not have a terminology to cover the interactions among external objects and how they impact on the participants' internal worlds.

It is true that Klein does use the term *circle* in discussing objects (Klein 1933, p. 251; 1934, p. 259; 1937, p. 340; 1945, p. 392). One might infer that she was referring to an interactive circle, but her term actually refers to the traffic of internal objects. She provides no solid theory of how mother and child interact and influence one another, consciously and unconsciously, or of how these interactions might impact the development of the internal worlds of both participants. In our view, such a theory would need to be anchored not only in reconstructions that evolve in psychoanalytic treatments with verbal children or adults, but also in empirically observed mother–baby interactions. We heed the objection that such observations are not identical to hermeneutical interpretations of a person's internal world (Green 2000), and we also agree with Klein that psychoanalysis does not deal with "exact data" (1961, p. 12). On the other hand, she herself made conscientious observations of her grandson, so she must have thought that they added to her psychoanalytic understanding—a point we certainly agree with.

Bowlby (1958) addressed the necessity of collecting empirical data if one is to understand infant mental life. He was critical of the "discrepancy between formulations springing direct from empirical observations and those made in the course of abstract discussion"—so common among analysts with "first-hand experience of infancy" (p. 354), among which he mentioned Klein. After his own supervisory experience with Klein in the late 1930s, Bowlby's critique of Kleinian theory became adamant due to its "lack of scientific rigour" and its "emphasis on the role of unconscious phantasy in the aetiology of neurotic and psychotic symptoms at the expense of environmental factors, especially in relation to clinical issues of separation and loss" (Renn 2010, p. 146).

This reaction contributed to the development of attachment theory and a research tradition based on empirical observations. Analysts have taken different positions on this tradition, ranging from critical (Zepf 2006) to positive (Fonagy 2001). Seligman (1999) is one analyst who suggests that we should rely more on the data of infant observation. He assures us that this reliance need not yield simplistic explanations once we recall that "the processes by which 'actual' events become internalized as stable elements of the psyche remain very complex" (p. 133). In

our view, the risk of reductionism is equal whether conclusions rely on observations or on reconstructive speculations. Our suggestion aimed at diminishing—but not annihilating—this risk is to combine various empirical methods, as will be argued in what follows.

Klein seemed to have had an ambiguous relation to direct observation as an instrument for validating her theories. The case of her grandson indicates that she was quite open and unprejudiced as to how everyday events influenced him. It is precisely these observations that make her text moving, lively, and credible. On the other hand, the Controversial Discussions (King and Steiner 1991) show that she had a strong agenda to promote her own theories; naturally, such a position can dim one's observations.

Another obstacle to unbiased observation is the narcissism with which one invests "one's own" theory. In Klein's case, it seems that if she herself did not author an innovation, she found it hard to accept (Aguayo and Regeczkey 2016). In contrast, when observing her grandson and writing down her notes, she was far away from theoretical controversies; she could relax and simply jot down what she saw going on in the family.

GAPS IN THE JIGSAW PUZZLE

If we want to build a psychoanalytic theory that describes the infant's internal world and how it is constructed in interaction with primary objects, we must grapple with the problem just outlined: i.e., the inevitable reductionism inherent in any method that we rely on, be it observational or based on reconstructive speculations. To this list of "myopic" methods, we should add infant observation, parent–infant psychotherapy, and adult and child psychoanalysis. This last method, from Freud onward, has generated reconstructions indispensable for intuiting infantile experience and deriving psychoanalytic metapsychology. Yet the distance between empirical data (for example, a patient's present separation anxiety) and reconstruction (linking this fear with abandonment during infancy) will always remain large.

For its part, experimental infant research draws on behavioral observations to yield rich and sophisticated data. Yet this methodology remains mute with respect to the unconscious of either infant or parent—which, as Green (2000) claims, can only be studied when a person utilizes his

own unconscious to intuit that of the other, as happens between analyst and analysand.

Are we then trapped between either leaning on infant research, empirically exact but superficial in its coverage of internal experience, or on psychoanalytic reconstructions that are subjective but devoid of empirical data gleaned from actual infants? Green (2000) states that infant research examines only observable behavior. Stern (1985, 2000) refutes this when he claims that there is a "non-psychodynamic beginning of life in the sense that the infant's experience is not the product of reality-altering conflict resolution" (1985, p. 255). This statement extends beyond observable behavior; it postulates what is going on in the baby's internal life. Of course, this runs completely counter not only to Kleinian theory, but also to Freudian theory, which posits drive activity from the dawn of an infant's life.

Seligman seeks to integrate infant research findings and psychoanalytic theory in its Kleinian version. The former have taught us that infant and parent are continuously "monitoring, influencing, and determining each other's behavior and meaning" (1999, p. 133). He recommends that we start in this tradition by observing the details of such interactions and then return to Kleinian concepts, "rather than starting from the concepts and trying to push the observations into them" (p. 132).

Furthermore, Seligman retains the concept of the instinct, which he claims can be reached via direct observation of interactions "at the most basic psychophysical levels: affects; kinesthetic, proprioceptive, and other bodily experiences" (p. 144). However, *instinct,* as Freud coined the term,[1] is a concept "on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind" (1915, pp. 121-122). This implies that one cannot observe an instinct/drive but only interpret it with an instrument that also takes into account the analyst's instinctual life—that is, his emotional reactions that can sometimes result in countertransference interference. Thus, Seligman's effort to mount a psychoanalytic theory on an empiricist platform seems as little—or as much—valid as one that relies on a hermeneutics built merely on the subjective experiences of the interpreter.

[1] We are using this inexact translation of *Trieb* (drive) whenever a cited author does so.

One easily finds other examples of researchers and analysts who unwarily traverse the gap between observation and experience. Beebe and Lachmann (2014) report on elegant experiments by Meltzoff and Moore (1997) that demonstrate the young infant's imitations of, for example, tongue protrusion. These observations of behavior are incontrovertible. However, we do not think they prove that "the infant's perception of these correspondences provides the infant with a fundamental relatedness between self and other" (Beebe and Lachmann 2014, p. 26). Similarly, we caution against construing mind as "expectancies of procedurally organized action sequences" (p. 26) that spring from such instances of imitation. We certainly believe infants have minds and that parent–infant psychotherapy must proceed from this assumption. But the therapist is aware that she speculates when she deduces from the baby's behavior that he is sad, distressed, or annoyed, and she must be prepared to develop or dismantle such conjectures if they later prove to be inappropriate.

In our view, behavioral research cannot prove what the baby's drive looks like or how he experiences the internal world with its conscious and unconscious continents. A reviewer of an earlier version of this article noted that experiences cannot be observed except by oneself; we agree, and we add that they can be suggested by a mother to her baby or by an analyst to a patient: e.g., "Perhaps you feel sad now." Or they can be noted in a research protocol: "Baby shows signs of sadness." These examples illustrate that subjective experience and interaction with others are intertwined. The comments by the mother, the analyst, and the researcher reflect assumptions, not empirical facts, about the other's internal world. Accordingly, Stern's (1985) authoritative statement about a non-psychodynamic beginning of life prior to the entrance of psychic conflict is as easy to refute as Klein's proclamations about drive conflicts within the baby.

Must we then give up the project of anchoring psychoanalytic theories of the infant's internal world, by Klein or any other author, in empirical observations? We think not—provided that one combines methods. Objective observation belongs to the tasks of infant researchers. They have discovered, with astounding acuity, signs of emotions and cognition in babies that were unknown until a few decades ago—such as, for example: babies' emotional reactivity (Tronick et al. 1978), their partici-

pation in protoconversational communication (Aitken and Trevarthen 1997), imitation tendency (Meltzoff and Moore 1997), and sensitivity to mother's sensual attributes (DeCasper and Fifer 1980; Delaunay-El Allam et al. 2010) as well as to her depression (Field 2010).

Psychoanalytic therapists can contribute via infant observation and parent–infant psychotherapy. The former method can be used to make assumptions about "the states of mind and feeling which permeate and shape the relationships of babies and their caregivers, and which also give rise to experiences 'in feeling' in observers and others within the infant's environment" (Rustin 2006, p. 39). Yet infant observation is neither a *via regia* to the baby's internal world nor an instrument for doing research, but "an adjunct to the teaching of psycho-analysis and child therapy" (Bick 1964, p. 558).

As for parent–infant therapists, they have integrated clinical observations, infant research, and theoretical development (Anzieu-Premmereur 2017; Baradon et al. 2005; Cramer 1998; Daws 1989; Emanuel 2011; Espasa and Alcorn 2004; Fraiberg 1980; Golse 2006; Haag 1991; Keren 2011; Lebovici, Barriguete, and Salinas 2002; Lieberman and Van Horn 2008; Norman 2001; Salomonsson 2014). Their reports indicate that a parent's distress can negatively impact the baby, and that the baby also takes part in developing the relationship disorder. Still, they rely heavily on countertransference (as do therapists working with adults), which we know is a highly subjective and ambiguous method of confirmation. And when it comes to forming an opinion about a baby's innate temperament, the results are just as much subject to guesses as the opinion of a grandmother who says, "Her dad was the same when he was born."

Freud submitted several intuitions about a baby's mental life: the tendency to regard the object as hostile in states of frustration (1895), the initial hallucination of satisfaction when hungry (1900), sexual arousal in interactions with mother (1905), the prolonged impact of his initial helplessness (1925–1926), etc. Yet none of these was substantiated by infant research, a discipline nonexistent at the time. We see these intuitions as pieces in a jigsaw puzzle that Freud sought to bring together into a coherent theory. Other analysts added their experiences with adult and child patients to enlarge theory and bring the pieces closer together. Then infant research, infant observation, and parent–infant therapy arrived on the scene to study real babies.

If all these modes today have made the jigsaw pieces come closer together and caused the picture to become more complete, the gaps between the pieces are still visible. In our view, cracks will always remain due to the nature of our object of study: the individual experience of an infant interacting with primary objects.

CONCLUSIONS

The recently discovered notes by Klein (unpublished) on her baby grandson, together with Milner's (1952) description of her ensuing analysis of him during latency, provide a rich source of interactional data from infant observation and a later child analysis. Klein's observations give unique insight into her empathy, love, and acuity; she obviously felt that they confirmed many of her theories. We agree in part but submit a reservation concerning some of her notions about the baby's ideations. We also point to inherent problems with the validity of observations made by someone who was so emotionally involved with the study object.

This brings us to a second focus: the problem of how to validate notions about infant mental life and how to ascertain which observational methods are trustworthy. In Klein's lifetime, analysts had to rely on experiences with adult and child patients. Today the available methods also include infant research, infant observation, and parent–infant psychotherapy. Every method is needed and has advantages and drawbacks, but none can claim supremacy or omniscience regarding what goes on in a baby's mind. Yet by applying several methods to a case, one can get a richer picture of the "inside" of a baby. We have argued that such a picture will never be complete, smooth, and free of contradictions but will invariably contain inconsistencies, gaps, and disagreements.

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