



Interview with Betty Joseph

Betty Joseph is a distinguished senior member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. Working within the Kleinian tradition, she has developed a distinctive approach to technique and has been widely influential. With her sensitive focus upon the precise details of the clinical situation, she has demonstrated and drawn out the technical implications of Kleinian concepts, particularly those of projective and introjective identification. She is interested in the way the patient's need to maintain psychic equilibrium may permeate the analytic situation, and in how psychic change can occur in the face of this. She pays close attention to the 'total transference situation' and to the analyst's countertransference, remaining oriented primarily to the immediate here and now of the analytic process. She highlights the tendency for the analyst to take part in enactments of the patient's internal object relationships, enactments which have to be monitored, retrieved and used in the service of analytic understanding.

Many of Joseph's most important papers are collected in *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change*, published in Routledge's New Library of Psychoanalysis series in 1989.

The interviewers intended, as the title suggests, to collect some memories of Melanie Klein herself, both as an individual and as a clinician. They also wished to hear about Betty Joseph's own psychoanalytic development as a younger member of the group around Klein, and to bring out some of the important developments and extensions Joseph has made, stemming originally from Klein's work.

The principal interviewer is Daniel Pick, associate member of the British Psychoanalytical Society and professor of cultural history at Queen Mary, University of London.

Jane Milton, the author of the introduction and accompanying footnote, provides further questions. She is a member of the British Psychoanalytical Society.

Note: We are very grateful to Miss Joseph for allowing her interview to appear on the Melanie Klein Trust website. It is of historical interest and much of the material in it would not be obtainable from any other source, Would readers please note that legal copyright constraints apply.

Daniel Pick: Can we start by asking you something about your own route to psychoanalysis, and to Melanie Klein?

Betty Joseph: It was 1937 or 1938, and I was about 20, and was doing the social work training at Birmingham University. I had already read a bit of Freud, but I don't think at that point any Melanie Klein. During the holidays students went to a place of their choice to get practical experience. I said I wanted to go to a child guidance clinic so they (very wisely, I think now) sent me to Emmanuel Miller's clinic. Emmanuel Miller (the father of Jonathan Miller) introduced child guidance clinics to this country from America. He had, I suppose, either the earliest or at least one of the earliest



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clinics in London. So I went there and learned a little about psychiatric social work and there I met a woman who said to a group of us at the Clinic, 'would you like to come and read some of Melanie Klein's work?' So over those two months we read some of her work, I don't remember what exactly. That was my very first introduction to her ideas.

Subsequently I went to the London School of Economics and did the training in Psychiatric Social Work. I then decided that I would only take a job where there would be a university and a psychoanalyst. I felt that if I was going to be a psychiatric social worker I ought to have an analysis. And there was only about one place in the whole of Great Britain (outside London) where there was a psychoanalyst and a university, and that was Manchester. It was 1940 and I was 23 at the time. So I got my first job in Salford, which is next door to Manchester. It involved helping to start up the child guidance clinic there. In Manchester there were two psychoanalysts at that time, Dr Haas and Dr Michael Balint.^[1] Esther Bick^[2] was working in Manchester and recommended Balint, her own analyst, so I started analysis with him about 1940. During one session he said that there were some senior colleagues coming up from London to interview people who might like to train as analysts – would I like to be interviewed? In fact it had never entered my head to be an analyst. I was interviewed by Susan Isaacs and Marjorie Brierley.^[3] This must have been in 1944. And they apparently approved of me.

There was only a limited training in Manchester and Balint decided that he would move to London and asked if I would like to go too. I was very glad to do so and came to London in 1945 and took up the training here. That was how I came to be an analyst.

DP: Was it unusual for someone doing psychiatric social work to assume they would go into analysis? Was that part of the shared ethos at the time or a purely personal decision?

BJ: I wouldn't think it was part of the ethos at the time. It wouldn't be absolutely unlikely but it wouldn't be something one would take for granted at all. I don't know how I came to that idea but I did. It seemed to me clear.

DP: Susan Isaacs, one of those interviewers, had a significant role in the Kleinian group and the Society – what do you remember of her?

BJ: Susan Isaacs became very important. She was a friend of Sibyl Clement Brown who was the Head of the Mental Health Course, the training for Psychiatric Social Work. We were of course a wartime group and moved around; we spent some time in London as well as in Cambridge and Oxford. We were all over the place. When at one point we found we were being evacuated to Cambridge, a group of us asked, whether we could have some lectures from Susan Isaacs since she was based there. The tutor agreed and managed to arrange it. Much to our horror, however, Susan Isaacs refused to talk about psychoanalysis. She said, 'before you talk psychoanalysis, you have to know something about development.' So she talked to us about the development of the infant and young child, which in fact was very helpful. So we got to know her a bit. Her books, particularly *Social Development in Young Children*,^[4] were prominent on the reading list. I don't know if people still read that – it's a very good book.



I don't remember how long I was in Cambridge. A term, I think. Everything was so chaotic in the war, as you can imagine. They had to find us accommodation – I think we were in Peterhouse College which was unbelievably cold!

DP: During that period in London the 'Controversial Discussions' were taking place. [5] Were you aware of this very heated debate going on?

BJ: I wasn't aware of what was happening in London at all. I do remember I had just been reading some of Klein's work and also Middlemore's *The Nursing Couple*, [6] which I discussed with Susan Isaacs at my interview, as I now think, rather to her surprise. But, of course, I was completely unaware of the Controversial Discussions. And when I first came to London I don't think I knew anything that was going on. The idea that there was something major occurring in the Society didn't seem to get through to us as students.

Jane Milton: Perhaps students were more protected than they are nowadays?

BJ: I think so. Things were much more protected. You see it was a much smaller group. We were then in 96 Gloucester Place.

DP: I remember Hanna Segal made a similar point [7] and yet it seems surprising that the news of the controversies did not travel given that it was a small group.

BJ: Yes, even she didn't know about it and she was much closer to the movement. She was ahead of me by a year or two. So, it wasn't really public knowledge in the way it would be now. You'd never get away with it now, I think because there were fewer students there was probably also less gossip.

DP: Can you say something more about the context of your work at that time? You have described your own transition from psychiatric social work to psychoanalysis between 1939 and 1945. I wondered how you felt the war may have affected that process and also, more widely, how it may have affected perceptions of mental illness and of psychoanalysis.

BJ: During this period I was helping set up a new Child Guidance Clinic in Salford and naturally people engaged in mental health work of all types were involved in some way in the tremendous upheavals caused by the war. We also helped with Civil Defence; I briefly drove a lorry. We helped with the evacuation of children. Some, for example Clare Britton, (later Clare Winnicott), worked directly with evacuated children. Others worked in war-time nurseries or advised staff, for example at the Anna Freud Nursery, [8] or Esther Bick helping in nurseries in the North. Others lectured and gave talks, for example Winnicott gave a series of talks on the radio, then published as 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother and her Baby'. [9]

DP: How far do you think the very painful social experience of evacuation was a stimulus to new thinking about mother-child relations?

BJ: I am sure that this sharpened our thinking about such things as the effect of moving children from their families and we learnt from our mistakes. We believed we had to act quickly, and certainly in the one area I knew, with hindsight I would say we



handled the actual evacuation, finding homes etc very precipitately and clumsily. Children were being moved in a desperate way, say out of the big cities. But my actual knowledge is of course limited to one area only and I am sure experiences varied.

DP: Were you working directly with such children?

BJ: No I was not working directly with evacuees.

DP: When did you formally start the analytic training?

BJ: From when I came to London, in the autumn of 1945. I qualified in 1949. There was a very interesting set of people in my year of the analytic training. Some were of my age, which must by then have been about 28 and there were some a little older like Lois Monroe and then there were others who were considerably older like Bion and Money-Kyrle. [10] Money-Kyrle would lecture to us on Freud and then he'd step off the podium and come with us to clinical seminars. And Bion was in a completely different analytic world from us. We would sit down and have a clinical seminar in which Bion would be discussing, in detail, the transference and exactly how he handled it. None of the younger group of us was yet thinking in that way at all. He was writing his book on groups at that period.

JM: How did it come about that there was such a disparate mixture of people with different levels of experience?

BJ: Because the older ones had just come back from some kind of war service.

JM: Had they had some training before the war?

BJ: They hadn't been in analytic training as such, but after all it was a long war. And Bion had been involved in the Northfield Experiments, [11] the War Office Selection Board etc. So the older ones came back from the war with enormous experience of human suffering, of psychiatric work, of working with groups and we came up, so to speak, from university and post-graduate stuff.

DP: Did that mean there were clinical discussions based on military cases, that people like Bion were bringing?

BJ: Not so far as I remember. We would be having discussions on our ordinary clinical cases but 'ordinary cases' for students were not quite as they are now. You were not given a choice of suitable cases. You had to have one obsessional and one hysteric. My obsessional patient broke down and went into mental hospital with a psychosis. My first so-called hysteric was a brick layer who had never heard of Freud [sic]. It was quite a different group of cases.

I did the training in the ordinary way and I could see that as an analyst I was absolutely no good; I felt I could not find my way and seriously considered resigning. Finally, after three years I had done the required work with my two training patients exactly as we do now. The Training Committee sent the usual letter saying that I was now qualified and I wrote back and said that I knew that I was not ready to be qualified, and asked them to take back my qualification. And six months later I felt the



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same; I did not believe that I had the stuff to be an analyst or ever would have. However the committee decided that I was now qualified and this is how I became an analyst.

Then I decided I would have more supervision. I went to Hanna Segal and subsequently Melanie Klein as well as Paula Heimann.^[12] When I told Paula Heimann that I was seriously considering resigning she said, 'don't until we've seen something of your work.' And then subsequently I went into analysis with her. It was for quite a short time, about four years, not more. And that's how I got there. I discovered to my surprise that no one has objected to their qualification before or since, as far as I know. It never occurred to me that there was anything strange about it at all. I was just quite sure that I knew that I wasn't ready to be an analyst. It was a peculiar beginning. So if people think one has to have a calling to do psychoanalysis, it is not quite true. Further, my experience makes me much more patient with other very poor beginners. Many of our analysts – people such as Segal, Bion and Rosenfeld ^[13] were what I call 'born analysts'. You could tell immediately they were analysts. I was a person who should have resigned three times, so to speak, and for me it's been very helpful in knowing what those students feel like who can't figure out what is going on in their patients at all.

JM: You spoke of not feeling ready to qualify. Did you come to question that view later?

BJ: The funny thing is I can never quite discover why and how things changed at all. Elizabeth Spillius always says she could see my future work in my membership paper (an unpublished paper of which I have no copy) and she may well be right.^[14] But I have little idea, there wasn't really a point at which I thought 'this is right.

JM: So you do agree now that you should be qualified?!

BJ: Yes, but I have never felt that that view was inaccurate at the time only of course I am very grateful to the people who prevented me from acting on it and resigning then.

JM: While you were doing your analytic training you were still working as a social worker?

BJ: At first I was working as a psychiatric social worker in a clinic in West Ham in London, quite a distance from where I was living. I was then still in analysis with Balint. And then Sybil Clement Brown who as I mentioned was the Head of the Mental Health Course at the London School of Economics suggested I join her staff. So I became what was called an occasional, part-time lecturer, which I enjoyed very much although it made clear to me that the academic world was not where I belonged in the long term.

I was living in Bloomsbury which had a Labour Council which appeared to contain almost nobody over the age of twenty three; although that cannot be exact, the members of the council were very young, liberal and academic. And they set up a tiny baby unit inside a maternity welfare clinic run by a psychiatrist who was an analyst, Fanny Wride and myself. Fanny Wride worked there in a psychiatric role whilst I was the psychiatric social worker. Any mother who was worried about her



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baby could bring it to the clinic. Our policy was that no mother should be left for more than three days without being seen. So, mothers worried about any kind of problem would come, sleeping, feeding difficulties etc. This meant that we were working very much as part of the community. And I personally learned a lot from the work there.

While I was training therefore I was engaged in these various activities; then soon after I qualified I gave up the university job because it became such an interference. There would suddenly be a committee and then what were you to do about your patients? By then I was building up a private practice so I went into this full time.

DP: What were your first impressions of Klein's circle? How far did it feel as though 'the Kleinians' functioned as a cohesive group with a shared clinical approach?

BJ: I think they did, although I only really knew them as individuals through supervision and I don't think they became a group in my mind, certainly not until I was qualified. Then one became aware that one belonged to a group. But I had had this rather strange background, starting with Balint, who was of course an Independent and then with Paula Heimann who subsequently left the group, actually a few years after my analysis terminated. That is a whole other sad story.

DP: Apart from Klein herself, who stood out for you as important figures in psychoanalysis in those early days?

BJ: If we are considering people near to Klein the people who stood out for me I suppose were Susan Isaacs, Ella Sharpe with whom I had some supervision, she was an analyst with a very special, sensitive and original mind, and of course Joan Riviere, who wrote a number of valuable papers. [15]

DP: What did you make of Joan Riviere?

BJ: I didn't know her well at all, I occasionally visited her, but she always remained a rather distant person to me, erudite, academic but a very interesting woman. To go back to your question about other analysts who stood out for various reasons, there was of course Ernest Jones, and Donald Winnicott, Anna Freud herself, Paula Heimann at that point, and James Strachey. [16] For a time I lived next door to James Strachey in Gordon Square in Bloomsbury. I lived at number 42 in the same house as Joe Sandler and his family. [17] They had a flat at the top of the house, I had one on the ground floor and basement, which was how Joe and I came to know each other.

JM: What was James Strachey like?

BJ: It's difficult for me to say. He was clearly a very significant human being but I only knew him as a next door neighbour and he was already going blind. He seemed very gentle but he was a very, very old man by then.

DP: Were you interested in his writing?

BJ: Probably not much at that period, I'm much more interested in it now than I was then!



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DP: You were living in Bloomsbury; I wonder how much you felt aware in a cultural sense of a strong Bloomsbury relationship to the Society when you first got involved – for instance, James and Alix Strachey, Adrian and Karin Stephen.

BJ: I became aware of the Bloomsbury Group and its relationship to the Society, or rather to psychoanalysis, in a fairly personal way. When I first came to London in 1945 I stayed in the flat of a friend of friends of mine, a psychiatrist called Portia Holman, who was a friend of the Stephens, the Meynell family etc who were part of the Bloomsbury set. Both of the flats that I lived in before coming to Clifton Hill actually belonged to the Meynells. Vera Meynell was the daughter of the poetess Alice Meynell and her husband set up the famous Cockerell Press which produced most beautiful books. These people as well as their connection with psychoanalysis became known to me only distantly.

DP: People like Keynes or Forster?

BJ: No, not at all. The nearest I suppose would have been people of the next generation like Adrian Stokes and Richard Wollheim. [18] They built up the Imago Group which consisted of a number of artists, writers, critics etc The group met from time to time to discuss papers and their developing ideas

DP: Earlier, you mentioned Money-Kyrle. He also connects with the Bloomsbury world we were speaking about. Virginia Woolf, for instance, mentions him as well as Klein in her diaries.[19] Can you tell us anything more about his approach and position?

BJ Money-Kyrle as I mentioned was a student when I trained, he was considerably older and seemed to belong to a rather distant, aristocratic very English world. He was a highly intelligent, cultured but reserved person whom I never knew well.

BJ: There was also Henry Reed. He was a good friend of mine. He did a whole series of very funny, very clever plays for the radio and started a kind of genre. Many of them have frequently been repeated. He was homosexual, very artistic, a strange man. When he met Mrs Klein, he told her how much he'd enjoyed her work. And she said, 'most people who tell me that haven't read any of my books.' And he replied something like, 'well, you remember on page x of such and such a book there is actually a typographical error.' There was! And he got to know her quite well.

DP: What were your first impressions of Klein?

BJ: It would be difficult to separate out my first from my later impressions, but one always had the feeling of a person both of real quality and originality and yet also a kind of human simplicity.

DP: Did you have much direct contact with Klein herself in those early days?

BJ: As a student of course I went to her lectures and seminars and in time became part of a small group of people who had quite close contact with her, partly connected with the work, case discussions, writing etc and partly socially. We would have occasional meals or visits to the theatre, which she loved. She was always very much aware of people's work and keen to help them develop. So, it was extremely



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encouraging when (probably in the late 50s shortly before she died), I remember her saying to me, 'when I first knew you I didn't think you had talent, but now ...'. She obviously sensed something had changed before I knew it had. One of the Societies in the States must have asked her to suggest the name of someone to do seminars in America and she wanted me to be the one to go. However Herbert Rosenfeld went and I was very grateful I didn't because it would have been much too early for me.

DP: What about Klein's family? Did you know Klein's daughter, Melitta, for instance, and about the painful break there was between them?

BJ: I don't know how soon we knew, but I think quite early on. And it was always a terrible tragedy. I remember in the London Congress – in the Fifties – a number of us were sitting with Mrs Klein and Melitta went across in front of us and took no notice. It was a terrible feeling, very, very sad.

DP: What does one make of that whole history between them?

BJ: I think probably that Mrs Klein was not easy. She was in all likelihood quite possessive and I think Glover^[20] probably wreaked havoc on what may well have been ground that was easily ploughed. But I don't really know the details. I did not know Melitta.

DP: And did Klein talk openly about these aspects of her personal history once they had become so public?

BJ: Not much. We knew about it, broadly speaking, but I really knew very little, except to know it was there.

JM: What were your impressions of Klein both as a teacher and as a person?

BJ: As far as I can judge she was a very good teacher. As a person, on the one hand she was very warm, very alive, enormously interested in life. That you could feel. I remember we went to Rhinoceros by Ionesco. She loved the theatre, music, food, wine. She was a person who enjoyed life. In the Society meetings you would see Melanie Klein in her little hat and her earrings, sitting on the right, fairly near but not in the front and Anna Freud would be sitting on the left, in her long homespun clothes with straight hair and no ornaments. The difference was very striking.

DP: They really inhabited different areas of the room?

BJ: Absolutely. This is not in any way to say that they wouldn't have talked together.

DP: What do you think would most surprise people about encountering Klein 'in person' compared with Klein 'in writing' or 'by historical reputation'?

BJ: I think with her writings one doesn't quite see the liveliness, sometimes they seem repetitive or at times dry. Also when you read, say, Narrative of a Child Analysis,^[21] you get the feeling that the interpretations are often so immediately deep you can't quite see how it would work for the patient. And yet if you knew her you could see it would work. You have a feeling that she would somehow make such a good contact that it would have much more meaning for the child than we might be



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able to feel reading it now. Interpretations that on reading might sound too deep and bodily were clearly not experienced like this by her patients. I remember being in seminars with her which were not only very interesting but very convincing. She had private seminars in the Fifties in which she would think aloud about ideas that she was developing.

DP: Were these clinical seminars?

BJ: Yes. Paula Heimann ran one seminar which some of the people who were in analysis with Klein would be able to attend, and Melanie Klein ran another which would include people in analysis with Paula Heimann. But it is very vague now, after all, it was about forty-fifty years ago.

DP: How would you describe the atmosphere of those seminars? Were students and younger colleagues free to question?

BJ: My picture of these seminars is not clear, some of the kind I have just mentioned I remember as more didactic. There is the one which has become almost anecdotal but really happened, I know because I was present! One of the young analysts who was struggling with the use of projective identification remarked that during a part of the session he felt confused and he interpreted to the patient that the latter had put his confusion into him. Melanie Klein quietly pointed out that this was not so, it was that he had not understood the material and therefore he was actually confused. There were also other seminars in which Klein would speak about her ideas, for example when she was working on Envy and Gratitude,^[22] so that one could see her work in progress. I doubt if many of us were at a stage when we could really challenge ideas; discuss, yes, perhaps especially Wilfred Bion, Hanna Segal, Herbert Rosenfeld and later Elliott Jaques.^[23] The latter worked with her and helped write the notes of *The Narrative of a Child Analysis*.

DP: What I'm wondering is how much there was a kind of orthodoxy – impressive though it may have been – and how much you felt in the midst of a ferment of ideas with all of these very gifted associates around Klein developing their own lines of thought – people we were speaking about before, her original British colleagues in the inter-war period, and then some of the younger people who became prominent later, such as Bion, Segal, Rosenfeld?

BJ: I would have said both. I think Klein was developing and consolidating her own ideas. Segal, Rosenfeld and Bion were seeing the relevance of her thinking in their work with psychotics and Bion also with groups. Those were really the three innovators at that period and Klein was interested in them and refers to all of them. So I think what you would feel was that people were developing their own ideas but she at the same time was consolidating a group around her. She was consolidating it fairly firmly, because if there was something important going on at the Institute – if there was any clinical paper - she would be there. Despite her age she would be there. And anything important going on – politically, analytically or anything - there would be phone calls to make sure you were there. There was that kind of firmness, but at the same time as one can see clearly people were developing their own ideas.

DP: In our earlier interview Dr Segal mentioned the same quality and expectation of allegiance: Klein called for considerable loyalty not only to her personally but also



conceptually, adherence to certain ideas.

BJ: Yes, that was very important. I think it was particularly important because there was so much antagonism towards her and her work so there was a need to 'strengthen the fortresses', if you see what I mean.

DP: How does that compare to the situation and response of Freud who also developed a close circle and who encountered, at times, personal disloyalty, rebellious 'break-away' figures (such as Adler and Jung) and a very antagonistic environment?

BJ: There was much less breaking away from Klein. The only real break away would have been Paula Heimann.

DP: Do you have any thoughts about why that might have been the case?

BJ: I think it's very difficult to tell. It seems to me that Paula Heimann must have been abandoning Klein's ideas and to some extent antagonistic to them from some years before because I always found it very puzzling that in my own four years of analysis with her I didn't know anything about splitting or what was being called 'projective identification'. Now clearly no analyst would actually use the term with their patient, but I didn't have any feeling for it, and I've always found that strange. Heimann wrote this extremely interesting paper on counter transference and yet I cannot feel, and I've never been able to feel, that she got hold of the transference with me. And this is to me terribly puzzling. You see I can't be wrong because I was there! And that isn't a failure in memory because the feeling just isn't there. And my impression is that she must already have been pulling back from Mrs Klein's work, pulling back from really deep analysis.

DP: Do you think Heimann had some legitimate grounds to feel aggrieved with Klein?

BJ: I don't think so but of course Klein could demand great loyalty but I think one can judge whether a person is worth it. But I assume that Klein's talent and her demands somehow must have aroused an enormous kind of rivalry or something similar in Heimann and in the end it was clear that it simply couldn't work out.

DP: Did Klein say much about it?

BJ: It wasn't really spoken about. She may have been a bit careful with me as I'd been in analysis with Heimann so I don't know. But I think she was very, very hurt. It was extremely sad for the group. But it had to be. This was an exception, no-one else left in all that time. And you see there was plenty of room for innovation as one can see with Bion's ideas. I think Segal said this before; Melanie Klein didn't go along with all he said, but she had enormous respect for him. She valued him, and there was a real friendship so there was no problem there.

DP: There are people who see the Klein group today as the dominant, even over-dominant, group within the Society. Could you say something about how its position in the Society has changed?

BJ: It's quite interesting because in the early days I think we must have been very



much in the minority. This is probably partly why Klein was rather tightly holding the group as if to keep it going. In the Sixties, there was great antagonism, especially from what we then called the 'B Group', from Anna Freud's people, and from Anna Freud herself. At that period we must have been very much in the minority, and then very slowly it changed. One would have to look at the figures, but I imagine it's only been over the last fifteen years or so that the numbers have grown. There is also much more of a rapprochement between the two groups now. In the very old days, if an analyst from Anna Freud's group gave a paper, the tendency was for it to be attacked. If a Kleinian gave a paper, it would be attacked. There may be difficulties still but it is very different now. The atmosphere could be quite unpleasant even as late as the Seventies. You don't get that kind of antagonism and spoiling of ideas that one had then.

DP: Did Klein express a view about the wider social role psychoanalysis might play in the present or the future?

BJ: Not that I recall although she did give a few general lectures. The book, that she wrote with Joan Riviere, *Love Hate and Reparation*, and two or three of the chapters in her *Collected Works* such as *Our Inner World and its Roots in Infancy* were really for a general audience. [24] Some of her followers played an important part in educational debates. Susan Isaacs, of whom we spoke earlier and then Margaret Gardiner were both at the Institute of Education. Margaret Gardiner wasn't an analyst but was very much influenced by analysis and by Susan Isaacs herself.

DP: Was Klein especially interested in the public dissemination of her work?

BJ: I don't particularly get that impression. She was more involved with developing the ideas and seeing that the people around her developed although she obviously was interested in people taking her ideas abroad. At first in the USA there was great antagonism to Klein's thinking which was seen as departing from Freud's and her work was not only rejected but really ridiculed. I think once a few people, at first Herbert Rosenfeld and Hanna Segal, began to be invited to the States their clinical work started to mean something significant. Then others were invited to New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and slowly to many other parts of the States. I always think it so unfortunate that Klein died before the real interest in her work in North America developed. The present situation where now a number of Kleinian analysts are invited to lecture, take part in conferences, give seminars case discussions and are given awards would have given her so much pleasure. And then there were the Kleinian developments in South America. That I'm sure intrigued her.

JM: How did Kleinian ideas spread in South America? Who seeded it?

BJ: There seemed to be something about Klein's immediate contact with the unconscious that many South Americans could quickly appreciate. A few people became interested in her work and visited Klein here. I am thinking of such people as Angel Garma, the Rascovskys and others from the Argentine. Then others came from Argentina and Brazil to get supervision and some even to train here, some of whom by now are very well known such as Elizabeth and Elias Barros. Others came from Peru and Chile. This was a time perhaps when economic conditions were different and it was easier for some Latin American candidates to come over here and train. Some of these people have stayed here, but others returned and helped



teach and develop Klein's ideas in their own countries.

DP: Did Klein remain hopeful about the likely future direction of psychoanalysis in Britain?

BJ: As she got older I think she became more pessimistic. I think Hanna Segal thought the same. Melanie Klein's last papers have a sadness about them which in one way is strange since it was clear that by then – around 1958-9 –there was such a strong group of really very striking people around her.

JM: Perhaps it was more of a personal sadness.

BJ: Yes, I am sure that is so. After all, she was writing a paper on loneliness. There's no question it was personal. But she would have loved to have seen the group as it is now - a very broad collection of people who have a very good grounding in her work but have developed in their own ways so the individuality of the papers that are being written at the present time is very encouraging. She would have enjoyed that enormously and I think she would have coped very well with the developments. One doesn't know, but that is my impression.

JM: She'd have got used to the notion of counter-transference after a while, do you think?

BJ: It's an interesting point, isn't it? I suspect so if one had really shown how one was working.

JM: She must have been using her counter transference very sensitively but it's just that she didn't conceptualise it like that, I suppose.

BJ: That is true but I do think that the way we are using it now is a bit different. For example the kind of stress that we tend to put on the analyst's observing carefully what is being aroused in himself and how he may be being influenced by what is going on and pushed unconsciously into some kind of enactment, the weight we give to this is I think an important development. Klein must have used it – and you can see examples in her work – she could sense what was going on and clearly used this sensitivity enormously – but I wonder how she would have felt about the current developments.

DP: How did the fact that Klein was an emigré manifest itself? Was it obvious that she and her work were informed by a different set of cultural traditions from England's?

BJ: I would say so. She had the kind of breadth and culture which was much more European. You could see it in the range of her interests in literature. There was a feeling about her that couldn't quite have been English.

DP: And Klein's politics?

BJ: I take for granted that she was liberal (with a small 'l'). I don't know exactly but certainly not Conservative. She didn't speak about it to me personally. Also, I was shyer and wouldn't have brought her out.



DP: Can you comment on your experience of supervision with her?

BJ: Klein was a very good supervisor and working with her a very good experience. She was patient if you were slow in understanding but would unhesitatingly show you what she thought was going on the session. There was a good mix of formality and informality. For example in the summer supervision would be in the garden – an idea which I later adopted. But if she knew you well she could be very demanding personally and about the work. I always feel that whatever one may feel about such demands one can forgive them if the individual has real talent and the ideas truly worthy of preservation and about this there was never any doubt.

DP: You've developed a distinctive voice of your own, within the Kleinian tradition, and I wondered whether, even in those early days, you were aware of having questions about the way analysis was conducted, your own ideas about clinical technique and how it might be invigorated and re-thought?

BJ: Not then. You must remember I was so primitive and I had no idea about technique. My own development was later. I was struggling simply to find the transference, to find the unconscious. I would say I wouldn't have had any idea that there was any problem, one way or another. I remember for instance that she liked to read one's papers and give one a hand. I remember her going through one of my papers and saying 'there isn't enough about internal objects'. She may have been right – she probably was right – but it didn't quite fit for me. So that I imagine I couldn't quite make the stretch from the way I could work to what she could see. But also at first it was quite clear I hadn't understood her work sufficiently, and things became easier as I understood better.

JM: What are your thoughts about the way your technique has evolved from Klein's?

BJ: As I said earlier, Elizabeth Spillius, in her archival manner, swears that she can see my development in my membership paper, it was a clinical paper written five or six years after I qualified. The topic I no longer remember. I don't think that it was until the later Seventies that I really felt some proper confidence in my work. My 1975 paper 'The patient who is difficult to reach' seems now to be the one in which I could see where I was going, though I did not know it then. Up to that time I feel my work was still very uneasy, indeed there were two papers, both on child cases which I decided not to put in my book of collected papers as they felt no longer quite to be me.

So I suppose sometime during the 70s I began to find my own analytic feet, and as every analyst has to do, to develop my work as securely as I could. When you ask how 'my technique' has developed, it sounds vaguely as if it were a particular type of technique. This I think is not so – to my mind it is the everyday way of working analytically, but with perhaps particular emphasis on the various elements in the immediate situation between patient and analyst. So my technique has evolved directly from Klein's, though there is some difference. I think the main difference being (as Elizabeth Spillius says in her book *Melanie Klein Today*) that most of us today would make less immediate interpretations to deeply unconscious phantasies, especially connected with bodily parts.



Also, of course, there is this whole development that I have mentioned in which we look much more at counter transference and enactment. Klein scarcely used the word countertransference as a concept (and nor did Freud actually – in fact I think it only comes in about three of Freud's papers ever). My work just developed out of a deep dissatisfaction with finding that I was interpreting to patients things that seemed to me to be perfectly accurate except that they didn't happen to get through to the patient - a rather important failure. And I suppose in a sense that is the focus of my work – how to find the patient – or the part of the patient – that you can talk to.

I was very much concerned with this aspect of the work, and presumably that must have taken me away from putting stress on the immediate deeper aspects. I haven't formulated it like that but I imagine this must have been happening. In other words I would be more likely to try to elucidate what was going on in the relationship between patient and myself, and probably only bring in the patient's history if it sailed into my mind and seemed to be linked with what was becoming clear at the moment in the room. Then I would try to follow up how the patient heard and used the interpretation. It seems to me clear that Klein was working in this way; if you look at Narrative of a Child Analysis you can see exactly how she follows the child's response to her interpretations. I suppose the possible danger of my trying to work so much in the immediate situation is the risk of losing contact with the depth.

JM: You mean in losing the unconscious phantasy element of it?

BJ: I watch myself because of my fear of doing that, losing the unconscious phantasy or losing the capacity to see where the depth is – even if even if one doesn't actually interpret it, which would be a very important loss.

JM: You and Hanna Segal work rather differently. How different do you think your technique actually is?

BJ: I think there is some but very little difference; people sometimes tend to overstress this.

DP: Nonetheless, isn't there still a difference of style, worth identifying? I think Hanna Segal refers to it herself briefly in her preface to the book of your papers. Can you elucidate this any further for us?

BJ: I think that theoretically, or even clinically, she would have more immediate grasp of unconscious phantasy than I have. It comes into her work very spontaneously, she has a real gift there. It means I think that she'd go more quickly and more easily to the deeper layers and I would be more inclined to work from the top and go very slowly down. Also, probably I'm trying to use the counter transference in a more detailed way than she would whereas she would probably go more quickly to the meaning of something while I would more be focussing on what was going on in the room. I think it's probably somewhere there. These issues we have of course discussed together, Hanna Segal is as you may know my earliest and closest analytic friend.

DP: Does the depth metaphor work for this distinction you're making?

BJ: By depth, here what I mean is the underlying unconscious phantasy. That she



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would go more quickly to, say, the phantasies in a feeding situation, whereas I would be tracking what the patient was doing with the interpretation, whether he was taking it in. It's that kind of difference, I think.

JM: And do you think Hanna Segal would be referring to things outside the room more than you would as well - whether it's the past or the external world?

BJ: Probably she would put more stress on the patient's history and refer to it sooner than I would. I don't think the difference would be great but there would probably be some difference in emphasis.

DP: Can you identify other important interlocutors as you have developed your own approach?

BJ: I suppose in the main, but not only, the people with whom I have been working over the last 40 years. To give a brief idea of this : somewhere about 1961 a group of Kleinian training analysts got together and decided we would organise seminars for Kleinian analysts. A number of such seminars were set up for example one led by Hanna Segal, another by Herbert Rosenfeld another by Elliott Jaques and so on. Mine has continued since then , that is since 1962. It is no longer a seminar but a workshop and no longer confined to Kleinian analysts. I am the only founder member but a number of others have been members for more than 20 years for example John Steiner and Michael Feldman.^[25] We meet every fortnight and discuss ongoing cases. So it is here that not only my ideas but the varying ideas of the others of the group emerge, are discussed and looked at clinically. It means that we all probably influence each other but have our own individual slants. Originally the group used formally to break up at the end of each year and people had to sign on if they wished to continue. This however became a bit of a farce since no one wanted to leave, which means also that no new people have joined for some years. As you can imagine I am indeed very happy to have the opportunity to work alongside this very vital and developing group of analysts.

END OF INTERVIEW



Notes:

[1] Michael Balint (1896-1971) who was a contemporary of Klein's, is a well-known member of the British Object Relations school.

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

[3] Marjorie Brierley (1893-1984) was importantly involved in the political and scientific debates around the Controversial Discussions (see note 5). She was to become a key member of the so-called 'Middle Group' within British psychoanalysis.

[4] Social Development in Young Children. London: Routledge, 1933.

[5] The 'Controversial Discussions' refers to the series of lecture/discussions between 1942 and 1944 in the British Psychoanalytical Society, concerning the conflicting views of Anna Freud and Melanie Klein. They centred particularly around the theory and technique of child analysis, and the nature of the inner world, particularly Klein's concept of unconscious phantasy. See King, P. and Steiner, R. The Freud-Klein Controversies 1941-45. London: Routledge 1991.

[6] Middlemore The Nursing Couple Hamish Hamilton 1941.

[7] Interview with Hanna Segal, Website of Melanie Klein Trust (2001). www.melanie-klein-trust.org.uk/segalinterview2001/htm

[8] Anna Freud (1895-1982) the daughter of Sigmund Freud, like Klein was a pioneer in child analysis, although her theoretical and clinical standpoints were very different, and led to heated debate within the Society (see footnote 5). She set up war nurseries in London, in which children separated from their parents were cared for and also studied.

[9] Donald Winnicott (1896-1971) came to psychoanalysis from paediatrics, and made important contributions to the theory of the mother-infant relationship. His earlier thinking was strongly influenced by Klein, but his work later diverged in important respects. 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother' was published in *The Child and the Family* London: Tavistock 1957.

[10] Wilfred Bion (1897-1979) was analysed by Klein, and became one of the most innovative and influential analysts of the twentieth century. His theories concern both group functioning and fundamental elements of individual psychic functioning. Roger Money-Kyrle (1898-1978) among other contributions built on Bion's work on the development of thinking to produce two classic papers in the Kleinian tradition, 'Cognitive Development' and 'The Aim of Psychoanalysis'. Both appear in *The Collected Papers of Roger Money Kyrle*. Strath Tay: Clunie Press 1978

[11] The Northfield Experiments were group-based experiments in psychiatric rehabilitation of soldiers conceived by Bion (see 10 above) while an army psychiatrist during World War Two. Northfield is a suburb of Birmingham, where the rehabilitation unit was situated. The experiments gave rise to some of Bion's innovative thinking



about group processes, which are published in *Experiences in Groups*, London: Tavistock 1961.

[12] Paula Heimann (1899-1982) was trained in Berlin, and was later analysed by Klein after emigrating to London. Initially an important member of the group around Klein during the time of the Controversial Discussions (see note 5) she later became alienated both personally and in terms of her theoretical perspective. She was later known as a member of the 'Middle Group' of the British Society.

[13] Herbert Rosenfeld (1910-1986) was analysed by Klein. Together with Bion and Segal, working around the same period, he made seminal contributions to an understanding of the psychopathology and psychoanalytic treatment of psychotic and borderline patients.

[14] Elizabeth Spillius is a senior and widely-published member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. She has been particularly skilful in explaining contemporary Kleinian ideas, setting the thinking in its historical context, and making the ideas available to a wider public. See in particular *Melanie Klein Today*, volumes I and II. London: Routledge 1988.

[15] Joan Riviere (1883-1962), working in the Kleinian tradition, made important contributions which are collected in *The Inner World and Joan Riviere*. London: Karnac 1991. Ella Freeman Sharpe (1875-1947) came to analysis from a background in education. She wrote a book on dreams which has remained respected and influential: *Dream Analysis* London: Hogarth 1978.

[16] Ernest Jones (1879-1958) A Welshman who 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 supporter of Klein and her work, and was the person who originally invited Klein to London. James Strachey (1887-1967) was the main translator of the Standard Edition of Freud's works. He wrote a seminal paper 'The nature of the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis' in 1934. (*Int. J. Psychoanal.* 15: 127-159.)

[17] Joseph Sandler (1927-1998) was an important writer and thinker in the Contemporary Freudian tradition of the British Psychoanalytical Society. He was also extensively involved in the work of the International Psychoanalytical Association.

[18] Adrian Stokes (1902-1972) was one of Klein's first patients when she came to London. Stokes was a painter and art historian, whose contributions to aesthetic theory made use of Kleinian ideas. Richard Wollheim currently holds a chair of Philosophy in California. His important contributions to the philosophy of mind make use of psychoanalytical, particularly Kleinian concepts. See, for example, *The Mind and its Depths* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1993. Adrian Stokes (1902-1972) was one of Klein's first patients when she came to London. Stokes was a painter and art historian, whose contributions to aesthetic theory made use of Kleinian ideas.

[19] Virginia Woolf wrote of the following event in her diary on the 11 March 1939: 'Then the great Psycho Analysts dinner on a wild wet night. Adrian late: dinner at 9



till 12.30. Speeches of a vacancy and verbosity incredible. Lord de la Warr rambling jocosely. And gossip with Duncan & Adrian; the rest of our table sit in unmitigable gloom. Poor Mrs so & so – Meynell and Money Kyrle dead silent: food profuse, snatched, uncharacteristic. Mary Hutch: Rebecca West: & set upon & committed to ask to dinner Mrs Klein.’ (11 March 1939, in Virginia Woolf, *Diary*, London 1984, vol. 5, p. 208). Money-Kyrle’s book *Superstition and Society* had just been published by the Hogarth Press. On 16 March, Woolf added: ‘The night before Mrs Klein dined – the backwash of my P[sycho].A[nalysts]’ party – unrecorded? A woman of character & force & some submerged – how shall I say – not craft, but subtlety: something working underground. A pull, a twist, like an undertow: menacing. A bluff grey haired lady, with large bright imaginative eyes.’ (16 March 1939, in *ib.*, p. 209).

[20] Edward Glover (1888-1972) was a powerful member of the British Psychoanalytical Society in the 1930s and 1940s. Initially a supporter of Klein and her ideas, he took her daughter Melitta Schmeidler into analysis in 1933. Subsequently he joined his patient in making fierce public attacks on Klein.

[21] 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 4 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.

[22] *Envy and Gratitude* (1957) is published in Volume 3 of *The Writings of Melanie Klein*. London: Hogarth Press 1975

[23] Elliot Jaques is particularly noted for his work on group and institutional dynamics, and for his seminal paper ‘Death and the mid-life crisis’ (1965) *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 46: 502-14.

[24] ‘Our adult world and its roots in infancy’ (1959) is published in Volume 3 of *The Writings of Melanie Klein*. London: Hogarth Press 1975. ‘Love guilt and reparation’ (1937) is published in volume I of *The Writings of Melanie Klein*. London: Hogarth Press 1975

[25] John Steiner is a contemporary London Kleinian particularly noted for his work on pathological organisations of the personality, which he has most recently called ‘psychic retreats’. His major work on this theme is *Psychic Retreats* London: Routledge 1993. Michael Feldman is a contemporary London Kleinian who builds on Joseph’s work in his detailed studies of projective identification and enactment in the analytic situation.