



Melanie Klein's Autobiography (1959)

Initial comments

These Autobiographical notes were found in the Wellcome Trust's Archives in London, and comprise a version of a text that Melanie Klein was working on at the end of 1959, the year before she died. It appears that this is a final compilation of many notes she had made throughout the year.

Like most of her writings, Melanie Klein made a number of versions and kept most of them. In this case she typed out many separate parts, before compiling this final version. The initial and fragmentary parts may be found in her archives in the Wellcome Trust, and these have been annotated and published as ten 'Fragments' in the Journal *Psychoanalysis and History*, by Janet Sayers and John Forrester (2013), whose annotations will be valuable for this final compilation. (See below for the full reference and a web link to the paper.) The 'final' version presented here, is not in Melanie Klein's archives but in another collection at the Wellcome Trust – the archives of Roger Money-Kyrle. This is no doubt the reason that it was missed by Sayers and Forrester.¹ There is quite a lot of repetition in the 'Fragments', but their content is similar to the present compiled version, though in the process of compilation Klein added some details.

This version was sent by Betty Joseph to Roger Money-Kyrle in 1962, two years after Klein's death. Money-Kyrle was in charge of editing a complete edition of Melanie Klein's writing, which was eventually published as the four-volume *The Writings of Melanie Klein*, in 1975. Betty Joseph's letter written in 1962 to Roger Money-Kyrle, accompanying this manuscript also survives in the RMK archive. The scanned text of the Joseph letter is appended at the end of these Initial Comments, and includes her suggestion that the 'Autobiography' might be included in *The Writings*. The reason this final complete version is not in her own Archive, but in Roger Money-Kyrle's seems therefore to be because Joseph had extracted it from Klein's papers to send it to him.

Her letter also says she sent another similar version of the autobiography, but slightly edited for publication. That text also survives in the RMK Archives. Clearly Money-Kyrle did not agree, as neither version is included in the complete edition. Instead he wrote a very brief two and a half page Introduction in the first Volume of the *Writings*, setting out the main chronology of Klein's life. But he obviously held on to the two versions in his own office, and the compiled manuscript, together with Betty Joseph's edited version, and her letter, then came into the Wellcome Archives in Money-Kyrle's papers after his own death in 1980.

These documents can be found in the Archives and Manuscripts section of the Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE. The Shelfmark is PP/RMK/E.6/3:Box 11

The intention of making them public on the Melanie Klein Trust website is to give a first impression of the way Melanie Klein saw life on looking back as an elderly woman. The picture of her childhood, family, and relations with her parents and sibs, does bear the traces of an emotional distance achieved many decades later by a woman relatively satisfied with her contribution as a psychoanalyst.

[R.D. Hinshelwood]

¹ Sayers, Janet and Forrester, John (2013) The Autobiography of Melanie Klein. *Psychoanalysis and History* 15: 127-163. Available at: http://www.melanie-klein-trust.org.uk/domains/melanie-klein-trust.org.uk/local/media/downloads/2013_Klein_autobiography___Janet_Sayers_transcription.pdf (click to access the paper online).

Flat 1,
42 Gordon Square,
London, W.C.1.
7th March 1962.

Dear Roger

I am sending you a copy of Mrs. Klein's autobiographical notes, which I have attempted to edit. Would you consider, first, whether you think these notes should be included as the first essay in the volume containing "The Oresteia", "On Loneliness", "Identification", and "Our Adult World"; secondly, would you look at the notes from the point of view of publication. I have not attempted to alter the English, unless the meaning is unclear or grammatical mistakes are ugly. I have attempted to bring in all the details of Mrs. Klein's notes, but ~~have tried~~ to avoid repetition. You will see therefore that the length has been cut down. *from about 16,000 to about 14,000 words*

Would you let Elliott or myself know your feelings about this, please?

You will notice that I have censored one passage about Hug-Hellmuth.

I have left a ho. a question & wonder to glad in any information or opinion about him.

RS

Betty

Elliott is Elliott Jaques, also involved in producing *The Writings*.
The passage about Hug-Hellmuth is explained in Endnotes ii.
The text below is transcribed from the typed document on 30 foolscap pages.



Autobiography – Melanie Klein [1959 – foolscap, typed]

My father came from a very orthodox Jewish family and was what was called in Yiddish a “vocher”. His father had been a business man, but, probably because the scientific capacity of my father was recognised, he was destined to be a Jewish scientist. He was married, according to the orthodox rites, to a girl whom he had never seen and only met on the occasion of the marriage. That marriage did not last long and was dissolved. I think at the time he was about 37. He had woken up to other interests and had revolted against his way of life. He had hidden under his Talmud books which gave him the possibility of matriculating. He went out one day without the knowledge of his parents and gained his matriculation at a gymnasium, as these schools were called. When he returned, his parents, particularly his mother, were horrified. He then declared that he was going to study medicine and I know from him that when he went in for his first examination, his mother was praying at home that he would fail. However, he passed and after some years he became a doctor. By that time he had completely broken with the whole orthodox attitude and had become independent of his family, though he never quite broke with them.

Cholera was raging at that time in the village of Poland and there were appeals for doctors (to treat people). He answered the appeal, informed his family and, when he returned after several weeks or months, he found a letter from his mother imploring him not to go. In contrast to other doctors, who stood outside the cottage windows telling the villagers to take their pulses, he went inside, treated the people in the ordinary way and did not fall ill.

He met my mother, who came from Deutsch-Kreutz, on a visit to Vienna, where she was staying with people who had a boarding house. He at once fell deeply in love with my mother, who was twenty-five and an extremely beautiful girl. At that time he must have been about forty-four or forty-five. They married and for some time he practised as a physician in Deutsch-Kreutz, and then they decided to go to Vienna for my father to practise there. They moved to Vienna, but he could not make a living from his practice, and my mother therefore decided to have a shop, even though this was considered incorrect for the wife of a doctor. Here

- 2 -

she sold plants, reptiles, etc. I know that she had a deep dislike of these creatures and that it was only through will-power that she could have anything to do with them. As I have said, she was very beautiful and some of her customers thoroughly enjoyed coming in and having conversations with her. One of my early memories is of going to the shop and I remember where it was in Vienna.



Then something happened. My father's father had been living, since his wife's death, with a daughter, who one day put him out onto the street. My mother at once agreed to take him in, and he lived with us until he died, apparently quite peacefully. When he died, he left them a few savings and a sweepstake ticket, which was quite a usual thing in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As it happened, they won 10,000 florins and everything changed. My father bought the practice of a dentist and we moved into a flat, and I remember that I thought the change was very impressive.

Now I want to speak of my mother's family. I have already said that she was very beautiful. She had very black hair, a fair complexion, nice features and the most expressive and beautiful grey eyes. She was educated, witty and interesting. I have always been proud of the way in which acquired her education. Her father was a rabbi in Deutsch-Kreutz. His grandfatherⁱ [my grandfather] was a very outstanding man: he was known all over the district for his knowledge and tolerance, being very liberally-minded, quite different from the orthodoxy that characterised my father's family. He had all the German philosophers on his shelves, unlike the attitude of the bigoted rabbis.

There were three daughters, two of whom were beautiful, and they acquired their education by teaching themselves, by reading and I think probably also by discussions with their father. My mother even managed to learn the piano by herself. Of course she never played very well, but there was a burning need for knowledge in that whole setting. She also learned French. Many years later, when we lived in the country which is now a suburb of Vienna, she was taking the waters and I remember her walking up and down a large veranda with a little book in her hand which contained idiomatic French expressions.

- 3 -

As far as my mother's mother is concerned, I only knew her photograph which shows a lovely friendly old lady, and I know that I longed for her to be living, because I never had a grandmother, and I know that this was a nice, kind and pleasant woman. The whole impression I got, in contrast to my father's family, was one of good family life, very simple, in restricted circumstances, but full of interest in knowledge and education.

At the time when the circumstances of the family so much improved, I remember that my father bought some jewellery for my mother, and I was deeply impressed by some diamond earrings, one of which now forms the centre of a brooch, which I shall leave to my daughter-in-law.

I have still something to add about my ancestry on my mother's side. I happened to hear that books by Reb Hersch Mandel Deutsch were still acknowledged by Jewish scholars,



and I have tried to find out if this was my grandfather or great-grandfather; I believe the latter, because my mother talked to me about my grandfather and his liberal attitude, but did not mention his books. I cannot ascertain which he is, as the names of people and places have changed so much in the last few years.

I also wish to say something about my ancestry on my father's side. I know very little about them, except that they were very orthodox, which put me against them. I gather from my mother that she got on very well with her father-in-law when he came to live with them. By that time he was an old man. He had been a business man and I know nothing at all about my grandmother on that side. At intervals during the years, his daughter and son-in-law, still wearing the ritual kaftan, appeared and all I felt about then that I disliked them thoroughly. The fact that I myself had had no orthodox upbringing was, through the circle in which I grew up, semi-orthodox, may have contributed to my dislike; and, of course, I could not forget that this aunt had put her father out of the house in a most disgraceful way. The last time I saw them was in the last [first] world war, when they were fleeing from Poland because of the Russian advance, and I gave them some help in the way of rugs and bedding, etc., which they took to help them settled in Vienna. I have never heard of them again and, since my mother died at the beginning of the war, in 1914, every atom of interest in them has gone.

- 4 -

I have said that I had no orthodox upbringing. My Mother seemed to keep to certain things more as memories of her childhood and devotion to her family than from religious belief. She tried once to keep a kosher household, but was not successful, and apparently gave up these beliefs as the children grew up and were more and more against keeping them. I remember, however, with pleasure, the first evening of Passover, particularly because, on that occasion, the youngest child had to say a Hebrew passage, of which I still remember the first lines. Since I was very keen to get some attention and to be more important than the older ones, I am afraid this attitude influenced my liking of that occasion. But there is more to it. I liked the candles, I liked the whole atmosphere, and I liked the family sitting round the table and being together in that way.

My mother always kept the great Day of Atonement with fasting, and that, too, remains pleasantly in my mind, how, on the previous evening, there was a particularly festive meal, and similarly after the fast. Every detail of it was interesting to me, starting with the black coffee, and then a good festive meal. I also went, it was understood, on that occasion to the synagogue, where my mother spent the whole day – I don't think my father did as much – I would go in my best clothes, being quite aware that the women, who of course were separate from the men, paid



great attention to what the children looked like; except my mother, who did not take much interest in these things and was deeply engrossed in prayers on that day. Otherwise, I only saw her make short prayers on Friday evenings, out of a lilac velvet-bound prayer-book, given her by my father when they were married. It took only a few minutes; then she closed the book and put it back in the wardrobe. My doubts as to how deep her religious feelings were, as contrasted with her attachment to the family and their religious impulses, were confirmed by her telling me once about a student with whom I believe she had been in love. She spoke with some admiration of his courage that, when he was dying of t.b., he said "I shall die very soon and I repeat that I do not believe in any god".

I did not see much orthodox feeling in my father, but both he and

- 5 -

my mother were deeply attached to the Jewish race, and that has really remained in me to the present. It did not take the same form as my parents' attitude, because, in the choice of my friends and relations, it barely matters whether they were Gentile or Jewish, but I have kept a strong feeling for the Jewish race, though I am fully aware of their faults and shortcomings. This never led me to be zionistic, even in my young days I had no desire to be segregate, but I feel a certain sympathy with the people who struggle to establish Israel and have some admiration for their endurance and the strength of their principles. I should have hated, though, to live in Israel. I have come, in my later life, to adopt England as my second motherland, but have strong ties of an international nature, which has some similarity with what I have been saying about my relations to Jewishness. Another thing I have always hated was that some Jews, quite irrespective of their religious principles, were ashamed of their Jewish origin, and, whenever the question arose, I was glad to confirm my own Jewish origin, though I am afraid I have no religious beliefs whatever.

In my attitude of sympathy with Israel also enter a feeling which, though it may have originated in the state of persecution of the Jews, extends to all minorities and to all people persecuted by stronger forces. Who knows! This might have given me strength to be always in a minority about my scientific work and not to mind, and to be quite willing to stand up against a majority for which I had some contempt, which in time has been mitigated by tolerance.

I spoke earlier about the change in circumstances which occurred in the fortunes of the family when I was about five years old. My father at the time preceding this favourable change, became attached to a kind of music hall, called an orpheus, as a doctor. He had to be present at the performance, which was very boring for him, and a sacrifice, because he wanted to be with his family, but a help financially. I remember he made some remarks of a contemptuous nature



about some English woman performing, and said that, if the English were depraved, they are very much depraved. There is a connection with one of my earliest memories at this time, when he still left in the evening, and our maid, whose name I still remember, gave him his supper before he went. In the same way

- 7 -

that he was faithful to my mother to such a degree that he would look at no other woman, so was he conservative about food.

I remember very well the little rissoles which were what he had every night. The reason why the maid gave my father his supper was that my mother was not back from the shop. I cannot have been more than three when I have my first memory connected with my father having his dinner before leaving to go to the Orpheus. He was probably in a hurry. I remember that I climbed up on his knee and he pushed me away. That is a painful memory. Later, and this is a pleasant memory, when we went, from May to September, to Dorsbach on the Hensberg, which at that time was still countrified, though by now it is part of Vienna, he used to hold my hand walking up the hill on which we lived. My father was so set in his habits that he would never go to a restaurant by himself. He would always come home for what was then called a dinner and go back to his work afterwards, though it was quite a distance from his working place, and I fetched him coming home from school and we went up together. I also remember overhearing him, when I was just over thirteen, say to somebody that his youngest daughter would go to the gymnasium, and this definitely made me decide to go there, so I already had at that time some wish to study.

I was the youngest and he was already in his fifties when I was born. He was an old fifty. I have no memories of his ever playing with me. It was a painful thought to me that my father could openly state, and without consideration of my feelings, that he preferred my older sister, his first-born. On the other hand, I was very much loved in the family and very spoilt, in that I was given so much attention. My remarks were quoted and there is little doubt that I was thought to be good-looking and that the family were proud of me.

In some ways, until the relation with my brother and me developed into a deeper one, I did not feel I was completely understood, but at this time no one really thought that any special understanding of a child was necessary. But I think of my childhood as one of a good family life and I would give anything for one day of having it back again; the three of us, my brother, my sister and myself sitting round the table



- 7 -

and doing our school work, and the many details of united family life.

I was the youngest of four children, the eldest, Emily, being six years older, my brother, Emmanuel, five years older, and the third, Sidonie, about four years older. I have no doubt, and this was told to me by my mother later on, that I was unexpected. I have no particular feeling that I resented this, because, as I have stated, there was a great deal of love towards me. My mother had no particular pedagogic principles, and no strict rules were kept. I do not remember ever having been punished, except on one occasion when I really provoked my father in a very cheeky way. He had suggested, when I did not want to eat something, that in his day children were made to eat it, and I replied that what was done some hundred years ago did not count today, which I knew would annoy him. He came over from his place and hit me on the shoulder. That is the only occasion on which I was smacked.

My mother had breastfed the three elder children, but I had a wet nurse, who fed me any time I asked for it. At this time Truby King had not yet done his devastating work. My mother's brother, Hermann, lived with us for some years whilst studying law. I was very fond of him and he, too, spoilt me very much. I heard him say many things, among them that, being so beautiful, a young Rothschild would have to come to marry me. He also had a lovely big dog, on which I rode.

I don't think I sufficiently understood my father, whose interest in me was not so great, because he had aged so much by this time. I admired certain things, such as his having done the whole of his medical studies by being a tutor, and having accumulated a large library and, what is more, learnt by himself ten languages, including Hebrew, in which he was a scientist. I know that he spoke Italian very well, because this was confirmed by an Italian who had a conversation with him, and that I could ask him for French and English expressions without bothering with a dictionary. His French was rather quaint and a little outdated, having fed on Moliere, Racine and the older poets. He also had had the opportunity of learning French from a veteran of the Napoleonic wars. I was told that it was rather classic French, but I admired his capacity to learn all this by himself. Actually he was a perfect scientist with

- 8 -

very little capacity for practical life. Looking back, I understand him much better than I did at the time. He died when I was eighteen, and by that time had for years been somewhat senile.

I think that I had an attachment for my eldest sister in early childhood and that she was very fond and proud of me. I remember that, between ten and twelve, I felt unhappy before going to sleep and Emilie was kind enough to move her couch near to mine and I went to sleep



holding her hand. Later on, when I developed intellectually, I found that we had little in common, and that remained throughout life.

Of my other sister, Sidonie, I have very pleasant and painful memories. I only remember her on her return from hospital, where she had been for scrofula. She was, I have no doubt, the best looking of all of us: I don't believe it was just idealization when, after her death, my mother maintained that. I remember her violet-blue eyes, her black curls and her angelic face. What I remember of her is her lying in bed, after her return from hospital, and her goodness towards me. At this time, and I must have been between four and five, the older ones had a knack of teasing me. They spoke amongst themselves of geographical things in a joking way, talking of Popacatapetl and other names, and I was entirely uncertain whether these were genuine or not. Sidonie, lying in bed, took pity on me, and she taught me the principles of counting and of reading, which I picked up very quickly. It is quite possible that I idealize her a little, but my feeling is that, had she lived, we would have been the greatest friends and I still have a feeling of gratitude to her for satisfying my mental needs, all the greater because I think she was very ill at the time. She died, aged about eight and a half, when I was about four and a half, and I have a feeling that I never entirely got over the feeling of grief for her death. I also suffered under the grief my mother showed, whereas my father was more controlled. I remember that I felt that my mother needed me all the more now that Sidonie had gone, and it is probable that some of the spoiling was due to my having to replace that child. It still fills me with grief that at that time we had no cure for t.b., when now-a-days an entirely new treatment would have kept her alive, and I always feel that it was

- 9 -

unnecessary that she did not live her life. My knowledge of myself told me that the very good relations with women and the capacity for friendship, which was always very pronounced in me, were based on my relation with this sister.

I have mentioned my relation to my brother, who seemed to me superior in every way to myself, not only because, at nine or ten years of age, he seemed quite grown up, but also because his gifts were so unusual that I feel that whatever I have achieved is nothing in comparison to what he would have done. From a very early age I heard the most beautiful piano-playing, because he was deeply musical, and I have seen him sitting at the piano and just composing what came into his mind. He was a self-willed and rebellious child and, I think, not sufficiently understood. He seemed at loggerheads with his teachers at the gymnasium, or contemptuous of them, and there were many controversial talks with my father. One of the always recurring topics was that my brother maintained that there was nothing in Schiller and

that Goethe was everything that counted, when my father grew very angry and quoted whole passages out of Schiller's work, which he admired. I remember him saying, in his anger, that Goethe was a charlatan, who tried to dabble in science.

My brother was deeply fond of my mother, but gave her a good deal of anxiety.

The relation with my brother was, I think, a most important factor in my development. I date my deep friendship with him definitely from my ninth year onwards, when I had written a patriotic poem, and he took care about correcting it and seemed to appreciate it. From at least this time onwards, he was my confidant, my friend, my teacher. He took the greatest interest in my development, and I know that, until his death, he always expected me to do something great, although there was nothing on which to base it. I remember that I wrote a little dramatic play when I was sixteen, and he even said that that was the beginning of something permanent, but it did not turn out that my capacity for writing, which was expressed in the beginnings of various novels and some poems (all of which I have destroyed) would ever have been to my satisfaction and probably not any good.

- 10 -

I deeply admired my brother, who had a genius as a writer and as a musician, and who often dictated to me what he was writing. I always thought that he had very much more creative capacity than I had, though he did not seem to think so. Later on, after his death, when I was twenty, I collected his writings together, with a great friend of his and mine, Irma Schonfeld, and managed to publish them. By then I was married and expecting my first child, and I travelled quite a distance to meet Georg Brandes, the literary historian, whom my brother had admired, to get a preface from him for this book, since he had refused by letter. Actually he had already left the house from which he had replied to me that he was too old and too tired to give any more prefaces or read any more books, but the friends with whom he had been staying, whose name I cannot remember, a woman writer and her sculptor daughter, seem to have been so impressed with me that their letter to Brandes produced the preface. Actually he used nearly all I had written about my brother in this preface. When, after a long struggle, I managed to get a publisher, and a good publisher, for him, it was a great grief to me that he went bankrupt soon after and the book was nearly lost. This book does not really give any idea of what my brother might have achieved, because we used every scrap in his notebooks, some of it quite immature, to put the book together, and it is a feeble picture of what might have come, although there are some beautiful things in it.

The illness of my brother and his early death is another of the griefs in my life, which always remain alive to me. I have said that he was a rather wilful child, though he could be



extremely kind and was very fond of my mother and me. He had had scarlet fever when he was, I think, twelve years of age, and that was followed by rheumatic fever. I always heard from my mother with self-reproach, that, because all the family were going out to the Prater, he also would go, and this was supposed to have caused a relapse and occasioned the first fever. I do not know if this was so, but I have always felt that the family should not have gone and forced him to go with them. That rheumatic fever affected his heart and he had what was then known as double heart failure. It was always understood, and he knew it very well, that he could not live longer

- 11 -

than some time in his twenties. This knowledge, of which he never spoke, must have had a great deal to do with his being rebellious and at times difficult. I have a beautiful letter from him, also one of the few things I have kept, in which he says that he hopes that what Fate will give me in years what it has deprived him of in days.

He studied medicine, but one of the reasons why he stopped his studies and got permission to do some travelling was that he felt that he wanted to use his gifts as a writer as much as possible. I know another factor which might have driven him away from home, but I will speak of that later on. He died in Genoa, on his way to take a ship to Spain. A postcard was found on his table, addressed to my fiance, and he was notified of his death. He travelled to Genoa to fetch his luggage, which had already been deposited by my brother for shipping, and no receipt was found to show which it was. The luggage had been described to my fiance, who was looking through an enormous hall full of baggage for it, when he saw a periodical protruding from a case. It was a number of Fackel, by Krauss, of whom my brother thought well. He then claimed this lot of luggage and was given it, and it contained manuscripts which I want to put together into a book. He was twenty-five when he died. Here again I have the feeling that had one known more about medicine, one might have been able to do something and keep him alive longer, but I have been told that even now rheumatic heart diseases are not always curable. I don't know whether this is true or not, but it left me with the same feeling that I had about my little sister, that many things could have been done to prevent his illness and early death. Writing now at the age of seventy-seven, and he was five years older than myself, I cannot imagine him as a man of eighty-two. In my memory he remains a young, strong-minded man, as I knew him, strong in his opinions, not minding if they were unpopular, with a deep understanding of art and a passion for it in many ways, and the best friend I ever had. My oldest son, Hans, who died at the age of twenty-seven when mountaineering, had, particularly in his early years, quite a resemblance to my brother, as I think has also Eric. I think also that my



grandson, Michael, has something of his appearance, but I may be wrong, because all these figure had so much in

- 12 -

common in my feelings.

The relation to my father was complex, partly because he took, so I felt, relatively little interest in me and so often professed that my older sister was his favourite. In addition, not only was my father old for his age, but I think that in his sixties he must have had a stroke and he became rapidly senile. He certainly was so when I was twelve or thirteen years of age.

My relation to my mother has been one of the great standbys in my life. I loved her deeply, admired her beauty, her intellect, her deep wish for knowledge, no doubt with some of the envy which exists in every daughter. Up to the present day, I still think a great deal about her, wondering what she would have said or thought, and particularly regretting that she was not able to see some of my achievements. I wonder often what she would have thought about these. Although she was extremely ambitious for me when I was a young child, when she grew older and things became more difficult – my father had largely become senile and my brother's illness had got worse, and she had really to keep the family going – I often heard her say that she didn't care for any greatness, she would wish him to be healthy, even if he had been a wine merchant or something like that. I am convinced she felt similarly about me, and that her great wish was for me to be happy, and yet I have a feeling that she would have been proud had she been able to realise what I have actually done.

Again, it is difficult for me to picture that by now she would have been 110 years old, because I still see her as she was before she died. She died in my house, having lost, through circumstances, everything to my sister, whose husband had taken over the practice my father had before. She died when the 1914-18 war had begun and was very much concerned because my brother-in-law had by then been taken prisoner by the Russians, or rather, when the Premysl fortress was being beleaguered by the Russians. My husband and others told her that this fortress was practically impregnable to take, but I wonder whether she believed them. She had at this time grown very thin and she was X-rayed and examined at the clinic in Budapest, where we then lived. She complained that the

- 13 -

room where she was examined was icy cold, though it was late autumn, and she felt that the bronchitis which followed on that examination was due to the room being so cold. At that time one of the assistants at the clinic where she was examined told me that the X-ray did not show



anything about cancer and he suggested that she should, in a few months, be examined again. I have since come to the conclusion that she must have had cancer, which caused her loss of weight.

I remember still how we walked up the hill in Bade, where we had a very nice flat. She was a little in front with my husband, and I was behind. I could hardly keep back my tears and was full of grief. Of course I felt, as one would, that I might have looked after her better, though living in the house with her grandchildren was obviously the best thing for her. Eric was four months old when she died and she enjoyed the baby, but ever since my brother had died, and that was much more distinct than after the death of her husband, she had to a large extent lost interest in life. This did not show in an unpleasant way: she still remained interested in everything concerning me and other people, she still took an interest in my clothes and in my books, but, looking back, I know that she withdrew more and more her interest in life as far as she herself was concerned. I never imagined anyone could die the way she did, completely in possession of her faculties, calm without any anxiety, and obviously not at all afraid or reluctant to die. I nursed her for some of the time, but we had a nurse for the last week. She was ill for about three weeks. The only thing in which I saw something of her anxieties having come up was that she told me that the nurse was strict. When she saw me so deeply grieved about the approach of her death, she said "If it means so much to you, make a gruel and I will eat it", because by that time she took hardly any food. Being an excellent cook, she told me how to make a chicken broth and forced herself to take it. It was quite obvious that she attempted to go on living for my sake. Even then she had not lost interest in me and my activities, my children, my home. I had a wet nurse for Eric, due to circumstances which I might mention later, who behaved very badly and terrorised the whole house. When I told her about this, she suggested that I should put up with

- 14 -

everything and have the child fed only about nine or ten months, and I followed her advice. I remember that, with a certain feeling of guilt that I might have done more for her, and we know that such feelings exist. I knelt down by her bed and asked her forgiveness. She replied that I should have at least as much to forgive her as she to forgive me. Then she said "Don't grieve, don't mourn, but remember me with love". I have since seen my sister die, full of anxieties and feelings of persecution, and heard of other people die, where anxiety was very prominent; I did not imagine that one could die in such a serene way, completely without anxiety and regret, no accusation against anyone, and friendliness towards my sister, though there she did actually have cause for complaint. But I never heard her complain about my sister in the preceding years



and everything she had left from the pocket money my husband gave her she sent to my sister, who needed it. She has in many ways remained my example and I remember the tolerance she had towards people and how she did not like it when my brother and I, being intellectual and therefore arrogant, criticised people. She would not agree with us. She had never had any particular feeling that she was in fact an outstanding woman; she was modest and when the question arose about something concerning the maid, she used to say "Well, I would not like to do that, why should she?" Of course, at that time, maids did not have the same treatment as they have now, but, in the best sense of the word, I think my mother was a socialist. As far as her means went, she really tried to make a relation with the maids, and we had one for many years, who was on equal terms. Sometimes she was taken advantage of, but she did not seem to mind that.

I am not sure of the relation between my parents. It was a very united family life. My father even travelled from the Martinstrasse where we lived and he walked to Dorsbach for his lunch. It would never have occurred to him to go out alone or even to go to a restaurant. My mother was extremely dutiful, both as a wife and as a mother and everything was done for the education of the children. I do not remember any occasion when my parents went out by themselves. However, whereas my father was deeply in love with my mother, until his death, and extremely

- 15 -

jealous, which was quite noticeable, I am not sure whether my mother was in love with him; in fact I do not believe she was. She looked after him, she was good with him, but occasionally I saw signs of dissatisfaction in her. In my phantasy, or was it perception, she had been love with that student in her little home town, to whom I have referred earlier, who died of t.b. Of course, in those days marriages were not simply ended as is the case today. She had respect for my father and appreciated his qualities, and it seemed a good thing to accept his proposal. Sometimes I thought that perhaps she was glad, but I have never been able to get to the bottom of this, whether she was simply not passionate or not passionate as far as my father was concerned, but I do believe that occasionally I saw a slight aversion against sexual passion in her, which might have been the expression of her own feeling and upbringing, etc.

I have already referred to the change in circumstances, which was extremely important to my feelings. I have no memory of the place where we lived before our fortunes improved, but it seems it was not good. I was very proud when we moved into a very nice flat with a balcony, which I remember very well, when I was about five years old. There is something of which I am not sure. I don't know whether my sister died before we moved, but I believe she



died in the flat. I remember that I was extremely happy about the jewellery, silver and canteen which my mother received and about the flat being so nice, and I also had new clothes. My happiness was very much increased when my parents decided to buy the house where the dentistry practice which my father had bought was carried out. I remember that an old friend of my mother, Mrs Hennier, also mortgaged some money on this house, and it seemed to me an onerous thing that my parents should actually own a house. The pride and happiness that I felt about these changes made it clear to me that I had been worried about the financial difficulties, I would almost say poverty, which preceded the moves.

I had begun to go to school from the flat in the Alserstrasse and was very happy there. I never was shy; I liked the company of children, which I had not had until then, as at this time one did not go to kindergarten. I gave no trouble at school and also liked acquiring

- 16 -

knowledge, and soon became a very ambitious pupil, paying great attention to the marks I received and to the one thing which at this time expressed the teacher's satisfaction, the words "worde belobt". No detailed reports were given, only marks, and, in the case of a very good pupil, these particular words. I remember the first day at school, when the teacher, dealing with a number of timid and anxious children, asked them their name in the following way. When she asked "Who is called Marie?", the little girls called Marie had to put up their hands and say "My name is Marie". I waited anxiously for my turn to come, though a number of children were under the benches, being so anxious, and had to be dragged out, to tell their names. My name, being a little unusual, did not come, and being unable to wait any longer, when the teacher said "Who is called Marie?", I put up my hand; when she said "Now say nicely 'My name is Marie'", I said "My name is Melanie". She looked at me little reproachfully and said "Your turn hasn't come yet" and I felt rather ashamed, though actually there was no other Melanie and my turn would not have come.

It was at this time that I had French governesses. The first one was Mlle. Chapuis. My parents engaged her through some agency from a convent, and I know that she was very religious. She was very kind and I have no memory of any unpleasantness about her. But she did not stay long because she got very homesick. She recommended a young girl also from this convent, Mlle, Constance Sylvester. She still had plaits, was nineteen years old and at first was very timid and anxious, but blossomed out very quickly. She was very good with me and took an interest in my thoughts, whereas the other members of the family spoilt and admired me, but were not particularly interested in what went on in my mind. Mlle, Chapuis had taken me repeatedly to church with

her and I knelt when she did. I felt extremely guilty about that, because I felt convinced that my parents, being Jewish, would not have agreed to my kneeling in a Catholic church and participating in the services. However, I did not want to give Mlle. Chapuis away, since she was otherwise very kind to me and I liked her and also I had a feeling of attraction to those Catholic services. There must have been, in fact I know there was, some revolt

- 17 -

against my Jewish origins and an attraction to something else. Constance did not do that. She soon seemed to lose some of her fervour and became extremely gay. I was her favourite because not only did she understand me, but I thought I understood her better than the others. I know that my brother teased her a lot. My sister Emilie was a bad pupil, and, since she had no trouble with me, my relation with her was quite a close one. I had another secret which I did not tell my mother and which made me feel very guilty, and that was, when she went out with me, according to the Viennese fashion, young men would talk with her and on a few occasions she allowed them to walk with her on the street. I was quite sure my mother would disapprove but my loyalty to Constance would not let me report it. She gave it up herself as a certain point, probably feeling that it was wrong.

This attraction to the Catholic church, which was stimulated by Mlle. Chapuis, led later on, when I was nine or ten, to some things which tortured me and which I could only confess to Constance. That was the feeling that I would one day become Catholic and how I would hurt my parents. I remember I told her “I don't want to do it, but I shall have to”, and she replied very understandingly, “Well, if you have to do it, you can't help it”. This Catholic attraction showed itself at school, where I felt deprived when I saw the Catholic children running to the priest and kissing his hand. I remember that on one occasion I plucked up my courage and also kissed his hand. He patted me on the head in a very friendly manner, but that occasion I did not mention.

I had decided at about fourteen that I would study medicine, but I may have been stimulated by hearing my father say to a patient that I was going to the gymnasium. At that time this was not true, because I was then going to a lyceum (lycee), where I learnt French, English and all the things that a girl of good family was expected to know. At that very moment, I decided that I was going to change over to the gymnasium, and, since it was the middle of the year, my brother taught me Latin and Greek, to keep up with the subjects taught at the gymnasium. I still remember, with amusement, that, though he was very keen to help me, he was a most impatient teacher. My prep from one day to the next was to



- 18 -

learn the four conjugations in Latin, and, when I muddled them, he cried out in anger “You want to study! You must become a shop assistant”. Still, with preparation, I was able to pass the exam, which consisted mainly of Latin and Greek, and life took on an entirely different aspect for me.

I must have been longing to study, or to do something, without having been aware of it. Now I knew that I was going to study medicine and had even thought of psychiatry. I was extremely happy in that school, where the girls' intelligence was above the average, and where the teachers were much more interesting and interested than at the previous school, and I was looking forward with great happiness to further studies at the University, though at this period the financial situation at home was very stringent, as my father had become more and more senile, and the house was kept going by the indefatigable capacities of my mother. I bore all sorts of deprivations, in comparison with those of my schoolmates, fairly easily. It was on rare occasions that I got a new dress, and theatres and concerts were also rare occurrences, but I had a lively and happy connection with my schoolmates and was soon introduced to friends of my brother. It was altogether a very intellectual circle in which I lived and I blossomed out. This was also a time when I read passionately whatever I could get hold of, deep into the night. My mother did not know this, as my room was apart from hers. I know that I did my prep largely in the tram, which was at the time still horse-drawn. I got behind in geometry, which was a subject I did not like, and a friend of my brother undertook to help me. He fell deeply in love with me and at the time I also had opportunities of meeting a few other young men, and, when I was seventeen, I met my future fiance. At that time there were actually four young men in love with me, all of which I know would have wished to marry me. I was very much impressed by my fiance, who seemed to me to be intellectually outstanding, and again I am afraid that I was influenced by my brother's opinion, who made friends with him. He was a second cousin and had visited us for that reason, but he fell in love with me and very quickly decided the issue by proposing to marry me. While being intellectually very forward at this time, well-read and stimulated

- 19 -

by a very intellectual circle, and therefore believing myself mature, I was in many ways only a child. At this stage, intellect was what impressed me most. I think I was both flattered and impressed by my future fiance's proposal, though it was clear we should have some time to wait. He already had his degree as an engineer, but still had his way to make. I accepted his proposal and it did not take very long for me to fall in love with him. From that time I was so loyal that I



refrained from any entertainment where I might have met other young men and never expressed a feeling that I already had in my mind, that we were not really suited to one another. Both loyalty to my fiance, with whom I was up to a point in love, and circumstances prevented me from mentioning this to my mother or my brother. I often wonder whether my brother, with whom I had such a deep and close connection, did not realise that I was doing the wrong thing, and whether he did not unconsciously know that I was going to make myself unhappy. He soon left his medical studies and, with very little money, travelled and could not bear to remain in Vienna any more. Certainly I had not spoken of my doubts either to him or to my mother, so, though they may have thought my fiance a difficult person, they also knew that I was in love with him, and thought that I did not mind him being difficult. I must allow for the fact that, since my sister's marriage and brother-in-law's taking over the dental practice, the whole financial situation had become worse and it would not have been easy for me to return to my studies, which I was longing to do. Whether or not this was the main factor of my doing something which I knew was wrong – my marriage – I cannot say, but it must have been an important reason.

When I became engaged, my fiance had finished his studies as a chemical engineer, but had still to have more practice and to make a position for himself, so the marriage was planned for two or three years later. I used this time for attending courses at the Vienna University in art and history, but even then I felt that I was not doing what I actually wanted to do, which was to study medicine. My engagement lasted four years and I was married the day after my twenty-first birthday. My husband had a position in a paper factory, partly owned by his father,

- 20 -

in Rusemberck, which at that time was part of Hungary, but with a predominantly Slovak population. After the war it became part of Czecho-Slovakia.

My first child, Melitta, was born ten months later, on the 19th January 1904, and I was very happy with her. She was very attached to me as well as to her nannie, who was a good Slovakian peasant woman. At that time I learnt Slovakian, and spoke it fluently. Melitta was a beautiful and fairly easy baby and soon showed herself to be very intelligent.

I threw myself as much as I could into motherhood and interest in my child, and my mother, who had more or less lost her home through different circumstances, came to live with us, which was a very great comfort. I know all the time that I was not happy, but saw no way out.

Considering how little I had travelled as a girl, I had two important travels: one when Melitta was one year old, with my husband to Trieste, Abbazia and Venice, and the second more



impressive journey in May 1906 to Rome, Naples and Florence, which opened up a new world. I was entirely indefatigable about seeing paintings and sculptures, and these journeys, of which my husband also was very fond, gave me a good deal of happiness. My honeymoon, too, had been an experience along the same lines, because we travelled to Zurich and, on the way, went to Constanza. It was all very new and impressive to me, as I hardly travelled before.

Three years after Melitta's birth, my son Hans was born, on 2nd March 1907. He developed well and I also fed him. He showed in the early stages of his life a precociousness and intellectual ability which was quite outstanding. At eighteen months, he could speak Slovakian (I had spent the first three years in a Slovakian town, where my husband was engineer in a paper factory) and German, which I cultivated in the beginning, in such a way that he could turn from speaking German to me to speaking Slovakian to the nurse without any difficulty.

When Melitta was three years old, six weeks after Hans was born, my husband got a better position as director of several factories in Silesia,

- 21 -

and we lived in Krappitz, a small provincial town without any charm, and I felt very unhappy, as I could not find anyone with whom I could even converse. I was very much strengthened by my mother's living with us. This was a great help to me, as the incompatibility between the characters and views of myself and my husband was becoming increasingly obvious. I am glad to say that he liked her and never had an objection to her living with me, since she was a very retiring and quiet person. There was no trouble between him and her.

Then, partly because I felt unhappy there, he accepted a position which centred on Budapest, where he was also the director of several factories, and I found life entirely different. There were relatives of my husband there, to whom I became attached, and altogether life in Budapest, with theatres, parties and pleasant company, was in complete contrast to the three years I had spent in the little Silesian town, which seemed inhabited by narrow-minded people, with whom I had nothing in common.

My third child, Eric, was born a month before the first world war started and, when he was five years old we left Budapest. This war, from the Hungarian point of view, was carried out without any interest. People knew very well that the Austrian Hungarian monarchy was doomed, something I heard long before the war started. There was plenty of food for people who could pay for it, and the idea that was so important in the second world war in England, that one should not buy things when others could not afford them, did not exist. Civilians were in no danger, the war was happening somewhere else. When the short-lived but very stringent

Communist regime started in 1919 at the end of the war, we left Budapest and I went to live for a year in Slovakia with my parents-in-law, with whom I had always been on very good terms, especially my mother-in-law, and my husband found a position in Sweden. Having been by birth an Austrian subject, I had now become a Czecho-Slovakian subject. My husband, having settled in Sweden, soon managed to become a Swedish subject since he was not keen on being Czecho-Slovakian. In this way I became a Swedish subject, which, at a later date, was very useful to me. This was the preliminary of our actually parting from one another, and lasted until 1922, when we were divorced. I took with me my youngest son, who was

- 22 -

then only eight, and nominally I also had the right to have my other two children, but that was not practical at the time, as I was still financially dependent on my husband.

While living in Budapest I had become deeply interested in psychoanalysis. I remember that the first book of Freud's that I read was the small book on dreams (not "The Interpretation of Dreams") and, when I read it, I knew that that was it – that was what I was aiming at, at least during those years when I was so very keen to find what would satisfy me intellectually and emotionally. I entered into analysis with Ferenczi, who was the most outstanding Hungarian analyst. Technique at this time was extremely different from what it is at present and the analysis of negative transference did not enter. I had a very strong positive transference and I feel that one should not underrate the effect of that, though, as we know, it can never do the whole job.

During this analysis with Ferenczi, he drew my attention to my great gift of understanding children and my interest in them, and he very much encouraged my idea of devoting myself to analysis, particularly child analysis. I had, of course, three children of my own, at that time, and, as I said, I had not found that the information that education and understanding could provide could cover the whole understanding of the personality and therefore have the influence one might wish to have. I had always the feeling that behind that was something with which I could not come to grips. There is much that I have to thank Ferenczi for. One thing that he conveyed to me, and strengthened in me, was the conviction in the existence of the unconscious and its importance for mental life. I also enjoyed being in touch with somebody who was a man of unusual gifts. He had a streak of genius. Also he strengthened in me the desire to turn to child analysis and he carried it out in fact by telling to Abraham at the Congress in 1919 in the Hague.

I heard – a memory which is very important to me – Freud at a congress in 1917 between the Austrian and Hungarian societies, and I remember vividly how impressed I was and

how the wish to devote myself to psychoanalysis was strengthened by this impression. By 1919 I had already done some psychoanalysis with one child and I read a paper to the

- 23 -

Hungarian Psycho-Analytical Society, which aroused great interest (it was the first one in my book "Contributions to Psycho-Analysis". It was following this paper that I became a full member of the Hungarian Society. I never had any supervision.

I remember with gratitude Anton von Freund, who was most encouraging and quite convinced that here was a blossoming talent that should be used. I am sorry that he died young – of cancer – I always felt that we would have been friends and he remains one of the good figures in my life. On that occasion he put certain questions to me, which I could not answer at the time, but which in retrospect seem quite relevant to a deep understanding of children, which was then not so pronounced in me.

After I had lived with my parents-in-law, who were most hospitable, for a year, I decided to go to Berlin. By that time, the estrangement between myself and my husband had very much increased. My reason for going to Berlin was that I had met in the autumn of 1920 at the congress at the Hague, already as a member of the Hungarian Society, Abraham, who strongly encouraged me to settle in Berlin and to devote myself to child analysis, and provided me his support, a promise which, like others he made, he fully kept.

So I arrived at the beginning of 1921 in Berlin. My daughter, who had passed her matric in the Slovakian town where I had lived with my parents-in-law, joined me and my three children were with me. She went to Berlin University to study medicine, and I began slowly to gain ground in Berlin as a psycho-analyst. A description of how I soon got access to the deeper layers of the mind in children is given in my paper PLAY TECHNIQUE AND ITS HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE, in "New Directions". I have often been asked how it was that I tackled the children in the way I did, which was entirely unorthodox and, in many cases, in contrast to the rules laid down for the analysis of adults. I still cannot answer what made me feel that it was anxiety that I should touch and why I proceed in this way, but experience confirmed that I was right and, to some extent, the beginning of my play technique goes back to my first case.

My interest in children's minds goes back a very long way. I

- 24 -

remember that, even as a child of eight or nine, I was interested in watching younger children, but all that was still dormant until it became alive in my psycho-analytic work. Or, rather, it had become very much alive in my relations to my own children. Maybe the fact that many ideas

about education did not have the effect that I aimed at contributed to my conviction that there was something which lay deeper – the unconscious which has to be tackled if one wants to bring about changes in the difficulties of children. From 1922, when the divorce became effective, my practice in Berlin grew, and I had opportunities of analysing children, also some of my colleagues, and some of the fundamental approach which I used has remained true until today. No doubt much has been added, but this is all shown in my papers and books.

Dr Hug-Hellmuthⁱⁱ was doing child analysis at this time in Berlin (later she became the wife of Muller-Braunschweig) but in a very restricted way. She avoided completely interpretations, though she used some play material and drawings, and I could never get an impression of what she was actually doing, nor was she analysing children under six or seven years. I am quite sure that we had very little in common and she was most reluctant to have anything to do with me. I do not think it too conceited to say that I introduced into Berlin the beginnings of child analysis. I was successful in my work and I treated, though his analysis was broken off, a child sent by the school authorities. All this contributed to my practice widening. I believe that, if I had persisted in staying in Berlin and had had the further support of Abraham, child analysis on my own lines would have been stabilised.

So I worked on my own in Berlin and I only remember one important occasion on which I asked Abraham's advice. This was when the anxiety in a child grew in a way which frightened me. Abraham more or less advised me to go on, some quite important changes in the child happened, and it turned out that I had been at a climax and that a few days later the anxiety went down again. This experience has been definite in developing my methods of approach. I knew now that it was anxiety that one had to analyse, and that, if one could find the unconscious reasons for it, with all the implications, one could diminish it.

- 25 -

I met Ernest Jones at a congress in Salzburg in 1925, where I gave my first paper on the technique of child analysis, an approach which was entirely new, completely controversial and strongly doubted by many analysts. Ernest Jones was very much impressed by it and I remember that, when I asked whether he would publish a paper of mine in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis, he said he would publish a book if I wrote one. This was very encouraging and so was Abraham's impression of the value of my work with children. He was very cautious, the real scientist, who would weigh carefully the pros and cons, uninfluenced by emotion, but who seemed to feel that something here was growing which might be of great importance. It was unforgettable that, when I participated in 1925 in a congress, he said at the end of the paper I read (ERNA'S HISTORY), which later made one chapter in "The

Psychoanalysis of Children”, that the future of psycho-analysis rested with child analysis. He had never before expressed his opinion so strongly to me and, since I was really in those first years unaware of the importance of the contribution to psycho-analysis that I was making, his saying so came to me as a surprise. I felt that I was working in the only way one would work with children, though I was of course gratified by results and by some papers which I had already written. I did not evaluate my contributions in the way in which they have since by many people been judged and in which I now myself judge them, considering how much light they have thrown, not only on the child's mind, but on the whole development of the adult, and that they have become the approach by which really ill people can be cured or improved, and that many children who might never have been cured have been made better in this way.

In 1925 Ernest Jones, stimulated by the opinion of Mrs. James Stracheyⁱⁱⁱ, who at that time was in analysis with Abraham in Berlin, and Mrs. Riviere, who from the beginning took a great interest in my paper, invited me to give lectures on child analysis in England. By that time I had been able to have analysis with Abraham, feeling very strongly that what Ferenczi could not do might be done. This was a very important factor in my development. At this time I was still unhappy, feeling my divorce, and both in need of some help and driven by the urge to know

- 26 -

more. When I approached Abraham with the request for an analysis, he told me that it had become a principle with him not to analyse anyone remaining in Berlin. He was referring to some very unhappy situations which had resulted from broken-off analyses with colleagues who had become hostile to him. I don't know where I found the courage, but my answer was “Can you tell me of anyone in Berlin to whom I could look up in such a way that I can go to them for analysis?” He never replied to that question, but he accepted me for analysis. I had to wait a few months and the analysis started at the beginning of 1924 and came to an end when Abraham fell very ill in the summer of 1925 and died at Christmas of that year; a great pain to me and a very painful situation to come through.

To return to Ernest Jones' invitation to give lectures on child analysis, I had neglected to write the paper on my work with children in the form of lectures. I had six weeks to write six lectures, which were at the time translated into English by Mrs. Strachey and one or two other people who helped. In 1925 I had the wonderful experience of speaking to an interested and appreciative audience in London – all members were present at Dr Stevens' house^{iv} because at that time there was not yet an institute where I could give these lectures. Ernest Jones asked me whether I would answer in the discussion. Although I had learnt a lot of English privately and at school, my English was still not good and I remember well that I was half guessing what I

was asked, but it seemed that I could satisfy my audience in that way. The three weeks that I spent in London, giving two lectures a week, were one of the happiest times of my life. I found such friendliness, hospitality and interest, and I also had an opportunity of seeing something of England and I developed a great liking for the English. It is true that later on things did not always go on so easily, but those three weeks were very important in my decision to live in England. In 1926 Ernest Jones invited me to come for a year to England to analyse the children of some colleagues. It was first a question of six children, including Ernest Jones' two. I remember that my Berlin colleagues said that I was absolutely mad to undertake this, as it was sure to lead to catastrophe with

- 27 -

my colleagues, but I did not feel this was so. In fact apart from one case where I had some difficulty with the mother, things went quite well. I had already in Berlin started to analyse adults as well, and that I continued in London. After a few months Ernest Jones asked me, and here I think the influence of Mrs. Riviere and Mrs. Strachey also came in, if I would settle in London. I was quite free to decide about my future and I accepted his suggestion, in particular as, since Abraham's death in 1925 the Berlin society had begun to deteriorate and support for my work had become very questionable. Three months after I had come to England, I was able to take my son, Eric, whom I had left behind with the family of a schoolmaster in Frankfurt, to England. He was then twelve and a half and when he was thirteen and a half, after being tutored privately and at the Hall, he passed his examination into St Paul's, where he finished his schooling. My son, Hans, had chosen to be an engineer and paper-maker, and had become more or less independent from his father. My daughter Melitta had finished her medical studies, but decided to become an analyst, had married and settled with her husband in England in 1932.

When at the beginning of the thirties, there was a possibility for me in the United States, I did not even consider it. England had become my adopted motherland and since the situation in Austria, both from the analytical point of view and from other angles, was not attractive any more (in 1926 appeared Anna Freud's book, which started the everlasting controversy against me, and the Viennese society was extremely hostile to me and my work), there was nothing to attract me to live in Austria. My mother, who had lived with me, died in 1914, at the beginning of the war, and my only bond with Vienna was my sister, who lived there, but this tie was not strong enough to take me back. So more and more I have really accepted England as my country and went through the second world war with all the feelings of English people at that time. This was very much increased by Hitler having destroyed so many of my friends in various lands, and Germany having become a country I abhorred. In spite of so many

difficulties developing in a psycho-analytical society in England from about 1935 onwards, I have never regretted coming to England,

- 28 -

working here and founding a school of thought and approach to child and adult analysis, which I do not think will ever be killed by controversial trends. Within the limits of human capacity, I feel that I have done something which perhaps in the future may prove to have been a great contribution to the understanding of the human mind. All that is bound up with my attitude towards England, and I remember with gratitude Ernest Jones standing by me until 1935, when he began, even before the war, increasingly to retire from conflict.

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My memory is, as I have so often said, that I was in some ways spoilt and conceited, and I did not feel that I was completely understood. I certainly very much wanted praise and liked to be in the picture. In a sense I was the opposite of being shy and I was rather what one would call in German 'verlaut'. Another feature, which was linked with the desire for praise and admiration, was that I was very ambitious. From the moment that I entered school it was very important to me to get the best possible marks, and that attitude, I remember, I had until I went to the gymnasium. There I had begun to be very interested in the subjects themselves; I had very interesting teachers, very intelligent schoolmates, and I think my ambition had already abated there. When I started psycho-analytical work, I was, I think, still very ambitious; it is contradictory that, at the same time, I had no idea I was really putting forward entirely new contributions to theory and I really felt that that was something that was self-understood. I was not conceited at that time, because I felt that no other conclusions could be drawn in analysing children and in following what Freud had laid down. Nevertheless, for years to come, I still felt very ambitious, and the struggle which I had against my critics – this became very strong after Abraham's death and in particular when Anna Freud's book, which denigrated my work, appeared – referred not only to my work, but also to myself. That is to say, at the beginning of my psycho-analytical work, the old ambition was still there. The further I progressed the less it grew. My own psycho-analysis, which played such a large role in my development, must have contributed to that, because more and more I lost my personal ambition,

- 29 -

which probably applies more to the thirties, and concentrated on the interest of producing what I know to be an extremely important contribution to psycho-analysis. This change over from personal ambition to protecting my work must have gone with great changes to myself. There is



no doubt that I had become, from the beginning of my analytical work, dedicated to psycho-analysis, and the feeling that that was the main object to be protected diminished the old interest in personal ambition. The older I got, the less my personal ambition became, and it is true that personal experience contributed to my becoming resigned, and even resigned about the protection of my work, which I took really to be the protection of the development of psycho-analysis. For years I was still working and went to all the Congresses from 1922 onwards, except the one in 1936 in Marienbad, and always did my duty by psycho-analysis, but I became more and more doubtful whether my work would survive and whether the depth to which I was able to take psycho-analysis was something which many people could bear, and whether there were many people who would carry out analysis to such a depth. I became very sceptical as time went on about the survival of my work, but in recent years, with a group of outstanding colleagues, who have the capacity to protect this work and who can and will continue it after my death, I am again hopeful. In all these years up to now, I have actually never shirked my duty to psycho-analysis, even in recent years – I am speaking in November 1959, very near my 78th birthday – I have hardly ever cancelled a session and have attended nearly all meetings, even when I knew that the paper was not worth while, because I felt that in the discussion I might be useful and because I felt that my presence and my voice might have some influence on the younger people, even those who do not belong to this group.

That change from strong personal ambition to the devotion to something which is above my own prestige is characteristic of a great deal of change that went on in the course of my psycho-analytic life and work. When I abruptly finished my analysis with Abraham, there was much which had not been analysed and I have continually proceeded along the lines of knowing more about my deepest anxieties and defences. I have now a mixture of resignation and some hope that my work will perhaps after all

- 30 -

survive and is a great help to mankind. There are of course my grandchildren who contribute to this feeling that the work will go on, and when I speak of having been completely dedicated to my work this not exclude my also being completely dedicated to my grandchildren. Even now, when they have become much less close to me, I know that I have been a very important figure in the first few years of their lives and that this must have been of great benefit to them. All three loved me deeply until six or seven years old, and Hazel even up to nine or ten, and I believe that they have kept some affection for me, though unfortunately they are far less in contact with me; except Michael, who has in recent years become much closer to me again and

who I know has at least unconsciously, and perhaps partly consciously, the feeling that I am of great value and also that he can speak freely to me.....

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- ⁱ It is likely she meant 'His father', i.e. *her* grandfather.
- ⁱⁱ This is a curious passage, since Hermine Hug-Hellmuth worked in Vienna, the first woman in the Viennese Society; and she was never married to Carl Muller-Braunschweig, remaining a spinster (see G. Maclean and U. Rappen 1991 *Hermine Hug-Hellmuth: Her Life and Work* (London: Routledge). So far as I can ascertain these are the only inaccuracies in the autobiographical notes. They are rather glaring mistakes, and there may be a reason for it. Hug-Hellmuth was the centre of a couple of serious crises in the psychoanalytic world around 1920 – (i) she forged a supposed diary of a young girl, which confirmed psychoanalytic theories about sexual development, and (ii) she was murdered in 1924 by her adopted son whom she had brought up according to psychoanalytic principles. These incidents can be discovered in Maclean and Rappen (1991). It is not surprising that such incidents would impact with some disturbing effect on psychoanalysts in general, and on someone such as Melanie Klein especially interested in the impact of psychoanalytic ideas on children. There were in fact several other people in the Berlin Society who were working psychoanalytically with children at the time. One was Ada Schott who did marry Carl Muller-Braunschweig, in (I believe) 1925. Possibly the misattributed memory of Melanie Klein is understandable in view of the trauma and turmoil over the use of psychoanalysis with children at this time in the mid-1920s.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See *Bloomsbury/Freud*, which is the letters between James and Alix when she, Alix, was in Berlin during her analysis with Abraham in 1924-5, and which gives a view of the Berlin Society including Melanie Klein.
- ^{iv} This refers to Adrian Stephen, though MK spelled it incorrectly. He was the younger brother of Virginia Woolf (nee Stephen).