

The Psycho-Analysis of Children, by M. Klein

a. People / Organizations:

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b. Quotes:

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c. General Notes:

▪ Part 1 - The Technique of Child Analysis (pg. 1)

○ Chapter 1 - The Psychological Foundations of Child Analysis (pg. 3)

▪ **"The child expresses its phantasies, its wishes and its actual experiences in a symbolic way through play and games.** In doing so, it makes use of the same archaic and phylogenetically-acquired mode of expression, the same language, as it were, that we are familiar with in dreams; and we can only fully understand this language if we approach it in the way Freud has taught us to approach the language of dreams. Symbolism is only a part of it. If we wish to understand the child's play correctly in relation to its whole behaviour during the analytic session we must not be content to pick out the meaning of the separate symbols in the play, striking as they often are, but must take into consideration all the mechanisms and methods of representation employed by the dream-work, never losing sight of the relation of each factor to the situation as a whole. Early analysis of children has shown again and again how many different meanings a single toy or a single bit of play can have, and that we can only infer and interpret their meaning when we consider their wider connections and the whole analytic situation in which they are set. Rita's doll, for instance, would sometimes stand for a penis, sometimes a child she had stolen from her mother, and sometimes her own self. Full analytic impact can only be obtained if we bring these play-elements into their true relation with the child's sense of guilt by interpreting them down to the smallest detail. The whole kaleidoscopic picture, often to all appearances quite meaningless, which children present to us in a single analytic session, how they pass from playing with a toy to impersonating something with their own person, and then again return to playing with water, to cutting out in paper or drawing, how the child does this or that, why it changes its game and what means it chooses to express the content of its games—all these things are seen to have method in them and will become meaningful if we interpret them as we do dreams. **Very often children will express in their play the same things that they have just been telling us in a dream**, or will bring associations to a dream in the play which succeeds it. For **play is the child's most important medium of expression**. If we make use of this play technique we soon find that the child brings as many associations to the separate elements of its play as adults do to the separate elements of their dreams. These separate play-elements are indications to the trained observer; and as it plays, the child talks as well, and says all sorts of things which have the value of genuine associations. It is surprising how easily children will sometimes accept the interpretation and even show unmistakable pleasure in doing so. The reason probably is that in certain strata of their minds, communication between the conscious and the unconscious is as yet comparatively easy, so that the way back to the unconscious is much simpler to find. Interpretation often has rapid effects, even when it does not appear to have been taken in consciously. Such effects show themselves in the way in which they enable the child to resume a game it has broken off in consequence of the emergence of an inhibition, and to change and expand it, bringing deeper layers of the mind to view in it. And as anxiety is thus resolved and desire to play restored, analytic contact, too, becomes established once more. As the interpretation releases the energy which the child had to expend on maintaining repression, fresh interest in play is generated. On the other hand, we sometimes encounter resistances which are very hard to overcome. This most usually means that we have come up against the child's anxiety and sense of guilt belonging to deeper layers of its mind. The archaic and symbolic forms of representation which the child employs in its play are associated with another primitive mechanism. **In its play, the child acts instead of speaking.** It puts actions—which originally took the place of thoughts—in the place of words; that is to say, that 'acting out' is of utmost importance for it. In his 'From the History of an Infantile Neurosis', Freud writes: 'An analysis which is conducted upon a neurotic child itself must, as a matter of course, appear to be more trustworthy, but it cannot be very rich in material; too many words and thoughts have to be lent to the child, and even so the deepest strata may turn out to be impenetrable to consciousness?' If we approach the child patient with the technique of adult analysis it is quite certain that we shall not penetrate to those deepest levels; and yet it is upon reaching these levels that, for the child no less than for the adult, the success and value of analysis depends. But if we take into consideration how the child's psychology differs from that of the adult - the fact that its unconscious is as yet in close contact with its conscious and that its most primitive impulses are at work alongside of highly complicated mental processes—and if we correctly grasp the child's mode of expression, then all these drawbacks and disadvantages vanish and we find that we may expect to make as deep and extensive an analysis of the child as of the adult. More so in fact. **In child-analysis we are able to get back to experiences and fixations which, in the analysis of adults can often only be reconstructed, whereas the child shows them to us as immediate representations.**" (pg. 8-9)

▪ **"Neurotic children do not tolerate reality well, because they cannot tolerate frustrations. They protect themselves from reality by denying it.**

What is fundamental and decisive for their future adaptability to reality is their greater or lesser capacity to tolerate those frustrations that arise out of the Oedipus situation. In small children, too, an over-strong rejection of reality (often disguised under an apparent docility and adaptability) is, therefore, an indication of neurosis and only differs from the adult neurotic's flight from reality in its form of expression. For this reason one of the results of early analysis should be to enable the child to adapt itself to reality. If this has been successfully achieved, one sees in children, among other things, a lessening of educational difficulties as the child has become able to tolerate the frustrations entailed by reality." (pg. 12)

○ Chapter 2 - The Technique of Early Analysis (pg. 16)

▪ **"The phantasies and imaginative games which develop out of ordinary play with toys are of great significance.** In its games of make-believe the child acts out in its own person what in another, usually an earlier, stage of its analysis it shows by means of its toys." (pg. 34-35)

○ Chapter 3 - An Obsessional Neurosis in a Six-Year-Old Girl (pg. 36)

▪ See text

○ Chapter 4 - The Technique of Analysis in the Latency Period (pg. 60)

▪ **"The analysis of children in the latency period presents special difficulties.** Unlike the small child, whose lively imagination and savours of search and interrogation or touches on the impulses the unconscious more easily, children in the latency period have a very limited imaginative life, in accordance with the strong tendency to repression which is characteristic of their age; while, in comparison with the grown-up person, their ego is still undeveloped, and they neither have insight into their illness nor a desire to be cured, so that they have no incentive to start analysis and no encouragement to go on with it. Added to this is the general attitude of reserve and distrust so typical of this period of life—an attitude which is in part an outcome of their intense preoccupation with the struggle against masturbation and thus makes them deeply averse to anything that These peculiarities have the effect that we do not find a clear access just manage to keep under control." (pg. 60)

○ Chapter 5 - The Technique of Analysis in Puberty (pg. 83)

▪ **"Warding off and modifying anxiety, which is also an essential function of the ego in the case of the small child is, however, carried out with greater success by the more developed ego of the adolescent.** For he has developed his various interests and activities (sports and so on) to a

great extent with the object of mastering that anxiety, of over-compensating for it and of masking it from himself and from others. He achieves this in part by assuming the attitude of defiance and rebelliousness that is characteristic of puberty. This provides a great technical difficulty in analysis at puberty; for unless we very quickly gain access to the patient's affects - strong as they are at this age - which he principally manifests in a defiant transference, it may very well happen that the analysis will suddenly be broken off. I may say that in analysing boys of this age I have repeatedly found that they have anticipated violent physical attacks from me during their first sessions." (pg. 83)

- Chapter 6 - Neurosis in Children (pg. 99)
 - See text
- Chapter 7 - The Sexual Activities of Children (pg. 116)
 - "masturbation phantasies are not only the basis of all the child's play activities but a constituent of all its later sublimations" (pg. 117)
- Part 2 - Early Anxiety-Situations and Their Effects on the Development of the Child (pg. 127)
 - Chapter 8 - Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict and of Super-Ego Formation (pg. 129)
 - "what initiates the formation of the super-ego and governs its earliest stages are the destructive impulses and the anxiety they arouse." (pg. 143)
 - "The mechanisms of projection and expulsion in the individual are closely bound up with the process of super-ego formation" (pg. 147-148)
 - "If it is true that the super-ego is formed at such an early stage of ego development, which is still so far removed from reality, we must review the growth of object-relations in a new light. The fact that the image of his objects is distorted by the individual's own sadistic impulses has the following consequences: it not only puts a different complexion on the influence exerted by real objects and by his relations to them, on the formation of his super-ego, but, in contrast to the theory hitherto accepted, it also increases the importance of his super-ego formation in regard to his object-relations. When, as a small child, he first begins to introject his objects—and these, it must be remembered, are yet only very vaguely demarcated by his various organs—**his fear of those introjected objects sets in motion the mechanisms of ejection and projection**, as I have tried to show; **and there now follows a reciprocal action between projection and introjection, which seems to be of fundamental importance not only for the formation of his super-ego but for the development of his object-relations and his adaptation to reality**. The steady and continual urge he is under to project his terrifying identifications on to his objects results, it would seem, in an increased impulse to repeat the process of introjection again and again, and is thus itself a decisive factor in the evolution of his relationship to objects. The interaction between object-relation and super-ego also finds expression, I think, in the fact that at every stage of development the methods which the ego uses in its dealings with its object correspond exactly to those used by the super-ego towards the ego, and by the ego towards the super-ego and the id. In the sadistic phase the individual protects himself from his fear of his violent object, both introjected and external, by redoubling his own destructive attacks upon it in his imagination. Getting rid of his object would partly serve the purpose of silencing the intolerable threats of his super-ego. A reaction of this kind presupposes that the mechanism of projection is initiated along two lines—one by which the ego is putting the object in the place of the super-ego from which it wants to free itself, and another by which it is making the object stand for the id of which it also wants to be freed. In this way the amount of hatred which was primarily directed against the object is augmented by the amount meant for the id and the super-ego. Thus it would seem that in people in whom the early anxiety-situations are too powerful and who have retained the defensive mechanisms belonging to that early stage, fear of the super-ego, if for external or intra-psychic reasons it oversteps certain bounds, will compel them to destroy their object and will form the basis for the development of a criminal type of behaviour." (pg. 149-150)
 - "According to my view, **the child's fear of its introjected objects urges it to project that fear into the external world**. In doing this it equates its organs, faeces and all manner of things, as well as its internalized objects, with its external objects; and it also distributes its fear of its external object over a great number of objects by equating one with another." (pg. 154)
 - "The interaction between super-ego formation and object-relation, based on an interaction between projection and introjection, profoundly influences his development. In the early stages, the projection of his terrifying imagos into the external world turns that world into a place of danger and his objects into enemies; while the simultaneous introjections of real objects which are in fact well-disposed to him, works in the opposite direction and lessens the force of his fear of the terrifying imagos. Viewed in this light, super-ego formation, object-relations and adaptation to reality are the result of an interaction between the projection of the individual's sadistic impulses and the introjection of his objects." (pg. 155)
 - Chapter 9 - The Relations Between Obsessional Neurosis and the Early Stages of the Super-Ego (pg. 156)
 - "It should, moreover, be remembered that the stage of development of the ego in which these phantasies originate is an early one and that the child's relations to reality are as yet undeveloped and dominated by its phantasy life. A further reason may be found in the relative proportions of the child's size and strength compared with those of the adult and its biological dependence on him; for we see how much more strongly it manifests its destructive instincts towards inanimate things, small animals and so on. The fact that genital impulses, although hidden from view, already exert a restraining influence on the sadism of the young child, may contribute to an early lessening of the sadism expressed towards external objects. As far as can be seen, there exists in the quite small child, side by side with its relations to real objects, a relationship to unreal imagos which are experienced both as excessively good and as excessively bad, but on a different plane. Ordinarily, these two kinds of object-relations intermingle and colour each other to an ever increasing extent. (This is the process which I have described as an interaction between super-ego formation and object-relations.) But in the mind of the quite small child its real objects and its imaginary ones are still widely separated; and this may in part account for its not exhibiting as much sadism and anxiety towards its real objects as would be expected from the character of its phantasies." (pg. 158)
 - "In this connection the mechanism of splitting the imagos is important; the ego turns away from the object that threatens danger, but it turns towards the friendly object in an attempt to repair the imaginary injuries it has inflicted. The process of sublimation can now set in, for the restitutive tendencies of the individual towards this object are a fundamental motive force in all his sublimations, even his very earliest ones, such as quite primitive manifestations of the impulse to play. A precondition for the development of restitutive tendencies and of sublimations is that the pressure exerted by the super-ego should be mitigated and felt by the ego as a sense of guilt." (pg. 161)
 - Chapter 10 - The Significance of Early Anxiety-Situations in the Development of the Ego (pg. 184)
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by the ego as a sense of guilt. At the beginning of its development, the ego is subjected to the pressure of early anxiety-situations. Weak as it still is, the ego is exposed on the one hand to the violent demands of the id, and on the other, to the threats of a cruel super-ego, and it has to exert its powers to the utmost to satisfy both sides. All those activities which help the child to defend itself from danger, which refute its fears and which enable it to make restitution to its object, have, in the same way as the early manifestations of the impulse to play, the purpose of mastering anxiety in regard to dangers both from without and within, both real and imaginary. In consequence of the interaction of introjection and projection—a process which corresponds to the interaction of super-ego formation and object-relationship—the child finds a refutation of what it fears in the outer world, and at the same time allays its anxiety by introjecting its real, 'good' objects." (pg. 186)

- "My starting point was that anxiety stimulates the development of the ego. What happens is that in its efforts to master anxiety, the child's ego summons to its assistance its relations to its objects and to reality. Those efforts are therefore of fundamental importance for the child's adaptation to reality and for the development of its ego. **The small child's super-ego and objects are not identical**; but it is continually endeavouring to make them interchangeable, partly so as to lessen its fear of its super-ego, partly so as to be better able to comply with the requirements of its real objects, which do not coincide with the phantastic commands of its introjected objects. Thus the ego of the small child is burdened with the conflict between the super-ego and the id as well as with the conflicting demands of the super-ego itself which contains various imagos that have been formed in the course of development. In addition to all this the child has to cope with the difference between the demands of its super-ego and those of its real objects, with the result that it is constantly wavering between its introjected objects and its real ones-between its world of phantasy and its world of reality." (pg. 188)

d. Further Readings:

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