



England–France–South America: Melanie Klein’s correspondence (1951–1960)

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The history of psychoanalysis has paid much attention to Melanie Klein’s personal trajectory—from Vienna to Budapest, Berlin and London—and to her “controversial discussions” with Anna Freud, in the 1940s (Grosskurth 1986; King and Steiner 1991; Kristeva 2001). In contrast, relatively little attention has been paid to the circulation and the uneven reception of her ideas in other regions—although some works have studied what happened in countries such as Switzerland (Quinodoz 2013), France (Grosskurth 1986; Roudinesco 1997), and Argentina (Etchegoyen and Zysman 2005; Dagfal 2009b).

The 12 letters written by Melanie Klein that are reproduced in this issue are a resource that can be very helpful to expanding the historiography of her reception in both the French-speaking world and in South America. These historical processes were interconnected: the striking reception of Klein in Argentina boosted her expansion not only in Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, and Mexico, but also, in turn, in France (Dagfal 2009b, *in press*). The developments which occurred in Buenos Aires in the mid-1940s constitute a unique case, as most of the founding members of the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association (APA)—and some of their spouses—very rapidly became Kleinian. Significantly, some of these analysts were the first to publish texts from a Kleinian orientation in the French language (e.g. Ángel Garma, Enrique Pichon-Rivière, Arminda Aberastury, and Marie Langer) in the early 1950s. However, Klein herself would still wait until 1959 (a year before her death) to see the translation of her first book *The Psycho-Analysis of Children* (1932) in print. Even then, it is remarkable that the translation of Klein’s first two books into French (Klein 1959a; Klein et al. 1966) was partly made by European analysts who had trained in Buenos Aires: Marcelle Spira and Willy Baranger. In short, Klein’s reception in France was as late and difficult as her implantation in Argentina had been unexpectedly easy and fruitful. Notwithstanding this, the latter facilitated the former. Most of those mentioned above are among the recipients of the first set of six letters featured here, which address Klein’s reception in South America, particularly in Argentina and Uruguay. The second group of letters—another set of six—discuss the “odyssey” of the French translation of Klein’s “fundamental book.” They were sent to Jacques Lacan, who was given the translations rights in 1948, to Françoise Girard and Jean-Baptiste Boulanger—a young couple of analysts who obtained those rights in 1952—and to Daniel Lagache, the renowned psychoanalyst who was in charge of the series in which the book finally appeared. To my knowledge, none of these letters have been published in their original

form, even though some have been previously quoted or translated. The letters were generally dictated by Klein and typewritten by her secretary, and then manually corrected by Klein before sending them by air mail. Only in a few special cases were her letters entirely handwritten, but that did not happen with any of the 12 that are featured.

The period of this correspondence stretches from 1951 to 1960, which encompassed the last decade of Klein's life. On the one hand, she was at the height of her celebrity, attending all the IPA international congresses as a main speaker, along with Anna Freud (Amsterdam, 1951, London, 1953, Geneva, 1955, Paris, 1957, Copenhagen, 1959). Her communications at these events were carefully prepared and generally published in the IJP. These papers were frequently referenced, as well as the books she wrote during those years—*Envy and Gratitude* (1957), *Narrative of a Child Analysis* (1961)—and the collections in which she participated—*Developments in Psychoanalysis* (1952), *New Directions in Psychoanalysis* (1955). On the other hand, as active as she was, Klein was growing old and, as she describes in her unfinished *Autobiography* and theorizes in some of her posthumously published papers, feeling lonely (Klein 1959b, 1963). Her concerns about her health are present in most letters. There is a visible contrast between her intellectual strength and her physical exhaustion, which she tended to attribute to overwork.

The origin of these 12 letters

Copies of the correspondence between Melanie Klein and colleagues are very rare because, as Jean-Michel Quinodoz has pointed out, she had the habit of throwing her letters away. Before he published the 45 letters sent to Marcelle Spira, there were only a few other letters available (Quinodoz 2015). The photocopies of the three letters addressed to Elizabeth “Betty” Goode de Garma—one of them also included Arminda Aberastury as co-recipient—were given to me by Goode after an interview in Buenos Aires, in 2002 (a few months before her death). The copies of the two letters addressed to Marie Langer were recently sent to me from Mexico by her daughter, Verónica Langer, whose husband, José Luis González Fernández, along with José Perrés, had already published the translation with a commentary (Perrés and González Fernández 1990). The copy of the letter sent to Baranger was just given to me in Buenos Aires by his granddaughter, Florence Baranger-Bedel. It forms part of a larger donation to the National Library of Argentina made by her and her father, Denis Baranger. The copies of the letters sent to Jacques Lacan, Françoise Girard, and Jean-Baptiste Boulanger have just been digitized and are available in the Melanie Klein Collection at the Wellcome Library, London. Finally, the photocopies of the three letters sent to Daniel Lagache were given to me in Paris by the late Éva Rosenvlum (the editor of Lagache's *Oeuvres Complètes*), in 1999. I have quoted different parts of this correspondence before (Dagfal 2009a, 2009b, 2011), but it has never been published in its original form.

42, Clifton Hill,
St John's Wood,
London, N.W. 8.

13th December, 1951.

Dear Mrs Garma,

Thank you for your letter. I am very glad to hear that you and Dr Garma are coming to spend a month in London. We shall be looking forward to that. I suggest that you should choose the first month of your holiday for this. My lectures on child analysis will not start until the end of January; the first lecture is on Thursday, 24th January, and I shall of course be very pleased if you and your husband can come to them.

I shall keep in mind your wish to have some supervision with me, and I think your plan to bring with you for that purpose material from cases is excellent.

I have already mentioned your intentions to a few of my friends and I am sure that there will be possibilities of arranging discussion with them too.

I was gratified to hear that Dr and Mrs Pichon Riviere enjoyed their stay in London. I certainly was extremely pleased to get to know them, and I very much enjoyed the few discussions we had.

Yours very sincerely
Melanie Klein

Letter 1

June 25th 1952

Dear Betty and Arminda,

In our letter to Rodrigue, Paula Heimann and I have given in detail our reasons for not accepting your generous and kind invitation and we also expressed our disappointment at being unable to come. But I still feel the wish to tell you both (and both your husbands) how very sorry we are and how deeply we regret disappointing you.

I know that you have given much thought to this plan and taken a great deal of trouble over it, and it really is hard that in the end it did not come off. I deeply value, and so does Paula Heimann, your friendship and your genuine interest in my work, and it would have been a great satisfaction and pleasure to come to the Argentine and to be useful to you and your Group. I was also very much looking forward to getting to know your country and to enjoying your hospitality. Let us hope that this will be possible in the future under different circumstances.

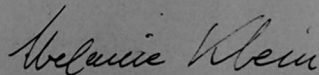
As you know, next year the International Psycho-Analytic Congress will be held in England. It would be very nice if both the Garmas and the Pichon-Rivieres would come to it and use this occasion for a longer stay in England.

I was very sorry, dear Arminda, that I could not send you a copy of my Congress paper; I had only one left and I need it for checking the proofs. But the paper will appear in the next Journal which should be out very soon.

I was very happy with the birthday number which you have probably seen by now. Altogether my seventieth birthday was made extremely happy by many signs of friendship and appreciation.

With best wishes to all four of you,

Yours



Letter 2

42 Clifton Hill,

St John's Wood,

London, N.W. 8.

20th February, 1953.

Dear Betty,

I was delighted to hear from Dr Segal about the arrival of your baby, and I send you and your husband my very best wishes and congratulations. I would have written earlier but I have been very pressed for time since I had promised to address the Child Psychiatry Section of the Royal Médico-Psychological Association. I gave them a paper on the psycho-analytic play technique and how it developed. I think the talk was quite successful. I have also had 'flu - a less enjoyable event - but I have now recovered.

I was of course very interested in all that Dr Segal has had to tell me about her stay in B.A. I should be pleased to hear from you again and also to know how your little girl develops.

I am sending you a book which appeared years ago and which has just been reprinted.

Yours ~~sincerely~~, with all

good wishes to you
and Dr Garma

Melanie Klein

Letter 3

Letters 1, 2, and 3 date from the period 1951–1953. The first, from 1951, is addressed to Betty Goode de Garma, Ángel Garma's second wife, who was a child analyst. Goode had met Klein in Zurich, at the International Congress of 1949, where she had even supervised a case with the Kleinian group (Goode de Garma 1992). Her husband, Ángel Garma, was

one of the founders of the APA and was its first president. He would visit Klein in 1952, along with Goode. Enrique Pichon-Rivière—another APA founding member—had already stopped by London with his wife, Arminda Aberastury, in 1951, a visit mentioned in that letter. Important to note is that Aberastury was the first Argentinian child analyst. She had established an epistolary exchange with Klein since 1945, mainly concerning practical questions of clinical practice (Fendrik 1993). She translated her “fundamental book” into Spanish in 1948 (Klein 1948b). Given their institutional and theoretical position, these two “primordial Kleinian couples” played a major role in the expansion of Kleinian psychoanalysis in South America.

The second letter, addressed to “Betty and Arminda” in 1952, shows Klein’s disappointment for not being able to accept their invitation to come to Argentina with Paula Heimann. At the same time, she invited the Garma and the Pichon-Rivières to attend the International Congress of 1953 that would be held in London. She apologized for not having sent the work she presented at the International Congress held in Amsterdam, “The origins of transference,” since it would soon be published in the IJP (Klein 1952). Finally, Klein shared her happiness for the “signs of love and appreciation” she received for her 70th birthday.

The third letter, addressed to “Betty” in 1953, is more personal. It acknowledges the arrival of Goode’s first daughter, of which Klein was aware through Hanna Segal, who had been in Buenos Aires and Montevideo in December 1952. Segal’s was the first visit of an English Kleinian to South America; yet, there would be many others (Bion’s, Heimann’s, Meltzer’s, etc.). Klein also wrote about a “quite successful” talk that she had given a few days before, on “the psycho-analytic play technique and how it developed.” In fact, it was a paper read before the Child Psychiatry Section of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association on 12 February 1953, that would be published by an American journal (Klein 1955).

TELEPHONE.
HAMPTSTEAD 8855.

Flat 2,
20, BRACKNELL GARDENS,
N.W. 3.

20th September 1957.

Dear Dr. Langer,

I was very glad to meet you and was only sorry that there was no occasion for having a fuller conversation with you.

I liked your paper very much but I think, as I have already indicated to you, that it would gain if you allowed more for the penis envy and castration complex of the woman. May I suggest that you re-read my chapter on the woman's development in "The Psycho-Analysis of Children".² My views on this point have not altered except that, as you rightly pointed out, I believe that all envy springs from the first relation to the mother. This, however, does not alter the fact that penis envy in woman plays an important role, though not as important as some people wish to make out.

I know you will not mind my drawing your attention to this again. It had occurred to me that that chapter might be of use to you in making your paper ready for print.

There were many things I should have liked to talk to you about and I hope you will come to London some time and then there will be more time to do so.

I had a very pleasant holiday following the Congress and a rest which was particularly needed because I found the Congress rather strenuous.

I apologize for writing in English, but I know that you are quite good at English and it is easier for me because I can dictate the letter.

With kind regards,

Yours
Melanie Klein

Letter 4

Part I
20 Bracknell Gardens,
London, N.W.3.
28th November 1957

Dear Marie,

I am again writing in English because, as I think I have explained before, it is quicker for me to dictate a letter. This may seem formal but it is not really meant to be.

I feel very gratified about your letter and I am glad to know that you found the reading of my chapter in 'The Psycho-Analysis of Children' rewarding. After all, this is one of the purposes of my writing. I think you will believe me if I say that my personal prestige is relatively unimportant to me in comparison with my wish to advance psycho-analysis and if I find people - and fortunately there are a few - whom I can help with my work, it makes up for a lot of disappointment through misunderstanding and neglect in psycho-analytic circles. I believe myself that the old Psycho-Analysis of Children is still of value, though of course I would now formulate certain things differently.

I wish you could come over to England for a year; there would be so much more opportunity for you to get a still greater understanding than you already have.

I received the copy of your paper. I think that, on the whole, the additions you made are all right and I do not think there is any need for alteration. Of course one could expand them and even improve on them, but the paper as a whole is based on such rich experience and is so interesting that I think it should be left as it stands.

I take it that you have sent another copy to Hoffer, and if you have not yet done so, this should be done very soon in order to get it into the number of the Journal which will contain the Congress papers. I should also be pleased to give it to Hoffer, but I do not know whether that is what you mean me to do.

It was a great pleasure to me to meet you personally and to know now with whom I am corresponding.

I am keeping quite well, but, as I told you, I am rather restricted by my need of a good deal of rest and wish I could work more than I do. However, I am getting on with my book, though at the moment I cannot say how long it is going to take me. I still hope that I may finish it by the summer, but I may be mistaken.

I have a few ideas about my next Congress paper.

Yours sincerely *and mit herzlichen*
Grüssen
The Melanie Klein

Letter 5

Letters 4 and 5 were sent to Marie Langer, an analyst trained in Vienna in the mid-1930s, while she was a member of the clandestine Austrian Communist Party. In 1936, with her companion, she became a member of the International Brigades, as a volunteer physician in the Spanish Civil War, before going into exile in Montevideo and later in Buenos Aires. In 1942, she was among the founding members of the APA, of which she would be president in the 1960s, leaving aside other political interests until the 1970s. As soon as she arrived in

Buenos Aires, she got hold of the original version of *Die Psychoanalyse des Kindes*, which allowed her to help Arminda Aberastury with her translation, who had only been working with the English version (Langer 1989). When Langer met Klein, at the International Congress held in Paris, in 1957, she was already a Kleinian with a solid background and a 15-year clinical practice. She had also written a very Kleinian book on motherhood and sex (Langer 1951). Klein and Langer had grown up in the same city and spoke the same mother tongue, which probably contributed to them getting along very well both during the congress and later in their written exchanges.

Letter 4 was sent by Klein on 20 September 1957, just a few weeks after the Paris Congress, commenting on the paper Langer had presented there. It is the most theoretical letter of all the correspondence included in this section. Langer's presentation had dealt with the psychological causes of sterility. In seven out of eight cases discussed, she had found that the hostility to a fertile mother and the inability to identify with her were a common trait. However, after reading *Envy and Gratitude* (Klein 1957), published in June, the Austro-Argentinian analyst wanted to make more precise the singularity of the emotions experienced towards the fertile mother, considering that they had a causal value. Was it hatred, jealousy, or envy that was at stake? Following Klein's footsteps, she came to the conclusion that envy was the primary emotion. However, it was not the Freudian penis envy, but the Kleinian breast envy, related to the mother. Langer concluded that hostile feelings towards the mother, present in most sterile patients, were hiding primary invidious phantasies (Langer 1958).

Far from being flattered by Langer's admiring work, Klein asked her to allow "more for the penis envy and the castration complex of the woman." Even if she believed that all envies sprang from the first relation to the mother, for her, that did not alter "the fact that penis envy in women plays an important role ...". Therefore, she suggested that Langer re-read the chapter dedicated to a woman's development in *The Psycho-Analysis of Children*. At last, before talking about her holiday rest, she expressed her hope that Langer could come to London in order to talk with her about "many things." She even apologized for writing in English, since she could not dictate a letter in German to her secretary.

Klein's following letter (# 5) dated from 28 November 1957. It was more personal—it began by "Dear Marie" and no longer by "Dear Dr. Langer." She was gratified by the fact that re-reading her book had been helpful for Langer. That made up "for a lot of disappointment through misunderstanding and neglect in psycho-analytic circles." Klein even invited her to spend a year in England, as she had done in 1949 with Elizabeth Goode de Garma. "There would be so much more opportunity for you to get a still greater understanding than you already have." As for Langer's paper, she thought it was ready to be published in the IJP issue which would contain the Paris Congress works: "... the paper as a whole is based on such a rich experience and is so interesting that I think it should be left as it stands." It would be difficult to find another letter so complimentary written by Klein to any other "foreign" colleague. With Arminda Aberastury and Marcelle Spira, for example, even though she encouraged them to publish in different journals—including the IJP—she tended to be more critical on a theoretical level (Fendrik 1993; Quinodoz 2015). In any case, she was happy to invite each of them to spend some time in London.

2/20 Bracknell Gardens,

London, N.W.3.

19th September 1958.

Cher Baranger,

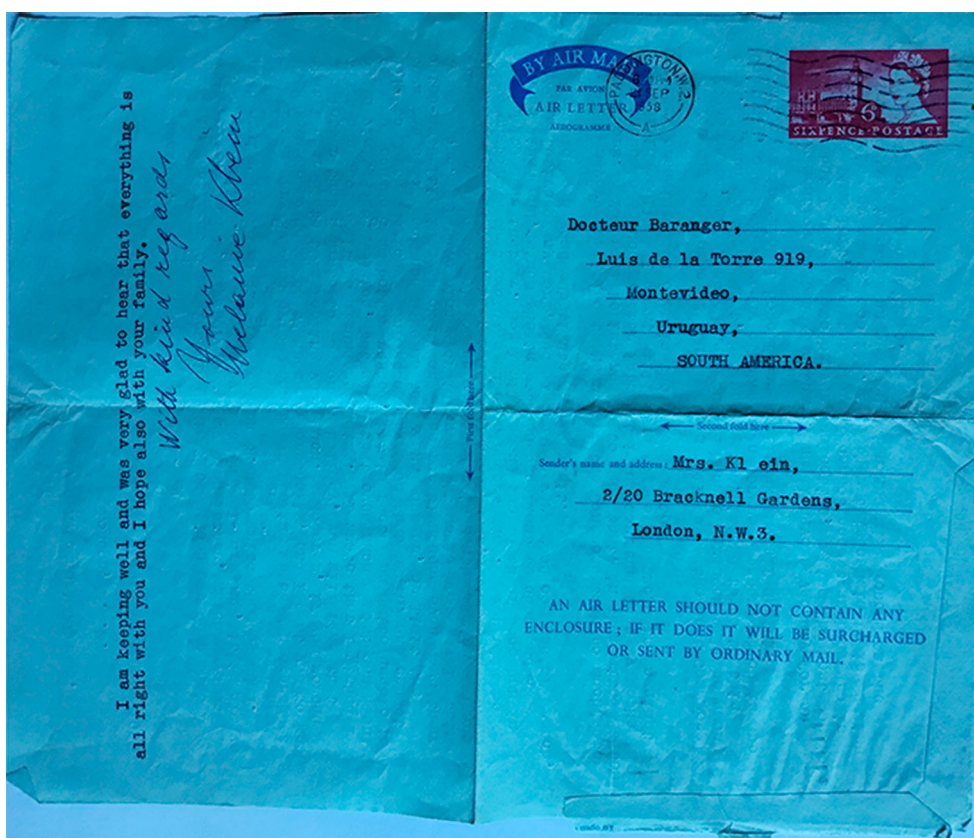
The fact that I am dictating this letter does not mean that I *feel* ~~think of you~~ less warmly ~~than~~ your very kind letter, which gave me great pleasure. As I am already in the middle of work, it is always much easier for me to dictate letters than to write them by hand.

I was very touched by the warmth of feeling which you expressed both towards my work and towards me personally, and I want you to know that I appreciate this feeling very much. However, if you reread the letter that I wrote to you on my holiday, you will find that there has been a little misunderstanding. I wrote that I wished I could visit South America, but added that even such a wish could only come up because I am better rested; ~~but~~ in fact I am quite unable to ~~come~~ *go* to South America. Unfortunately (from that angle) one cannot turn the clock back and make me ten years younger, or limit the osteo-arthritis in my back which makes for tiredness even more than my age does. I have plenty of ideas and it would be a lovely thing for me to be able to help those colleagues in South America who are interested in my work, but, in the circumstances, I have to husband my strength and that excludes such an undertaking. You will be pleased to hear that Dr. Segal will spend the month of December in Buenos Aires and, since she is both an excellent teacher and a representative of my work, and also has a very good command of French, she should be a good substitute for my visit.

I was very gratified to hear that the Congress took so much note of my work. You will be interested to know that, in the United States too, there is a much greater interest in my work and that my books are selling well. I might still live to see the prejudice against my work breaking down even in the United States.

You say that some of your members will go to the next Congress in Copenhagen, and I hope that you and Madame Baranger will be among them. Then we shall meet, because I, too, intend to go to this Congress, and have already started on a Congress paper, which is one of the ways in which I hope I can still make myself useful.

I may mention that next autumn I shall have a vacancy for an analysis, but I have now to be very selective, making the best possible use of the time left, and therefore I cannot accept anybody who is not promising or who is too ill. Whether this candidate is English or from abroad is still an open question and will depend on the personality of the candidate.



Letter 6 (page 2)

The last letter of the first group was sent to Willy Baranger, a French philosopher born in Algeria who trained in Argentina as a psychoanalyst in his mid-twenties. Along with his wife, Madeleine Coldefy-Baranger, he moved to Montevideo in 1954, where he would become a training analyst and a co-founder of the *Asociación de Psicoanálisis del Uruguay* (APU). Since 1948, he had carried out important editorial roles, first, as an assistant to Arnaldo Rascovsky—the director of the *Revista de Psicoanálisis*—and secondly as a translator for Ángel Garma. Baranger helped Garma have his books published in French in the *Bibliothèque de psychanalyse et de psychologie clinique*, a series created by Daniel Lagache in the Presses Universitaires de France (PUF) (Dagfal 2009b). It is very likely that Garma recommended Baranger to Klein, who, as I will show later, was still trying very hard to get her first book published in the same series. However, Garma was not the only one to talk to Klein about Baranger. Her correspondence with Marcelle Spira—a Swiss analyst who had been analysed in Buenos Aires by Marie Langer before returning to Geneva—also pointed her in that direction:

Thank you very much for letting me know about Baranger, who I have been told is a very good translator and has been helping, I think, in the translation of my “Contributions” into Spanish. I have mentioned his willingness to translate the “New Directions” to [Daniel] Lagache ... (Letter from M. Klein to Marcelle Spira, 29 March 1956; in Quinodoz 2015, p. 53).

In fact, Baranger wanted to translate the *Developments in Psycho-Analysis* into French, and he was already working on the Spanish translation of her *Contributions* (Klein, 1948a). In time, he would do both, with the help of his wife Madeleine. However, the books would not be published in Klein's lifetime (Klein 1964, 1968). A year after her letter to Spira, she wrote to Jean-Baptiste Boulanger (the main translator of her first book into French): "Dr. Baranger in Montevideo and his wife are working very energetically on the [French] translation of 'Developments in Psycho-Analysis' and it would be an enormous help if you could let them have that glossary that you gave Madame Spira" (June 28th, 1957). This tells us that Baranger was already working for Klein right before the Paris Congress, where they probably met briefly—the Frenchman attended the meeting with his wife and José Bleger, another renowned analyst of the second Argentine generation (Baranger 2018). It seems from the content that both exchanged a couple of letters before the one published in this issue (letter 6), where Klein expressed her appreciation for "the warmth of feeling" shown by Baranger.

In her response, strangely enough, Klein did not refer to the translations. She focused instead on clarifying a misunderstanding: she wished to go to South America, but was not really able to, considering her health condition. Instead, she told Baranger that Hanna Segal would go once more to Buenos Aires, in December 1958. She also let him know that her books were "selling well" in the US and invited him to attend the Copenhagen Congress, in 1959, with his wife. Finally, she told him that she would have a "vacancy for an analysis" in the autumn, and that she had to be "very selective, making the best possible use of the time left." Was she subtly inviting him to start an analysis with her? Didn't she know that, in spite of his youth, he was already a training analyst, analysed by Pichon-Rivière? Or was she just asking him to help her to find a good candidate?

In the future, Baranger would become one of the most original analysts of South America, using freely his Kleinian background—and combining it with other theories—to address new clinical problems (Pieczanski and Pieczanski 2014). Today, the library of the APA carries his name.

TELEPHONE
MAIDA VALE 2794.

42, CLIFTON HILL,

ST. JOHN'S WOOD, N.W.8.

London, 3rd January 1952.

Chère Madame,

Thank you very much for your letter. I hope that you will forgive me for writing to you in English but it comes to me so much more easily.

I need not tell you how interested I am in the contents of your letter. Of course I remember very well our talk in Zürich and your sending me a specimen of your translation. I was even at the time much impressed by the great interest in my work which your whole attitude denoted.

I spoke to Dr Diatkine last August at the Amsterdam Congress and he seemed determined then to carry out the translation which Dr Lacan had in fact handed over to him. Dr Diatkine told me that he would keep me informed of the progress, and as I did not hear from him I wrote to him on November 21st, but did not receive a reply. Of course I became apprehensive that this translation had again met with serious obstacles. It therefore comes to me as a great relief to hear that you and Dr Boulanger have undertaken to carry on that work. It gives me hope that after all this book will actually become accessible to the French public, a matter which needless to say I have very much at heart.

I can assure you that I fully realise the difficulties which you indicate in your letter. You may be certain that I shall not get in touch with anybody about the translation until I have seen you. With your consent I think I shall find a way to make it quite clear to Dr Lacan that I wish the translation to be entirely entrusted to you and your husband.

January 20th is convenient for me and I shall be very glad if you and your husband will come and have lunch with me at 12.45. I hope that this will give us plenty of time

to discuss the whole arrangement before you have to leave for Kensington.

Let me thank you again very heartily. I am much looking forward to seeing you again and to meeting Dr Boulanger.

With kindest regards and all good wishes for the New Year,

Yours sincerely,

Helene Klein

P.S. It may make it easier for you to find my house if you remember that N.W. 8 is St John's Wood.

TELEPHONE
MAIDA VALE 2794.

42, CLIFTON HILL,
ST. JOHN'S WOOD, N.W.8.

22nd January, 1952.

Cher Dr Boulanger,

Here is the agreement which we discussed, and I am also writing to Dr Lacan and Professeur Lagache to make it quite clear that you and Madame Boulanger have got the exclusive rights for the translation.

I very much enjoyed meeting you and your wife and feel that we have established a very satisfactory relation. I have already glanced through the translation of the 6th chapter but have not yet compared it with the original. However I can already say that I am very happy about it; it reads well, expresses the meaning correctly, and is a good translation.

I wish to thank you again for undertaking this task. I appreciate the amount of work and devotion needed to carry it out, and am grateful for that.

With best wishes to Madame Boulanger and yourself,

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Klein

TELEPHONE
MAIDA VALE 2794.

42, CLIFTON HILL,

ST. JOHN'S WOOD, N.W.8.

Extract from letter written by
Mrs Melanie Klein to Dr Jacques Lacan,
dated 22nd January, 1952.

'I am writing to tell you that I have transferred the exclusive right and full authority to translate into French The Psycho-Analysis of Children to Dr and Madame J B Boulanger, who are going to carry out this work by themselves. At the same time I am withdrawing from you the right to translate The Psycho-Analysis of Children given to you in my letter of 2nd November, 1948. I need not go into details to explain my decision which is amply justified by the fact that this translation has been in your hands for over three years without being finished.'

Letter 9

The second group of letters—from 7 to 12—deals, above all, with the difficult reception of Melanie Klein in France. Four of them (7, 8, 9, and 11) are mainly dedicated to the different obstacles related to the French translation of *The Psycho-Analysis of Children*, whose publication took more than a decade, spanning from 1948 to 1959. The other two letters (10 and 12) are chiefly related to the possible publication of other works. Letters 7, 8, and 9 give new details about a story that has already been told: the complex game of seduction, misunderstandings, and disappointment between Klein, Jacques Lacan, and two of his

disciples (Grosskurth 1986; Roudinesco 1997; Kristeva 2001). Sometime during 1948, Klein gave Lacan the rights to translate her first book into French. However, without telling her, he bestowed the translation to one of his analysands: René Diatkine, who did a good part of the work based on the original version. Around the same time, in 1949, Françoise Girard, one of Lacan's followers, asked for Klein's permission to translate the same book, which she refused. At the Amsterdam Congress of 1951, Diatkine told Klein that it was him who had been translating her book and not Lacan, who seemed to have lost his translation. After that incident, Lacan invited Françoise Girard to translate the second part, along with her Canadian husband, Jean-Baptiste Boulanger. They also worked hard but, by the end of the year, they found out that Lacan did not even have the first part of the translation, which Françoise Girard explained to Klein in a letter she sent her on 31 December 1951.

The three letters sent by Klein to different recipients in January 1952 (7, 8, and 9) tried to quickly straighten out this confusion. In the first one (letter 7), addressed to Girard, she summarized the story, and invited the Boulangers to meet her in London in order to "discuss the whole arrangement." Two days after the meeting with Girard and her husband, on 22 January, she wrote to them to say that she was also writing letters to Daniel Lagache and Jacques Lacan to make it clear for them that the Boulangers had the exclusive rights for the French translation. Lagache was included as an addressee since the book was meant to be published in the series he directed at the PUF. Lacan's inclusion was obvious: since he had obtained the rights in 1948, Klein had to withdraw them from him. In letter 9, which is an extract of the letter she wrote to Lacan, without her signature but with her original heading, she says: "I need not explain my decision which is amply justified by the fact that this translation has been in your hands for over three years without being finished."

C P.

TELEPHONE.
HAMPSTEAD 8953.

20, BRACKNELL GARDENS,

N. W. 3.

19th December 1957.

Cher Lagache,

I am turning again to you for help. Madame Spira has written to me that she will have my "Contributions..." ready for the summer, which actually I think means to come out in the autumn. She has written to Payot, who, in a very polite way, have refused to publish the book. The reason he gives is that he already has a great number of books on this subject. Could you suggest to me another publisher? Baranger is also getting ahead with the translation of the "Developments ...". I do not want to repeat myself, but you know that I feel very badly about the Press Universitaire, ~~who~~ are willing to postpone the further publications for years, and I have no time to wait so long. If you could find another respectable publisher, *then* I shall first try again the Press Universitaire, but I have no idea how to find a publisher. The trouble is, of course, that my name is not known in France, and this makes it difficult to find a publisher. - *My books are now selling well in U.S.A.*

I am keeping fairly well and forging ahead with my book. At the moment I am feeling in need of a rest and looking forward to a fortnight's holiday.

With all good wishes to you and your family for a happy Christmas and New Year,

Yours ever

Melanie Klein

TELEPHONE,
HAMPSTEAD 8853.

FLAT 2,

20, BRACKNELL GARDENS,

N.W. 3.

London
28th March 1959.

Cher Lagache,

It gave me great pleasure to receive the first copy of "The Psycho-Analysis of Children" from you with your kind inscription, and I thank you very much for the help you have given me in this matter. The book looks quite attractive and I hope it will help to get my work better known in France and also benefit some section of the French population. In any case, it is the fulfilment of a wish which I have had for the last 26 years. Need I say more?

You know that I am grateful for your friendship and your permanent interest in my work. This encourages me to ask you quite frankly what are the chances for the publication of my next book. You wrote to me some months ago that you would know more later on and I take it that you are waiting to see whether "The Psycho-Analysis of Children" is successful, which might influence the Presses Universitaires to publish a second book of mine. You may remember that you thought that, if I found another publisher, it would encourage the Presses Universitaires to publish a second book. I wonder what you are thinking of this now.

My "Envy and Gratitude" has been very successful both in England and America. I had a collection of reviews from the United States which show that it is interesting to various circles, not necessarily psycho-analytical ones, and the same is true of England. I have recently had a review by a lecturer in philosophy at the London University, which, in a most lucid way, describes my work, and I have been invited to give a paper to the Anthropological and Sociological Department of the University of Manchester, as part of a series of lectures from outsiders. They asked me to choose my own subject, without necessarily referring to sociology. So it seems that my work is making its way after all.

I hope that you and your family are well and shall be glad to hear from you again and to know about your plans.

My paper for the Congress at Copenhagen is ready. Its title is "On the Sense of Loneliness".

With all good wishes

Yours

Melanie Klein

Flat 2,
20 Bracknell Gardens,
London, N.W.3.
13th May 1960.

Cher Lagache,

I have so far not replied to your letter, because I was not sure when the translation of "Contributions to Psycho-Analysis" was going to be finished. I have now heard from Madame Spira that she has made a third revision of the translation and that all she has to do now is to translate the index. I can therefore assume with some certainty that the translation of my book "Contributions to Psycho-Analysis" will be available in the autumn, and I shall be very grateful if you can do something in the matter of publication.

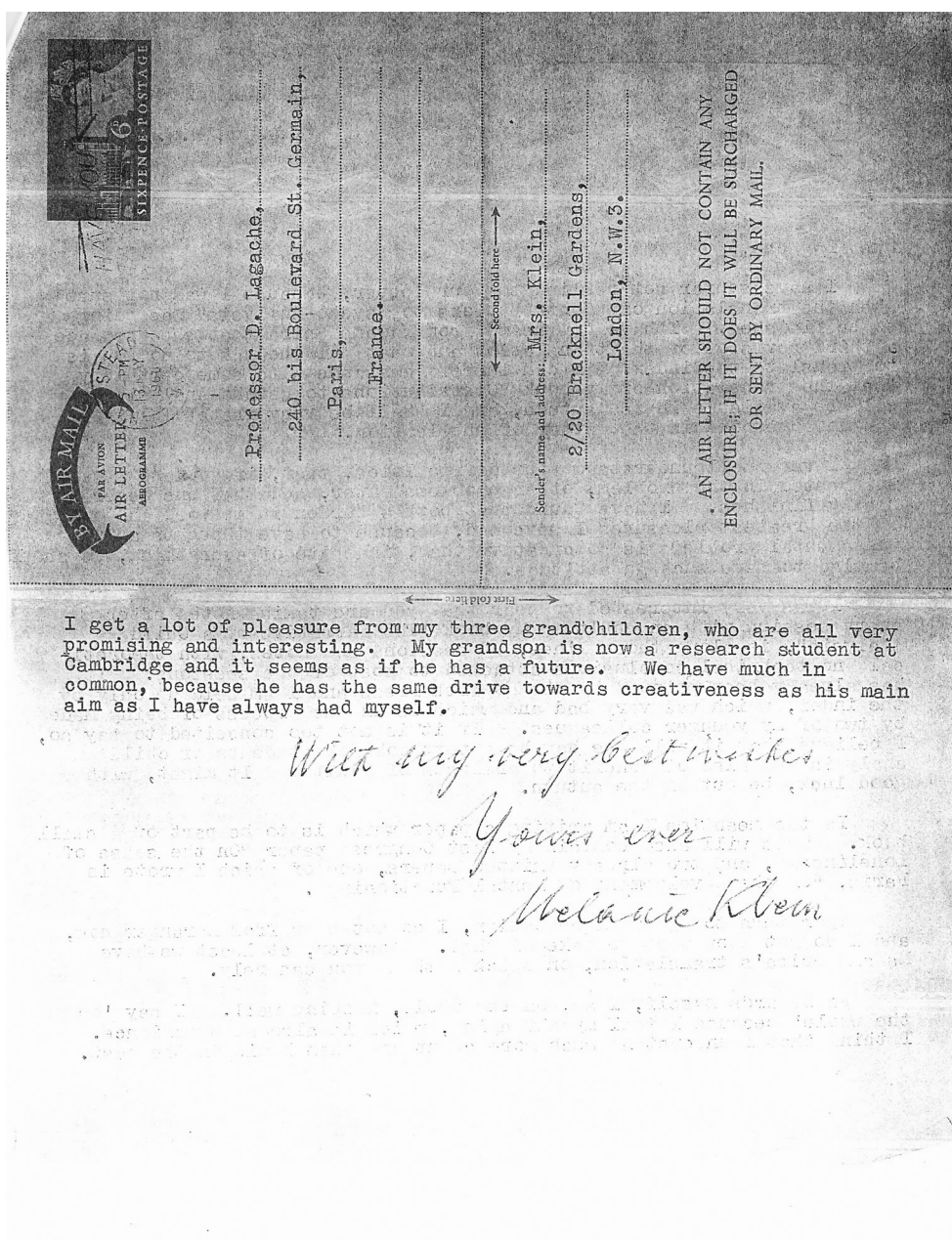
I very well understand your difficulties, that, if you are interested in one problem, other problems enter, and that one never really finishes. I have found that both a burden in my work and one of the greatest pleasures I have had, because to have thoughts about fundamental problems is so creative that, in spite of everything, we should be glad to have such an attitude.

I was very interested to hear that you are taking notes after every session with an adult. My book "The Narrative of a Child Analysis", is along those lines, 93 sessions and notes, with theoretical and technical conclusions attached to most of the sessions. It has already been printed by the Hogarth Press and I am held up only by the index, which was very bad and which is in the process of being made *de la* by two of my younger colleagues. If it is not too conceited to say so, I believe that it will one day be a textbook for students of child analysis and also of benefit to analysts of adults. It might, with good luck, be out in the autumn.

In the meantime I am writing a paper which is to be part of a small book. This will also contain my last Congress paper "On the sense of Loneliness", and two already printed papers, one of which I wrote in Paris, "On the Development of Mental Functioning".

To return to my own translation, I do not hear from Baranger now, and I do not know what to make of that. However, at least we have Madame Spira's translation, on which I think you can rely.

As regards myself, I am, on the whole, keeping well. I say 'on the whole' because I feel myself aging, which is also an experience. I think that I understand much more about age than I did in the past.



Letter 12 (page 2)

After the agreement with the Boulangers, many things happened concerning the French translation. In 1953, Daniel Lagache (and also Lacan) broke up with the *Société Psychanalytique de Paris* (SPP) and founded a new association presided by Lagache: the *Société française de Psychanalyse* (SPF). Supposedly, the new institution was more “progressive,” and was supported by Klein, even though its members lost their affiliation to the IPA. Lagache, nonetheless, kept his post as director of the series *Bibliothèque de psychanalyse et de psychologie clinique* in the PUF, where Klein expected to publish at least

three books. Meanwhile, the Boulangers moved to Canada, where they participated in the creation of the Canadian Society of Psychoanalysis. Unexpectedly, Françoise Girard died after a surgery in 1954, leaving her widower as the only translator. As he was not able to meet the established deadlines, Klein asked him to accept the help of Marcelle Spira, who was translating Klein's *Contributions* in Geneva, while Willy Baranger was "getting ahead" with the *Developments* in Montevideo. Those two works plus her "fundamental book" were supposed to be published by the PUF. However, according to letter 10 (19 December 1957), the publisher seemed to be willing to postpone the publication for a few years. That is why Klein was asking for Lagache's help. She could not wait for such a long time and she needed "another respectable publisher." However, Spira had told her that Payot was not interested. "The trouble is, of course, that my name is not known in France, and this makes it difficult to find a publisher."

The letter Klein wrote to Lagache on 28 March 1959 (letter 11) was a much happier one. Her first volume had just been released, and she was grateful for Lagache's help. "The book looks quite attractive and I hope it will help to get my work better known in France ... " Nonetheless, she was already thinking of the future, and she wondered if and when her next book would be published. "I take it that you are waiting to see whether 'The Psycho-Analysis of Children' is successful ... " Klein did not miss the opportunity to let him know how successful her *Envy and Gratitude* had been, keen to promote her work. "I had a collection of reviews from the United States which show that it is interesting to various circles, not necessarily psycho-analytical ones, and the same is true of England." The remaining letter from Klein to Lagache—the last one of all—would be sent more than a year later, on 13 May 1960. In that final letter (# 12), she announced that Marcelle Spira's translation of *Contributions* would be ready for the autumn, although she had not heard from Baranger. However, his translation of *Developments* would only be published six years later (Klein et al. 1966), while Spira's version of *Contributions* would never be printed. Instead, there would be another translation, by Marguerite Derrida, published by Payot, the same editor that had refused it in 1957 (Klein 1968).

Beyond editorial matters, this is the only letter where she had an exchange with Lagache about clinical questions. She told him she was interested in the fact that he took notes after every session with an adult. "My [forthcoming] book 'Narrative of a Child Analysis' is along those lines. 93 sessions and notes, with theoretical and technical conclusions attached to most of the sessions" (Klein 1961). In a certain way, it seems she could not stop selling her work. Yet, the ending was more personal. "As regards myself, I am, on the whole, keeping well. I say 'on the whole' because I feel myself aging, which is also an experience. I think I understand much more about age than I did in the past." She would die just four months later, from colon cancer complicated by a hip fracture. According to Grosskurth (1986), she fell out of bed because she did not want her authoritarian night nurse to stay in the room.

Final comments

The 12 letters I have just presented very briefly are helpful to outline the uneven map of Klein's reception in the Spanish-speaking and the French-speaking worlds. Even if this correspondence was only addressed to Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Paris, it includes quite heterogeneous recipients from four different countries, to whom Klein wrote in diverse

manners. In most of the cases, the recipients had adopted Klein as a central theoretical reference, which made them a part of a group whose own founder considered to be as marginal as valuable for the future of psychoanalysis. In other cases, Klein wrote to her equals, asking for help in the diffusion of her works. Finally, all her correspondence shows the importance she attached to the transmission of her ideas in the last decade of her life, either in training, in print, or in clinical work.

I hope these 12 letters can be used by those who are interested in the history of psychoanalysis to shed new light on the unique history of the Kleinian movement. These sources should be interpreted in connection with other sources, such as the Klein–Spira correspondence (Quinodoz 2015) and the thus far almost unexplored correspondence between Klein, Françoise Girard, and Jean-Baptiste Boulanger, which is available online on the Wellcome Library site.

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