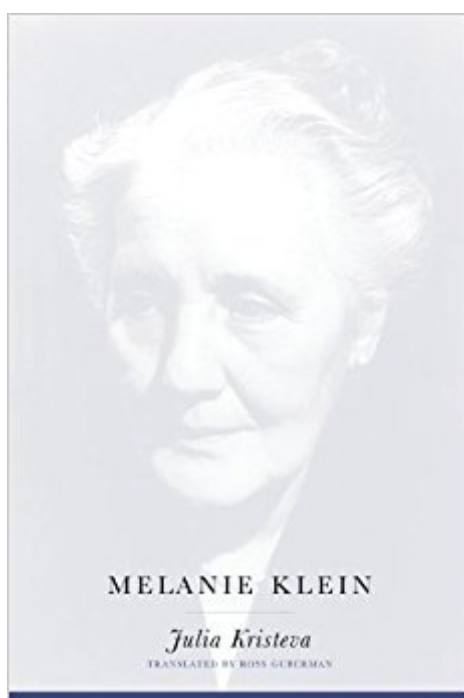


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Melanie Klein (European Perspectives: A Series In Social Thought And Cultural Criticism)



Synopsis

To the renowned psychoanalyst, philosopher, and linguist Julia Kristeva, Melanie Klein (1882–1960) was the most original innovator, male or female, in the psychoanalytic arena. Klein pioneered psychoanalytic practice with children and made major contributions to our understanding of both psychosis and autism. Along the way, she successfully introduced a new approach to the theory of the unconscious without abandoning the principles set forth by Freud. In her first biography of a fellow psychoanalyst, the prolific Kristeva considers Klein's life and intellectual development, weaving a narrative that covers the history of psychoanalysis and illuminates Kristeva's own life and work. Kristeva tells the remarkable story of Klein's life: an unhappy wife and mother who underwent analysis, and without a medical or other advanced degree became an analyst herself at the age of 40. In examining her work, Kristeva proposes that Klein's "break" with Freud was really an attempt to complete his theory of the unconscious. Kristeva addresses Klein's numerous critics, and, in doing so, bridges the wide gulf between the clinical and theoretical worlds of psychoanalysis. Klein is celebrated here as the first person to see the mother as the source of not only creativity, but of thought itself, and the first to consider the place of matricide in psychic development. As such, Klein is a seminal figure in the evolution of the provocative ideas about motherhood and the psyche for which Kristeva is most famous. Klein is thus, in a sense, a mother to Kristeva, making this book an account of the development of Kristeva's own thought as well as Klein's.

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Customer Reviews

Klein (1882-1960) was internationally known as the mother of child analysis and a reformer in the field of Freudian psychoanalysis. Her contribution came via analysis of her own children and emphasized the darker side of object relations: envy, sadism, and Thanatos. She was born in Hungary, trained in Berlin, and had great influence in England after emigrating there, dividing the psychoanalytic profession between Anna Freud and herself. This intellectual biography is the second volume of "Female Genius: Life, Madness, Words," a trilogy by psychoanalyst and critic Kristeva (linguistics, Univ. of Paris). (Hannah Arendt, published last summer, was Volume 1; the forthcoming Colette will be Volume 3.) While the language is clear, it is riddled with psychoanalytic jargon and is appropriate for cognoscenti who admire Freud and want to delve into the work of an audacious and difficult follower. Kristeva, a formidable cultural historian and critic, brings a rich mix of data and ideas for psychoanalytic theorists, but Phyllis Grosskurth's *Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work* (Jason Aronson, 1995) is much more suited to the general reader. E. James Lieberman, George Washington Univ. Sch. of Medicine, Washington, DC Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Kristeva, a formidable cultural historian and critic, brings a rich mix of data and ideas. (Library Journal) Not only is Kristeva superbly successful in this elaboration, but also I believe she is sometimes superior to Klein herself in the conceptual articulation of clinical insights. (Aleksandar Dimitrijevic *Metapsychology*)

must have! Both brilliant women....

It's pretty accessible, relative to Kristeva's earlier work.

Kristeva is rare intellectual across many disciplines. As always she brings depth and clarity to an important psychoanalytic clinician just as she has done with Proust and so many others. At

It was a biography that summarized and analyzed Klein's work, giving us insight on her take on psychoanalysis on children. It wasn't too difficult to read.

Excellent volume

I expected that if Julia Kristeva was going to write a book that analysed Melanie Klein's ideas that she would do so in a manner that respected those ideas and not impose her own Lacanian linguistic framework. Unfortunately I was wrong. Melanie Klein developed her work as an outgrowth of the findings of Sigmund Freud, Sandor Ferenczi and Karl Abraham. These are the theoretical-mediational lenses she used as she developed her own ideas. Her whole work would be opposed to the linguistic neo structuralist framework of Lacan. But despite this Kristeva analyses Klein using concepts like 'Imaginary' , 'Real', 'Other', etc, and she does so without bothering to explain what these terms mean. In the end I only read half way through before putting the book down in disgust. I would recommend the following two introductory books on Melanie Klein by Hanna Segal; 'Klein ; Theories And Techniques Of The Pioneer Of Child Analysis', 'Introduction To The Work Of Melanie Klein'. Hanna Segal's daughter Julia Segal has also written a good little book called 'Melanie Klein' which does a fairly good job of introducing Melanie Klein's ideas without distortion. Melanie Klein was a very clear writer and her writings are quite accessible, I recommend her last compilation of essays 'Envy And Gratitude' although her other works are very interesting too. However erudite some people think reading Kristeva's writings may be I regard this book on Klein as intellectual tripe.

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