

5 Splitting the Mind

In the previous chapter, it was argued that despite the advances present in object relations theory, its potential contribution to a social psychoanalysis is limited by its adherence to a 'primary unity' view of the psyche and its description of the environment as passive and at best supportive of the child's naturally determined development. In these affiliations, object relations theory appears to go against its own constructivist premises, which make the structure and content of the mind a product of interactions with specific people. Instead, it assumes a basic healthiness or 'goodness' in the child which needs only tolerant conditions to reach fulfilment. This assumption is challenged by approaches that contest the idea that there is an inherent unity to the mind, and in particular that the ego is a whole entity at the start of life. Traditional Freudian psychoanalysis, for example, regards the ego as a developmental achievement, built on the basis of a heterogeneous unconscious which is always threatening to disrupt its precarious unity. The ego is thus a *construction*, as is the super-ego and the whole organisation of unconscious desire. Underlying the fragile ego are id impulses, particularly destructive ones, which repeatedly threaten the integrity of ego functioning. Similarly, in those post-Freudian approaches which contest the idea of a primevally unified psyche, humans are viewed as fundamentally split, the repository of desires which conflict amongst themselves and with the outside world of 'rational' control. The effect of this proposition is to make appeals to 'human nature' unavailable, at least in any simple way: if there is no particular organisation of the psyche which can be understood as the 'truth' of the individual, then explanations of individuality have to be historical, in the sense of revealing the processes whereby the individual's particular psychic structure has come to be. What then becomes the 'nature' of each individual is the history of her/his construction in

the face of the demands of experience – a fundamentally social understanding of development.

In this chapter, two differing accounts that emphasise the splits to be found in the psyche are discussed. The first of these is that of Melanie Klein, which is closely linked to object relations theory (and indeed owes a fair amount to the work of Fairbairn), but which differs significantly from it in its approach to the Freudian instincts, its notions of mental structure and of 'phantasy', and its evaluation of the possibilities for the achievement of a unified psyche. Secondly, Lacan's very different approach will be presented as the most detailed and extensive account of the implications of a refusal to acknowledge the ego as a significant element in mental structure. Many of the issues raised in Chapter 4 recur here: the importance of biology, the role of environmental or social structures. The orientation of these two theories is, however, different enough from what has gone before to throw new light on these issues. In all this, the terminology is problematic, as words such as 'psyche', 'ego' and 'self' are used confusingly and sometimes interchangeably in the literature. Here, 'psyche' refers to the whole mind, however its structure is envisioned; the 'ego' refers to that agency of mental structure in which rational or reality principle processes and defence mechanisms predominate, and which may be seen by some theorists as identical with the psyche, while others see it as only part of the whole. The 'self' refers to the individual's experience of her/his consciousness, and is hence usually seen as a property of the ego, although in some views the two concepts are identical.

Envy and destructiveness

Melanie Klein's particular contribution to the debates on psychological structure and development derives from the extraordinary manner in which she employs concepts from both 'biological' and 'relationship' approaches. She does this by combining a severe instinctual bias (adopting the least popular of Freudian concepts, the Death Instinct, as her starting point) with a subtle account of psychological development through periods marked by the relative disintegration or integration of ego-object relationships. This developmental account, which focuses on the so-called 'paranoid–

schizoid' and 'depressive' positions, will be described in detail later; here, Klein's concern with instincts and with the 'negative' emotions of envy, greed and loss which form the basis of so much that is expressed in the psychoanalytic situation, will be examined. Ironically, it can be argued that this theory's focus on inborn negativity and what appears to be its neglect of the 'real' environment (e.g. the way a mother *actually* treats her child) enables it to proffer some new insights on the penetration of individuality by social construction processes. This derives in part from its account of splitting, but more generally from its fascination with the structure of relationships that the infant forms in the merger between her/his biological impulses and human environment. Klein's theory also provides an important comparison with those approaches that suggest the existence of a primordially integrated consciousness, an ego or self (depending on the theory) which is initially a unity, even if it is likely to be fragmented by the vicissitudes of experience. Klein asserts the inherently split nature of the mind, as an entity imbued with internal contradictions in its fundamental nature.

Klein assumes that at birth there exists a primitive ego, which is relatively unformed but has at least the ability to experience anxiety, use some fundamental defence mechanisms (projection and introjection) and form certain kinds of primitive object relationships (Segal, 1973). In contrast with Fairbairn's view, however, this ego does not constitute the whole of the neonate mind. In addition, there are instincts in existence from the start; these instincts are represented in mental life by 'phantasies', which are the means by which the ego attempts to ensure the satisfaction of the instincts. Thus, Klein adopts that view of instincts found in Freud which assumes the instincts themselves to be entities acting on a biological level but having representatives in mental life, by which they become known. It is at this point that Klein embarks on a deviation from Freud which is deceptively subtle and which, were it not for the tenacity with which she holds to instinct theory, would align her firmly with the object relations theorists described previously. This deviation has to do with the status of objects in the child's early psychic economy. In Freud's account, objects are the least essential aspect of the instincts, being simply those entities which the infant finds will allow satisfaction to come about. In Klein's world, however, objects exist from the start, and the

instincts are *always directed towards objects*, rather than being directionless psychic urges. This raises the question of where these primeval objects come from, a question given different answers at different stages of Klein's theorising (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983). Three particular theories concerning the origins of these objects stand out: as inherent in the instincts themselves, a kind of inherited knowledge of appropriately satisfying images based on bodily parts; as derivatives of the Death Instinct when it is 'deflected' at birth (see below); and as 'explanations' conjured up by the child to explain her/his experiences of early internal sensations. The significant point, however, is that although she postulates that at birth the infant is embedded in a total phantasy world, Klein always provides instincts with some necessary object. This moves her theory away from the closures of Freudianism to the more open possibilities of an encounter with reality that later object relations workers have focused upon; it is relationships of various kinds with objects, initially internal ones, that form the basis of psychological development for Klein. Greenberg and Mitchell outline the central significance of this perception:

The very building-blocks of mental life in Klein's theory are different from those in Freud's. For Klein the basic units of mental processes are not packets of objectless energy, but relational units *ab initio*. (1983, p. 137).

In this way, Klein provides not just a bridge between classical and object relations theory, but also a distinctive view of development which combines biological and social outlooks in the single concept of the instinct. This has led not only to considerable confusion, but also to a great deal of light.

The first object of desire is the mother's breast, which in the child's mind becomes split into a good (gratifying) and bad (frustrating) breast (Klein, 1946, p. 2). The good object is seen by Klein as forming the core of the ego when it is taken in by the child, contributing vitally to psychological growth. In a sense, it is the child's 'aim' to incorporate the goodness of the primal object in order to facilitate the formation of a strong and secure ego. The problem is that the Death Instinct operates at the centre of the infant's experience; it is, for Klein, the source of activity and disturbance, acting through the creation of a primeval threat of

annihilation. Klein takes literally Freud's polarity of Life and Death Instincts, and envisions the child as the battleground of these mighty forces. Although she is sometimes cautious in her expression of this idea, merging it with a more palatable terminology of love and hate, there can be no doubt of its role in her theory, nor of its biological underpinnings:

In speaking of an innate conflict between love and hate, I am implying that the capacity both for love and for destructive impulses is, to some extent, constitutional, though varying individually in strength and interacting from the beginning with external conditions. (Klein, 1957, p. 180).

The early environment of the child has, goodness knows, enough sources of terror for the infant; but its capacity to destroy is increased out of all proportion by the operation of the Death Instinct internally, which presents the vulnerable and fragile neonate ego with a threat of annihilation that gives rise to tremendous anxiety. This anxiety is immediately taken up into the child's object relationships:

I hold that anxiety arises from the operation of the death instinct within the child, is felt as a fear of annihilation (death) and takes the form of fear of persecution. The fear of the destructive impulse seems to attach itself at once to an object – or rather it is experienced as the fear of an uncontrollable, overpowering object. (Klein, 1946, p. 4)

Just as the 'good' breast is the early representative of the Life Instinct, and the child's aim is to incorporate and identify with it, so the ego copes with the threat from the Death Instinct by 'deflecting' it outwards, on to the breast. The breast is consequently felt to be aggressive and threatening to the ego, giving rise to a sense of persecution. In this way, the original fear of the Death Instinct is transformed into fear of a persecuting object (Segal, 1973); the main anxiety during this period is that this object will get inside the ego and overwhelm it. This is, it must be remembered, a description of *normal* infancy: although normal children are not consumed by anxiety all the time, they nevertheless are bound to experience it, because it begins within them, as fear of their own Death Instinct.

It is clear from what has been described above that there is a great emphasis in Klein's theory on the role of phantasy. 'Phantasy' refers to the psychic representation of instincts, but, because of the indissoluble link between instincts and objects, it is also the arena in which the child's object relational drama is experienced. This does not, however, mean that the experiences are not in an important sense *real*: 'Phantasy is not merely an escape from reality, but a constant and unavoidable accompaniment of real experiences, constantly interacting with them' (Segal, 1973, p. 14). In contrast to Fairbairn's view of phantasy as a substitutive response to external frustration, Kleinians view it as the basic stuff of psychological functioning, without which there would be no mental processes at all. The internal phantasy world has absolute primacy in this model, and all that we do, think and feel depends upon it. And because this world of internal objects exists as 'really' as the external one, the latter can never be experienced in a pure form. This is a very important point in the Kleinian argument. It is nowhere denied that the nature of the real environment makes a significant difference to the child: as will be described below, important developmental achievements are held to depend on the provision of sufficient good experiences from the environment. However, the outside world is always perceived and related to through a screen of the child's internal drives and phantasies, which may alter its impact dramatically. Even if the early environment is perfectly good, or 'good enough', in Winnicott's phrase, the child will experience anxiety and fear, and will suffer aggressive and destructive emotions. All that Kleinians can say about good experiences at this developmental point is that they will 'tend to lessen the anger' (Segal, 1973, p. 15); they will never wholly take it away. At best, the harshness of the child's initial objects, generated by the Death Instinct, may become overlaid by internalisations of the actual parents and gradually become transformed, but the initial anxiety to which they give rise will always appear – it is the starting point of psychological development, more fundamental to Klein than the sexual impulses accentuated by Freud.¹

The effect of Klein's notion of the Death Instinct and her prioritising of the importance of the child's internal world, can be seen in the concept of envy, described in much detail in her 1957 paper, *Envy and Gratitude*. Klein (1957, p. 176) is clear on the origins of envy: 'I consider that envy is an oral-sadistic and anal-

sadistic expression of destructive impulses, operative from the beginning of life, and that it has a constitutional basis.' Envy is a two-person emotion, aiming at being as good as the object; when this is felt to be impossible, however, it aims at spoiling the goodness of the object, so as to remove the source of envious feelings (Segal, 1973, p. 40). This spoiling aspect of envy contains its destructiveness, especially when, as often, it is mixed with greed – the ruthless acquirement of all the goodness that lies within an object, 'scooping out' the goodness of the breast, in Klein's words. Where greed and envy differ is that the former is primarily concerned with introjection (taking in all the object's goodness), the latter with projection (putting badness into the object to destroy it). It is this projective mode of operation that makes envy such a pure and powerful expression of the Death Instinct: whereas destructiveness is a consequence of greed, it is a motive for envy (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983). Envy is unavoidable: whether the breast is fulfilling or not, envy ensues. If the breast is unsatisfactory, the child hates and envies what is felt to be the mean and grudging breast; if the breast is satisfactory, s/he envies its inimitable flow of goodness, wishing hopelessly to own it. Thus, when envy is intense, the perception of a good object can be as painful as that of a bad one, for the better it is the more it gives rise to envying desires. Finally, envy destroys hope, because it is directed at the sources of goodness in the child's world; its recurrence during psychotherapy is both a necessary focus for work and a profound threat to progress.

This description of envy seems to doom the child to experiences of badness and despair. The more goodness there is around, the worse s/he is likely to feel. In fact, however, it is precisely here that the Kleinians introduce the importance of environmental experiences. For although gratification does provoke envy, which is why it is impossible ever to remove it completely and why it is so persistent throughout life, other emotions are also brought about by gratification: admiration, love and gratitude. The capacity for these positive feelings derives from a deep relationship with the good object, and is advanced when the proportion of gratifying experiences is greater than that of frustrating ones. This brings about an immensely positive state, the basis of integrated development:

If the undisturbed enjoyment in being fed is frequently experienced, the introjection of the good breast comes about with

relative security. A full gratification at the breast means that the infant feels he has received from his loved object a unique gift which he wants to keep. This is the basis of gratitude. (Klein 1957, p. 188)

Strong envy of the feeding breast interferes with this enjoyment and hence undermines the possibilities for gratitude and also for the integration of the psyche (as positive feelings fail to predominate over negative ones, leaving the child's mental world in a threatened state). All this also influences the vicissitudes of the Oedipus complex, when it appears later in development: although by this time people are being recognised by the infant as individuals, s/he still perceives them in terms of her/his own projections. This brings about intense envy as well as the jealousy of the ordinary Oedipal rivalry, as the parents are phantasised to be providing one another with the gratifications that the child most desires. If the child's envy is not excessive, jealousy in the Oedipal situation becomes a means of working it through, because being directed at rivals rather than at the primal, internalised object, it is felt to be more manageable and less destructive. On the other hand, if early envy remains powerful, it can also destroy the possibilities for successful resolution of the Oedipal phase – as in psychotic states.

Here, then, is a powerfully biological theory taking on board the most contentious of Freud's metapsychological ideas. Nevertheless, despite its undoubted valorisation of internal processes over environmental conditions, and its reliance on much criticised concepts of instinct, it holds out a perspective for the construction of a psychoanalysis that takes account of social relations. The theory is clearly founded on the notion that the infant is riven from the start with conflicting desires, some of the most powerful of which are aggressiveness and destructiveness. As such, it is superficially less optimistic than the more humanistic orientation of object relations theory, where the emphasis is on a positive object-seeking tendency which gives rise to destructiveness only when thwarted. Yet, there is another kind of optimism in the Kleinian approach. At one level, this arises straightforwardly from its focus on negative impulses: it confronts the painful phenomenon of destructiveness and examines what can be made of it, how gratitude and other positive feelings can be constructed, how social relations can be formed and maintained in the face of envy

and greed. In this way it recognises some deep anxieties that people have, and reaches out to social ways in which these might be overcome. In contrast to the tendency of object relations theorists to talk in terms of a *return* to a loss or missed state of perfect support from the mother, Klein's theory focuses on the need to take the experience of envy or destructiveness and make something productive out of it. For example, Kleinian theory's emphasis on the control of destructiveness, the achievement of gratitude and (as will be discussed in the next section) the expression of reparative urges, provides some strategic ideas on the amelioration of actually experienced negativity. Secondly, Klein shares with object relations theorists an appreciation of the relational nature of development, in her case expressed by her reformulation of instinct theory to incorporate relationships with objects (internal and external) as fundamental aspects of what appear to be biological entities. This is, in some ways, the reverse of ego psychology's tendency to impose biology where all is apparently social, making Klein's work viable as a source of politically progressive insights. Finally, Kleinian theory's concentration on phantasy, the internal world which mediates the impact of the outside world, brings into focus one of the most radical elements in psychoanalysis. It refutes a simple individualism which begins with an integrated self and then examines what the social world makes of it. Instead, the (real) social world is experienced through a conflicting screen of internal forces, which alter and shape it powerfully. As will be argued more fully in the next section, this allows the theory to become dialectical, positing contradictions within as well as between each element in the inside-outside divide.

Splitting and reparation

The thrust of Klein's developmental theory is to recognise the conflicting forces that operate within the psyche and to detail the processes by which these, in interaction with the equally conflicting forces of the external world, produce a final mental structure that can be understood in relationship terms. The clearest way into this is through a brief outline of the central elements in the theory, in particular the 'paranoid schizoid position' and the 'depressive position'.

In Melanie Klein's view, the newborn infant is not only imbued with the instincts of life and death, but also has enough ego to experience anxiety and to employ certain defences. As described above, the earliest anxiety is a product of the Death Instinct, which is experienced by the ego as a threat of annihilation. It is in order to protect itself against this threat that defence mechanisms are brought into play, and it is through the interaction between instincts, defences and the external world that the mental organisation of the infant reaches a coherent form. According to Klein, and in contrast to the view of Anna Freud, the earliest defences employed by the infantile ego are projection and introjection, with splitting being both a consequence of these processes and a defensive manoeuvre in its own right. Projection, the phantasised insertion into the external world of impulses that originate within oneself, is ontologically the earliest of these mechanisms, although introjection, which is the phantasised taking into the self of material that lies outside, is intimately bound up with it from the first moment of development. In addition, as a reflection of the Life and Death Instincts, the young ego possesses tendencies both towards integration and towards fragmentation. Although the general thrust of development is towards increasing the degree of integration of the ego, its opposite tendency towards splitting and fragmentation is a powerful one, operating both as a straightforward consequence of the early ego's lack of cohesion at birth, and as a defence against primordial anxiety (Klein, 1957). Whereas in the classical view splitting and repression are linked defences, Klein places splitting much earlier, suggesting that it is a primitive way in which intrapsychic conflicts (which, because of the ambivalent structure of the instincts, exist from the start) are coped with by simply holding them apart. Repression, on the other hand, relies on the removal of anxiety-producing material from a relatively coherent consciousness, and hence requires the existence of a stronger ego. Thus, in Klein's account not only are instincts separable from one another and opposed to each other at birth, but the consequence of the anxiety that they generate is to create immediate and inevitable splits in the infantile mind. Psychic unity is not just empirically unobtainable; it *cannot* be present because of the fundamental make-up of the child.

Before describing the postulated order of events in early psychic life, it is worth stressing that the defences employed by the ego are seen as central to development: splitting is not in itself a negative

phenomenon, and nor are projection or introjection. Thus, splitting represents the first attempt to organise the chaotic contents of the psyche and hence is fundamental to processes of ordinary thought and discrimination; more psychodynamically, it allows a separation to occur between good and bad aspects of the psyche and of objects, thus preserving the existence of the good parts from the threatening, destructive fury of the bad and enhancing the security of the ego. It is only this protection that provides the context in which good ego-object relations can develop and become strong enough to allow later integration to occur. Similarly, the projection of good impulses from the self into the mother allows the formation of good ego-object relations to take place, and also preserves internal goodness until the child is able to integrate it with the equally preserved, but now relatively overcome, destructive impulses. This process will be clarified below; the general point is that these early defences (including some very extreme ones, such as projective identification, in which parts of the self are projected on to external objects and then identified with) serve normal and necessary developmental functions.

None of this is to say, of course, that splitting cannot go awry, and come to hamper development or even form the prototype for psychotic breakdowns (for it is recourse to these early defences that is characteristic of schizophrenia). Thus, Klein (1946, p. 5) suggests that 'primary anxiety of being annihilated by a destructive force within, with the ego's specific response of falling to pieces or splitting itself, may be extremely important in all schizophrenic processes'. Excessive anxiety can bring about too much of a split, leading to fragmentation of the ego which results in it being broken up into unintegratable little bits: 'in order to avoid suffering the ego does its best not to exist, an attempt which gives rise to a specific acute anxiety – that of falling to bits and becoming atomised' (Segal, 1973, p. 31). On the other hand, failures of splitting are just as destructive: for example, excessive envy can interfere with the primal split of the initial object into its good and bad aspects (the good object being attacked mercilessly by envious impulses), making the building up of a good object hard to achieve, with synthesis then becoming impossible. The defences also produce their own anxieties: for instance, projective identification, which can be a way of investing destructive or valued parts of the self in a 'safe' object, can also lead to the fear that an

attacked object will retaliate, or that important parts of the self may be imprisoned, leading to a dangerous depletion of internal resources (Segal, 1973, p. 30). Importantly, there is an environmental role here: an excess of bad experiences can fail to mollify the destructive urges of the infant, making the defences more and more extreme and self-damaging.

In the ordinary course of things, the child's initial use of projective defences initiate her/him into the 'paranoid-schizoid position'. At the start of life, the infant's precarious psyche is threatened with being overwhelmed by the destructive forces emanating from the Death Instinct; to cope with this, these destructive impulses are projected outwards on to objects. At the same time, the Life Instinct is also projected outwards, in order to create an ideal object to which the ego can aspire; without this, the entire external world would be a place of harrasing destructiveness and persecution. With the duality of instincts, the child's perception is that there is a duality of objects: even though the actual 'object' on to which destructiveness and idealism are projected is one (the breast) it is *experienced* by the child as two separate objects. That is, the breast, which in fact is a single object with rewarding and frustrating aspects, is split in phantasy into the good, nurturing breast, and the bad, frustrating one. In significant respects, the ideal trajectory for development is from this split situation to one in which the ego can deal in an integrated way with the actual contradictions of the external world – can achieve, in a sense, a comprehension of dialectics.

According to Klein, the child's psychological development is dependent for a positive outcome on the presence of a good internal object which can become the nucleus of a stable and integrated self. As this good object can only derive from the external set of relations in which the child is embedded, and as these are already infiltrated by the child's projected and split impulses, the principal aim of the infantile psyche becomes that of introjecting the ideal object, something which cannot be achieved without the risk that the persecuting object will enter in and destroy it. So the good and bad parts of the ego-object nexus are separated, as a protective strategy both for the good (internalised) object and for the psyche as a whole, in that splitting can also lead to a dispersal of the destructive impulse and therefore of internal persecutory anxieties. Hence, in order to be able to related to the

containers of bad and ideal feelings without having the integrity of the latter threatened by the former, the ego splits itself into a 'libidinal' and a 'destructive' part: that is, 'the early ego splits the object and the relation to it in an active way, and this may imply some active splitting of the ego itself' (Klein, 1946, p. 5) – a version of things quite similar to that postulated by Fairbairn. So, schematically, what has occurred is *first*, projection of destructive and good impulses on to an external object, *second*, the splitting of that object into 'bad' and 'good', and *third*, the introjection of those objects to form split ego-object relationships within the psyche. This is a description of the formation of the ego's structure in the very early months of life: it is organised around phantasies which in turn derive from the projected impulses of the child. Its characteristic defensive strategies, apart from projection and introjection which are more like the fundamental basics of mental activity than conventional defences, are splitting, omnipotent denial, idealisation, hallucinatory wish fulfilment – all prototypical 'schizoid' mechanisms. The primary anxiety is that of being annihilated by the Death Instinct; as the destructive feelings have been expelled from the psyche, anxiety is predominantly experienced as a fear of persecution. All this, it appears, is independent of the external world, except for the postulation that some object is necessary or the child would have nothing to use as the focus of her/his projections.

The paranoid-schizoid position is one which is held throughout life as a potentiality, and underpins adult schizoid functioning. The defences of this period also remain, developing into important forms of mental activity: for example, projective identification is the basis of empathy and symbol formation (Segal, 1973). But the paranoid-schizoid position is also a developmental state which is overgrown by further development. In the second quarter of the first year, according to Klein, the child gradually becomes more integrated and able to perceive the mother as a whole person, which in turn allows the infantile ego to become more integrated. The manner in which this occurs demonstrates the importance of Klein's idea that the good object is introjected in development (which contrasts with Fairbairn's view that it is only frustration which gives rise to an internal object world), and also reveals the subtle way in which environmental factors enter into the theory. Put simply, for the paranoid-schizoid position to be transcended in

a reasonably unproblematic way, 'the necessary condition is that there should be a predominance of good over bad experiences. To this predominance both internal and external factors contribute' (Segal, 1973, p. 37). If all goes well, and is not disrupted either by excessively strong constitutional destructiveness or by a harmful environment, the child forms the belief that the ideal object is stronger than the bad object and, commensurately, that her/his own libidinal impulses are stronger than her/his destructive ones. This makes it easier for the ego to identify with the ideal object, in turn making the use of extreme mechanisms of defence less necessary. As the ideal object gains in strength, it is experienced by the child as in less danger from the bad object; this means that anxiety is lessened and hence the strength of the good object is reinforced. This again means that there is less fear of badness and less power attributed to the destroying object; the ego also is less depleted as projection is no longer as necessary as once it was. The final result of the beneficial cycle that is thus set up is that it becomes possible to integrate the persecutory and ideal objects in the confidence that the latter will not be destroyed by the former. Incidentally, this reveals again the importance of splitting: at the start of life, it is destructiveness that is paramount; it is only by splitting that the libidinal impulses are kept secure until their strength can be reinforced by good environmental experiences and by ordinary growth, so that this destructiveness can be contested. And it is good object *experience* that is also necessary; without it, there will be little opportunity for the ideal object to become a strong focus for the formation of a cohesive and integrated ego.

Given the situation described above, the integrative tendencies that are present in the early ego gradually achieve predominance and splitting ceases to be the characteristic mode of functioning of the child – although it remains an important defence which is always available. The experience of an integrated ego and the perception of the mother as a whole object is a considerable relief to the child, as persecutory fears lessen. However, a new problem is also created: because the mother is experienced as a whole object, not split into good and bad parts, she becomes the source both of gratification and pain, and the child's attitude to her is one of ambivalence. Thus, the good mother, from whom the child derives nurture and love, is no longer phantasised as separate from the frustrating mother upon whom the child's destructiveness is

vented. The child is exposed to the feeling that s/he can damage or even destroy the mother with her/his destructive rage, and lose the most precious object. This gives rise to feelings unknown in the paranoid-schizoid position: mourning for the lost good object, and guilt over the way it has been destroyed (in phantasy) by the child's own aggression. In addition, because the mother is introjected, the destruction is also an internal destruction, leaving the child feeling wasted and empty. The mixture of feelings experienced at this point – love and hate, guilt and loss, the phantasised persecutors of the earlier phase – constitutes what is known as the 'depressive position'.

Despite the characteristically negative outline of the components of the depressive position, there are some crucial achievements under its sway. Dynamically, although the child is exposed to feelings of loss and guilt, the realisation of the integrated nature of the object produces a sense of optimism which can carry her/him to a triumphant working through of these more difficult feelings. This is because the badness of the object, and the destructiveness of the internal world, are now experienced as ameliorated by the goodness of the same object and the loving, constructive manifestations of the Life Instinct. In its integrated form, destructiveness is less threatening than in its split, pure form, and the child is thus more able to overcome it and become engaged in a benevolent cycle of depression and reintegration. In addition, a number of developmental achievements come about in this period. One is the enhancement of reality testing that occurs as the child begins to make a firmer division between internal and external worlds: for example, the mother's return after separations allows the child to calibrate the strength of her/his own instincts against the resilience of the object (Segal, 1973). The awareness of the split between self and other in fact only becomes possible once the integrity of the external object is recognised. Again, new psychological defences become available to the child, of which repression is the most important; this depends on the existence of a reasonably integrated ego. The Oedipus complex has its origin in the depressive position, depending as it does on an awareness of the existence of whole external objects which can form relationships with one another. The super-ego, which according to Klein has its first roots in the introjected ideal and persecutory objects of the paranoid-schizoid position, becomes more integrated and is ex-

perienced ambivalently, so that it loses some of its ferocious aspect and can come to represent elements of the loved, as well as the feared, parent/object.

Perhaps the most important new development in the depressive position is that of *reparation*, which has been taken up by some (e.g. Rustin, 1982) as the foundation of the prospects for a socialist-Kleinian theory. The idea is a simple one: reparation includes 'the variety of processes by which the ego feels it undoes harm done in phantasy, restores, preserves and revives objects' (Klein, 1955, p. 133). The concept of reparation transforms the idea of instinctive aggression from a deterministic principle to a complex containing positive possibilities: the formation of loving personal relationships out of a desire to 'restore, preserve and revive'. Reparation derives from the depressive position because it depends on the acknowledgement of the integrity of the good-and-bad object and the ambivalent instincts: something only needs to be made good if it is valued as well as hated; reparation is only possible if the ego contains good impulses as well as bad. The love immanent in reparation thus supports the integrating tendencies present in the ego; its 'building bridges' aspect also forms the basis of creativity (casting a different light on this from Freud's notion of sublimation), as the lost or damaged internal object is made good. Finally, the experience of reparation allows the depressive position to be transcended, as the child discovers within her/himself the resources to mitigate destructiveness, becoming more stable and also more realistic in monitoring the effects of her/his phantasies on objects. The significance of reparation places it in a special position with reference to other 'defences':

Reparation proper can hardly be considered a defence, since it is based on the recognition of psychic reality, the experiencing of the pain that this reality causes and the taking of appropriate action to relieve it in phantasy and reality. (Segal, 1973, p. 95)

Intriguingly, what has begun as a theory emphasising the negativity of human experience, its fundamental destructiveness and the damage caused to self and others through envy and hatred, resolves into a precise and luminous celebration of making good, of forming personal relationships of the deepest kind on an image of concern and loving consideration. Despite all appearances,

Kleinian theory is not pessimistic. True, it does not advocate the basic goodness of all things, but then neither is it forced to assume the basic impossibility of the good environment to explain why this goodness is never realised. Instead, it begins with the concept of contradictory being, split in its essence as well as in all its relationships, and traces the manner in which integrity can be achieved. As such, it directs interest towards the specific kinds of social relationship that may be organised for full reparation to take place.

Klein's view of the fundamental contradictions of the human psyche is vitally important in the face of a romanticised notion of human integrity. The tendency of object relations theorists to postulate an initially integrated individuality which becomes split through experience is reversed in Klein, with the consequence that the possibilities for enriched relationships become emphasised and the trajectory of her theory is towards construction rather than withdrawal. The implications for political and psychotherapeutic work are significant. Instead of arguing for a return to a primeval state of goodness, wholeness and integrity, Klein's theory suggests that progress is an advance towards conditions which allow more stable and complete expressions of reparative urges, in the extended sense described above. Klein also provides a more complex account of both internal and external worlds – the psyche and the environment – which can be seen in her description of the early months of life. The psyche is made up of conflicting forces, the impact of which is to supply momentum for the generation of more advanced mental structures. In a parallel fashion, the external environment is also made up of contradictory elements – the breast is *in reality* both gratifying and frustrating – which the child has to deal with. Development in Klein's account is the gradual increase in the complexity and strength of the ego so that both these kinds of contradictions can be dealt with, meaning, not removed but tolerated. Hence Klein's deviation from a common tendency amongst psychoanalysts to describe the nature of the child in terms of certain structures: for instance, that s/he has a whole ego or a primordial id. Although Klein does discuss the id/ego issue, the basic material of psychic life in her theory seems to be the capacity for projection and introjection, for the mixing of external world and phantasy. She thus emphasises mental processes rather than structures: the activities by which a child comes to

comprehend the ambivalence of the social world as well as of her/his own emotions, the links between these two kinds of ambivalence and the steps that must be taken to cope with them. From these processes, all else follows; in addition, it is only by understanding the real contradictions of the world, and tolerating them in an emotional sense, that it is possible to consider how to bring about change. Klein's theory is certainly limited by the biologism of its language and, more importantly in this context, its failure to deal clearly with the role of social events in development. But the principles on which it is based and the conceptualisation of development that it produces make it a dynamic theory in the full sense of the word: one that valorises internal forces and focuses upon the study of process. And the process which is emphasised is the intensely dialectical one of how the contradictions of the external world and the conflicts of the internal one meet, intertwine, and resolve.

Splitting and culture: Lacan

Whereas Klein's theory develops a notion of splitting as a defensive procedure undertaken by the ego as it faces up to the threat of the Death Instinct, Lacan makes splitting the fundamental developmental process. He does this, however, by employing a very different version of 'splitting' in which it functions as a developmental marker: the idea is that development occurs through a series of radical change points, fissures cutting the subject² off from its own history. More generally, Lacan focuses on alienation, on how the subject becomes formed in 'otherness', how identity is always produced by the insertion of the subject into something outside. Mitchell (1982, p. 4) states this succinctly:

Psychoanalytic practice is in danger of seeing the patient as someone who has lost control and a sense of a real or true self (identity) and it aims to help regain these. The matter and manner of all Lacan's work challenges this notion of the human subject: there is none such.

As in Freud's most rigorous formulations, Lacan understands the human subject genetically: that is, there is nothing, not even the unconscious, that has pre-existent form as a germ of 'self' or 'ego';