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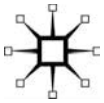

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1
The Imagination: Bergman, Klein and Sartre

> And every picture – every one of my pictures are dreams.
>
> – Ingmar Bergman[1]

In *Fanny and Alexander* (1982–1983), Helena Ekdahl reacts with dismay to her daughter-in-law's suggestion that they should both act in August Strindberg's *A Dream Play*:

> Emilie Ekdahl: I'd like you to read a new play by August Strindberg.
> Helena Ekdahl: That nasty misogynist!

Here, Ingmar Bergman distances himself from Strindberg, one of his great inspirations. Helena's statement retains its force as a warning from Bergman that Strindberg was flawed in his attitude towards women. Yet, moments later, as *Fanny and Alexander* concludes, Helena reads to her son the following lines:

> Everything can happen. Everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist. On a flimsy framework of reality the imagination spins and weaves new patterns. (August Strindberg)[2]

The final words demonstrate that Bergman extracted core ideas from Strindberg without slavishly following his representation of gender. The final lines are significant, not just as a conclusion to this film but as an expression of Bergman's belief in the ultimate value of imagination throughout his work.

In *Fanny and Alexander* imagination is a unique and powerful force. Intermittently verisimilitude is punctured by Alexander's visions of his dead father as a ghost. When Isak rescues the children from the bishop,

an apparently magical agency is introduced, which allows the children to be momentarily in two places at the same time, and this agency develops as Alexander meets the mysterious Ishmael. This magical agency may or may not have a metaphysical cause, but appears to be directly related to Alexander's capacity for seeing beyond the immediately perceptible world. Thus, *Fanny and Alexander* demonstrates how imagination is not only an abiding concept for Bergman but also how he can utilise this as a structural element with his narratives. Then, near the end, with the reappearance of the bishop, his stepfather, the imagination is presented as a haunting power, a disturbing image that reveals Bergman's complex approach to the imagination.

Researching this book, I set out to explore Bergman's belief in the power of imagination, asking initially whether he holds a belief akin to the sentiment of the Strindberg quotation in *Fanny and Alexander*. Although Strindberg is a key influence, it became clear to me that Bergman's work and ideas suggest a wide range of possible interpretations. Although the library of Bergman appreciation, research and criticism already revolves around the power of his imagination as an auteur, exploration of Bergman's ideas on imagination, in relation to other artists and thinkers, emerged as a subject for further investigation. As a consequence, I am concerned not only to explore Bergman's ideas in relation to philosophy and psychoanalytic theory but also to focus more specifically on the way his films include elements that put particular stress on the process of imagining. The close analysis of films in this

Figure 1.1 *Fanny and Alexander*, Cinematograph/Svenska Filminstitutet/Sveriges Television 1/Sandrews/Gaumont/Personafilm/Tobis Film, Palisades Tartan Video. At the end of the film, Alexander is still gripped by his imagination

book, will attend to the structural significance of sections that represent metaphysics, dreams, nightmares and visions. It will also mean considering the way cinematic language and narrative orchestration are used at other points to signify a world beyond, which is not transparently observable to all the characters of the diegesis even though it may be accessed by an individual character such as Alexander. A good example of mise-en-scène used to this effect is the appearance of death as a figure for the knight in *The Seventh Seal* (1956).

Also central to Bergman's focus on imagination is the creative use of off-screen elements, which cannot be directly observed by character or viewer, ranging from creative use of off-screen cues to more infamous examples such as the miracle at the end of *The Virgin Spring* (1960). This episode, discussed as part of Chapter 5, may signify imagination or a metaphysical intervention by God, an ambiguity to which I will return. Bergman's need to step beyond a reality strictly dependent on observation must also recognise the significance of memory, a mental faculty that is closely associated and can overlap with imagination. Thus, I include flashbacks alongside other elements that divert us from a linear narrative anchored in observation of the present. This is particularly apparent in, for instance, Bergman's use of a form of imaginative flashback in *Wild Strawberries* (1957), in which the main character enters his own memory as an observer. Simple cause and effect linear narratives are significantly diverted or interrupted at key moments in Bergman's work, thus signifying his focus on the imagination. Because he also maintains narrative fluency, these disruptions appear less experimental than avant-garde film-making, but the appeal to imagination is very pervasive, ranging from flashbacks that represent character reflections to the way off-screen space is used to make the audience think beyond that which is immediately given.

The attention to sequences or elements foregrounding imagination will be tied in with a wider enquiry. A scholar who has already written about imagination in Bergman's work in relation to a broader context is Marilyn Johns Blackwell, who focuses in the final chapter of her book, on a number of sequences from films, including *Wild Strawberries* and *The Seventh Seal,* which represent characters' imagining. In an inspiring and instructive way, Johns Blackwell considers how these sequences contribute to the representation of gender.[3] For my analysis, it is equally important to recognise how Bergman relates sequences concerned with his characters' imagining to the rest of the narrative in which they are situated. It is necessary to investigate Bergman's approach to imagination at the level of meaning because it is often figured as a significant

value in his work. That is not to say imagination is automatically seen as beneficent. After all, the figure of death in *The Seventh Seal,* and the final appearance of the bishop in *Fanny and Alexander* introduce Manichean division into the imaginary realm. Like the miracle in *The Virgin Spring*, these phenomena appear to be ambiguously placed on the borderline of metaphysics and imagination, carrying connotations of a power beyond human agency. However, I want to explore the idea that for Bergman the imagination does ultimately carry potential for redemption in humanist terms. Here we enter the debates about Bergman as a philosophical director and his relationship to religion. While there is an enormous range of intellectuals and artists who champion the power of the imagination, this book focuses on a specific comparison between Bergman and the work of the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein and the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, who are both humanistic thinkers. The comparison of Bergman's films with ideas from these thinkers is intended as an exploratory association and an original contribution to understanding how film theory can approach his work, 68 years after his film career was launched with the script of *Frenzy* (1944).

In 1985, subsequent to completion of *Fanny and Alexander*, Bergman declared that this was his last film.[4] The retrospective decision to conclude his career with a film partly inspired by his own childhood testifies to Bergman's understanding of himself as a director dealing with personal material. By this stage in his career the discipline of film studies had fully emerged in higher education. The evolution of the subject involved enormous appreciation of the work of directors due partly to the publication of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, a significant agent in the development of Bergman's international reputation. However, the development of film studies as an academic discipline also gave rise to a reaction against the auteur theory through the emergence of semiotics, structuralism and post-structuralism, as theories applied to cinema. The questioning of authorship itself was already apparent in the 1960s, and coincided with a relative decline in Bergman's reputation as a groundbreaking director. And yet, critical work on Bergman has rarely strayed away from an emphasis on his authorship. Indeed, as Bergman made various returns to film-making after his self-declared retirement, including *Saraband* (2003), authorship had recovered some of its credibility in the discipline, and this is reflected in more recent work on Bergman. For example, the collection of essays *Ingmar Bergman Revisited*, published in 2008, introduced many new ideas into Bergman research, but did not seek to challenge the very concept of authorship. Instead, this was deployed in a wide-ranging and discursive fashion across the essays.[5]

In this introductory chapter I am concerned to set out general points that provide the context for specific analyses of Klein, Sartre and individual Bergman films. I will begin by showing how three auteurist responses to Bergman's work, from the 1950s onwards, challenge a view of Bergman restricted to a thematic world view full of angst and metaphysics. Instead, we find that critics as diverse as Jean-Luc Godard, Peter Cowie and Thomas Elsaesser move beyond this stereotype to highlight Bergman's cinematic qualities, and indicate an interest in relating his films to a broader context. This context varies, including references to other film-makers, culture in general, philosophy and psychology. These responses are admittedly not indicative of research on Bergman's relationship to Swedish and Scandinavian culture, but do give an indication of the way Bergman relates to a more generalised European intellectual context. Following consideration of points from these critics, I will provide an introductory overview of the careers of Klein, Sartre and Bergman to convey the correspondences and differences between them. After giving overviews of their work I will sketch in a political and intellectual context that suggests a degree of convergence in their ideas about society and culture, which I describe as 'humanistic'. I will go on to consider how the work of Jacques Lacan, in particular, but also structuralism and post-structuralism, in general, involved a strong turn away from the humanistic philosophy of imagination found across the work of Klein, Sartre and Bergman. In order to sharpen this contrast I will briefly resume the work of two critics of 'the structuralist turn', Arthur Marwick, and José Guilherme Merquior.

In Chapter 2 I will concentrate on the development of Klein's ideas, with some further application to a Bergman work that has been considered of great interest for psychoanalysis and psychology: *Wild Strawberries*. The following chapter will concentrate on Sartre and conclude with analysis of a Bergman film that shows a strong awareness of the tension between the individual and external reality: *The Seventh Seal*. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are devoted to extended analysis of three Bergman films. The aim here is to explore the relevance of Kleinian and Sartrean ideas whilst focusing more intensively on film style and narrative form.

Culture, existentialism and psychoanalysis in Bergman criticism

Bergman criticism has rarely focused extensively on social and political factors, but a need to relate his work to ideas of culture, history, psychology and philosophy is frequently apparent. No one, to my knowledge,

has explored more than a passing affinity between Bergman's and Klein's work. Nevertheless, there is a significant history of psychoanalytical responses to Bergman's work including elements in Robin Wood's book in 1969, a key auteurist reading of the director's films, and Frank Gado's Freudian study of the director's entire filmic output.[6] Existentialism, like psychoanalysis, figures frequently as a reference in Bergman's reception, but sustained book-length application of this theory is relatively uncommon. Examples of the discussion of existentialist ideas in relation to Bergman include Birgitta Steene's analysis of *The Seventh Seal*, and Jesse Kalin's argument for the significance of Martin Heidegger (as opposed to Sartre) in understanding selected Bergman films.[7] Passing references to Sartre can be found across writing about Bergman, including, for instance, his interviews, but this is frequently a shorthand for evoking an idea of Bergman's world view rather than a sustained analysis of the applicability of Sartre's ideas. Nevertheless, the concern to reference society and culture found in the work of critics and theorists focused on Bergman's authorship suggests the potential for further analysis of cultural influences, including existentialism and psychoanalysis. Three examples, the criticism of Godard, Cowie and Elsaesser, suggest the potential of placing Bergman in a broader cultural context that should include reference to existentialism and psychoanalysis.

Having raised searching questions about Swedish society in his early works of the 1940s, Bergman's reputation became significantly more internationalised in the 1950s and elicited a passionate following amongst film critics. In 1958 Godard writes more of a celebration of Bergman's films rather than an analysis. For Godard, *Summer with Monika* (1953) is an inspiration for modern film-making, but he also writes enthusiastically about the range of the director's output.[8] One can see why Godard enthuses about the moment in *Summer with Monika* when the Harriet Andersson character addresses the audience directly. As Godard points out, here is a disruption of the diegesis, an innovation used subsequently by the French New Wave directors, including Godard himself. The latter celebrates the spontaneity and lack of formula in Bergman's work so that he suggests the audience may love one film and be confused by the next. Godard loves the way Bergman transforms his narratives with flashbacks, speaking of 'l'importance primordial du « flashback »'.[9] For Godard, Bergman's work demonstrates improvisation in stunning contrast to the more studied approach of other admirable auteurs. Godard emphasises Bergman's authorship as a cineaste, writer and dramatist, saying that

as an 'homme de théâtre', Bergman adapts the work of others, but as an 'homme de cinéma, il entend rester seul maître à bord ... Bergman crée *ex nihilo* aventures et personnages'.[10]

There is recognition of Bergman's originality in relation to tradition – the way in which he has adapted many great plays of Scandinavian literature by such artists as Henrik Ibsen and Strindberg – and in relation to other contemporary directors. Godard argues that Bergman's work is distinguished from other directors, including Robert Bresson and Luchino Visconti, because he uses a personal starting point.[11] Although, the method of evaluating a director's work, through comparison with other film directors, is employed here rhetorically, it is clear that Bergman's style is favoured by Godard, because it is personal and bears comparison with the ideas of existentialism. That is, we have the idea of creativity as a very spontaneous form of invention. For Sartre, as we shall see, the self is confronted by nothingness. In Bergman's case the laws of the traditional forms are, according to Godard, subverted through pure invention. Godard thinks that Bergman reduces traditional frameworks to nothing before he reworks their elements. Godard conveys this approach using the rhetoric of modernism and existentialism, and the love of art that is judged to be throwing away the rule book. The individualistic, existential ethos comes through further, as Godard emphasises Bergman's dedication to an individual reality: 'On est toujours seul; sur le plateau comme devant la page blanche. Et pour Bergman, être seul, c'est poser des questions'.[12]

For Godard, Bergman's films are a creative transformation of preceding tradition. Godard refers to *Summer Interlude* (1951) and the way in which the flashback structure opens up a narrative that has a mythical dimension and a modernist sense of time. He also refers to a moment in this film when he says that through just one look in the mirror Maj-Britt Nilsson is transported: 'comme Orphée et Lancelot à la poursuit du paradis perdu et du temps retrouvé'.[13] Bergman, according to Godard, creatively draws on a range of artistic influences (Guy de Maupassant, Germaine Dulac and Man Ray are cited) that are not restricted to his preoccupation with Scandanavian drama.[14] Thus, Godard's response to Bergman evokes existentialism and modernism, in his celebration of a spontaneous transcendence of existing norms.

Peter Cowie is a film critic who championed Bergman's work in Britain in the 1960s. In 2004 Cowie returns to Bergman's significance in relation to radical developments in film culture. Cowie identifies Bergman as the key cutting-edge director of the 1950s. 'Bergman excited the

imagination of critics, audiences and film-makers alike, more than any director of the fifties…'[15] Cowie notes how Bergman's films were represented by influential commentators:

> French critics such as Jean Béranger and Jacques Siclier wrote about Bergman tapping into the fifties *Zeitgeist*, and how the dread of nuclear Armageddon explained the fervour with which *The Seventh Seal* was embraced.[16]

Cowie, however, focuses on specific qualities of Bergman's work such as the use of flashbacks and the complexity with which women were represented.[17] He argues that these elements set the Swedish director apart from his contemporaries just as much as his vision of society. Nevertheless, Cowie still retains a discursive sense of Bergman's engagement with society. He refers to Bergman's range of subjects in this period, which significantly move us away from the stereotype of an angst-ridden auteur behind *The Seventh Seal*. As Cowie indicates, the stereotype was crucial in developing Bergman's international reputation, and therefore may have led some audiences to be unaware of his other work. Cowie sidesteps a narrow version of auteur theory in other ways, highlighting the talented team that Bergman worked with through the 1950s; the way the films changed in the 1960s with Sven Nykvist taking over from Gunnar Fischer as cinematographer; and through a comparison with Federico Fellini's interest in showmanship, demonstrates shared traits with more mainstream entertainment cinema.[18]

For Cowie, Bergman's film-making represented a new type of psychological cinema, with which other directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni also became associated. Cowie is struck, in particular, by the fact that Bergman included in his films questions and themes that had previously been explored in the context of other art forms. Cowie argues that:

> Bergman broached his metaphysical themes with disarming skill, daring to ask fundamental questions – both for himself and of his audience – that one associated more readily with poets and novelists, or painters such as Rembrandt and Goya.[19]

This captures one of the reasons why interest in Bergman's work has endured. Its status as high culture can also be read as a popularisation of high culture – part of the trend involved in claiming that popular works

could reach the level of traditional masterpieces, which emerged forcefully in 1960s culture.

Cowie suggests that the appeal of uncertainty in the work of various film directors in the 1960s was a cultural phenomenon, with 'anxiety' a key topic: 'Uncertainty replaced the doughty dedication to post-war recovery and emancipation'.[20] This extends the idea of ambiguity as a formal quality of the works (explained in David Bordwell's account of art cinema),[21] to give a sense of Bergman's work engaging with contemporary society. The influence of existentialism and psychoanalysis accords with his questioning sensibility. Although this sense of uncertainty was combined with radical political commitment in the case of directors such as Pier Paolo Pasolini, Bernardo Bertolucci and Andrzej Wajda, it also had an effect on Bergman and was vital in his reception. Bergman, like other prominent directors of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Antonioni, was seen as representing alienation.[22]

Thomas Elsaesser is more immersed in post-1960s critical theory than Cowie, but his discussion of Bergman still retains elements of auteur theory, the significance of a modernist aesthetic and film history. Two articles by Elsaesser introduce some of the key issues in the director's films, suggest the need to re-evaluate Bergman's work and point ultimately to the relevance of a philosophical understanding.[23] Elsaesser refers to Bergman's book *Images* and as a response to this notes some of the key aspects of Bergman's style. Elsaesser observes that Bergman himself is not so revealing about his style, but does disclose certain points such as his preference for black and white over colour. Elsaesser is disappointed that *Images* does not include discussion from Bergman about camerawork and a significant element of film style which Elsaesser highlights: namely the way Bergman creates 'complex fluid action spaces'. Elsaesser also wanted more from Bergman's book on the use of the close-up in his work and the soundtrack.[24]

Elsaesser makes it clear that interpreting Bergman has moved on from exclusive concern with the director's existential and religious themes, and also the theme found elsewhere in art cinema: the opposition between reality and illusion. Bergman achieved critical acclaim and acquired funding from Svensk with films dominated by such themes. However, Elsaesser speculates that it may be that Bergman's international reputation also developed because his films were known for liberal, explicit and sometimes shocking treatment of contemporary life.[25] As Elsaesser notes, our reading of Bergman is determined by numerous contextual factors, and should be extracted from various rigid forms of category and stereotype, including the stereotype of Bergman as the voice of

Nordic gloom, and Bergman as a national monument. These ideas have partly arisen, it is argued, due to the economics of world cinema and the need to use authorship and an idea of national cinema to achieve a niche in the market.[26]

Elsaesser discusses the need to place the director in a context, including his relation to a form of introspective awareness revealed through external cues. He observes the dialectic between inner and outer reality, and discusses how this is introduced in *Persona* (1966). At the beginning of this film Elisabet Vogler loses her power of speech on the stage. She turns from looking at the theatre audience to looking in the direction of the camera and thus in effect, as Elsaesser points out, the film audience. Bergman condenses the relationship between cinema and theatre into a silent movement by the character, using this ultimately to represent a psychic movement from outer world to 'an inner revelation of being', 'emotional reality'.[27] The film shows that her public self, like her stage self, is related to an inner self. This inner self, like the backstage in a theatre, is hidden from the audience. As Elsaesser puts it, 'just as the business that habitually goes on backstage in a theatre is necessary in order to produce the "show", so the chaos of one's inner self may well be the necessary precondition of one's active "social" life…'[28] Elsaesser argues that Bergman uses the backstage metaphor for the relationship between internal reality and social reality in other films, such as *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955) and *Sawdust and Tinsel* (1953). For Elsaesser, Bergman demonstrates how cinema can explore the phenomena of psychic reality, which are not amenable to perception or language.[29] Of course, both perception and words are crucial to *Persona*, but more fundamental is the focus on the dialectical movement between inner and outer reality. Thus, despite qualifications to the image of Bergman as an auteur defined by existential and psychological themes, Elsaesser's account of Bergman suggests that within his work the core concern is of a philosophical/psychological nature, and seems to touch on the concerns of existentialism and psychoanalysis. Indeed, the potency of the scene from *Persona* leads Elsaesser to argue that Bergman's exploration of psychic reality can, at key points, reach beyond the theories of psychology and psychoanalysis:

> In his best moments, Bergman manages to render palpable a sense of indeterminacy such as it has rarely existed in the cinema since the great silent European cinema of the 1920s (the films of Murnau, Lang, Dryer): not psychological, nor psychoanalytical, but 'phenomenal'.[30]

Although Godard, Cowie and Elsaesser are concerned with Bergman's cinematic qualities, and they do not refer directly to existential philosophy or psychoanalytic theory, their observations suggest that these fields remain critical alongside an awareness of the diversity of cultural influences on Bergman's films. As Elsaesser's observations convey, Bergman's interest in silent cinema and theatre must be included in our appreciation of his ability to represent psychic depth, and the dialectic between inner and outer worlds. A comparison with Klein and Sartre offers the potential of bringing together diverse ideas about existential and psychoanalytical elements in Bergman's work. In the course of this study I will note ways in which any simple idea of Bergman as the locus of all meanings in his films is qualified, including the way we must take account of his collaborators. However, I accept that we cannot dispense with a focus on Bergman as the organising centre of his work. Contrasting and comparing Bergman's output with the work of Klein and Sartre, I will investigate and explore whether these three figures converge in their ideas about imagination.

The central focus on the imagination is not intended as a return to the romanticist mythology of the artist as creative genius. On the contrary, Klein, Sartre and Bergman are firmly situated within a modernity which insists that the relationship between the artist and external forces is a critical issue and that both sides of this dichotomy must be given weight. If we take Bergman as an example of this it is clear that, at certain times in his life, he holds the opinion that art must be subjected to serious questioning. This is apparent in different Bergman interviews including, for instance, his discussion of *Persona*. Bergman mocks his own character's argument that art can be therapeutic and suggests that art is marginal in its political effect and that artists are elevated, too frequently, by their audience. However, his analysis of his own work also involves contradictory views, which prevent us seeing his viewpoint as straightforward or cynical. He seems to say that it is up to the audience to decide about therapeutic or other values in the work. When asked if it is 'legitimate' for an audience to use art in this way Bergman replies, 'if they can, it's marvellous'.[31]

Klein

Writing of Klein, Julia Kristeva observes, 'beneath the apparent self-assurance of this woman, who became the leader of a school of thought, lay an exceptionally close relationship with anxiety, both in other people

and herself'.[32] Kristeva goes on to make a comparison between Klein and the philosopher Hannah Arendt:

> both of whom emerged from secular Jewish worlds, appropriated Christian philosophy, Enlightenment humanism, and contemporary science in a uniquely critical and highly personal way.[33]

Here are two reasons to look at Klein's work in a broader context: her personal understanding of anxiety and her absorption of perspectives from philosophy and science. Fundamental to her place in this book is the idea that Klein provides an alternative to other ideas because of the significance she attaches to imagination. This, however, must be clarified at the outset. Klein puts emphasis on the presence of something like imagination in the infant from birth, but she calls this 'phantasy'. *The New Kleinian Dictionary* begins the definition of unconscious phantasy by stating that 'unconscious phantasies underlie every mental process and accompany all mental activity'.[34] The term 'phantasy' has created confusion and given rise to different interpretations. James Strachey, a key early explainer of psychoanalytic theory, is said to give us 'the definitive exposition' of this concept, differentiating '*fantasy*', meaning 'caprice, whim, and fanciful invention', from '*phantasy*' meaning 'imagination, visionary notion'.[35] However, as the authors of *The New Kleinian Dictionary* note, many analysts, let alone readers, have equated phantasy with fantasy, as the latter is defined by Strachey.

Klein was born in 1882 in Vienna.[36] Janet Sayers explains that Klein's personal life was event filled and traumatic. Her sister Sidonie died when she was young. Later, in her teenage years, her father died, and this was followed by the loss of her beloved brother Emmanuel, an art student who encouraged her to write fiction.[37] Klein started analysis with Sándor Ferenczi in 1912, and his interest in child analysis led her to analyse her own son.[38] Sayers argues that Klein's analysis of her own son and her ensuing work with children 'shifted psychoanalysis from Freud's instinct-based approach to one that was more alert to children's inner images of the relations between others and themselves'.[39]

Klein became separated from her husband after World War I, another personal factor informing her understanding of human problems. Moving to Berlin in the 1920s, she developed her ideas on psychoanalysis alongside other pioneers of the discipline and amidst an increasingly forceful clash between the ideologies of communism and fascism. In her first book, *The Psychoanalysis of Children*, of 1932, her analysis of her son is included alongside other case studies and theory, although he is given

a different name. After this, when she was living in London, her reputation as an analyst developed through the 1930s. However, she experienced further emotional loss again with rejection from a daughter and the loss of a son through an accident on a mountaineering holiday.[40] The importance of Klein's personal life to her work is made clear by the fact that she followed her experience of loss by working on a talk for a meeting in Lucerne on the subject of depression.[41]

To analyse one's own child would clearly be controversial today. Klein's emphasis on analysing children shocked contemporaries in the psychoanalytical movement. A very important theoretical divergence had already emerged in the 1920s between her approach and that of Anna Freud. This conflict of ideas split the psychoanalytical movement, leading to a major debate between the followers of both women in the 1940s. Sayers summarises, 'She [Klein] rejected Anna Freud's claim that children are too closely involved with their parents to entertain phantasies about them'.[42] Sayers goes on to account for Klein's divergence from Anna Freud by showing that Klein felt that analysis had to engage with, and liberate, children from negative phantasies internalised prior to the Oedipus complex:

> Freeing children from inhibition accordingly depends on exposing and reducing the harshness of these figures rather than strengthening them, as Anna Freud advocated, in seeking to reinforce the child's superego.[43]

Klein's central ideas of the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position developed from her earlier work. She described on the basis of clinical examples the way in which, prior to the Oedipal phase, the child transfers love and hate onto the parental figure, re-internalises these emotions in phantasy and then projects these phantasies outward again. This process describes how the child from the beginning of its life is torn between oscillating states of love and hate. The instinctive pull of the child towards that which it deems as good is challenged by fear of attack and physical invasion. For Klein, this state begins with the mother's breast as an object that may be imagined as good or bad. It can thus be related to feeding, but is not strictly determined by this because of the over determination played by the child's projection of meaning onto this content. Klein first introduced the paranoid-schizoid position formally as a concept in 1946, using it to bring together observations from her work up to this point. In 1946 she summarises the key idea underlying this position as follows: 'The vital need to deal with

anxiety forces the early ego to develop fundamental mechanisms and defences'.[44] This involves the child categorising thoughts and feelings in a Manichean dichotomy and resorting to extreme patterns such as assumed omnipotence or debilitating fear. *The New Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* provides a summary of Klein's key concept as follows:

> paranoid-schizoid mental states play an important part throughout life. The chief characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position is the splitting of both self and object into good and bad, with at first little or no integration between them.[45]

This paranoid-schizoid position is, according to Klein, necessary, but also must be overcome or transcended. The depressive phase is used by Klein to discuss how the child moves beyond the paranoid-schizoid. Again, this occurs very early in an individual's life, beginning in the first year, but continues to reappear at different points. In effect, for Klein, it is a continual possibility of mental life. It is through the depressive position, and a transcendence of it, that Klein provides a narrative of integration and redemption based on a primitive concept of compassion. I will look at examples from Klein's writing about this concept in Chapter 2, and its relevance to cultural criticism and film analysis, but here let us note again a contemporary summary of the 'depressive position', which conveys a key element of Klein's concept:

> If the confluence of loved and hated figures can be borne, anxiety begins to centre on the welfare and survival of the other as a whole object, eventually giving rise to remorseful guilt and poignant sadness, linked to deepening of love.[46]

Klein's work made a decisive intervention in psychoanalytical theory. As Sayers puts it:

> In describing this process she launched her theory of what she called 'projective identification', involving not so much projecting instincts from within us on to others, as Freud had described, but projecting and identifying with others on the basis of putting into them loved and hated figures from within us.[47]

Thus, Klein's work points to an imaginary world that informs projection and can be altered and cultivated to improve projection. As a consequence, it also continually reaffirms an inevitable instability of the ego

and, like Freudianism, challenges some of the key assumptions behind rationalist discourses. Klein describes the infant's internal imaginary world in terms of 'internal objects', a difficult and controversial idea. An appealing feature of this concept is its representation of the role emotion plays in constituting the internal world, a perspective which compares with the way Sartre and Bergman challenge an exclusively rational or linguistic account of subjectivity.

As David Macey notes, there is a lack of scientific evidence for Klein's claims about childhood.[48] However, her work set up a significant divergence from Freudianism and played an influential role in the development of psychoanalysis through object relations theory. There is no evidence that either Bergman or Sartre read or understood these developments. Nevertheless, in Klein's emphasis on the dangers of a superego, we can see both an updating of Sigmund Freud's work on this concept and an idea which corresponds with Bergman's representation of individuals tormented by authority figures, either real or imagined. Sartre also takes the struggle against authority as an issue that is simultaneously highly subjective and related to external determinants.

Klein's emphasis on children's play as a source of understanding of the psyche is distinctive, and historically significant in the development of child psychology. Throughout Bergman's work we find sensitivity to the subjectivity of children and young people. The concept of 'play' runs alongside that of imagination and can be used to consider the social implications of actions ignored by adult sensibility. Klein found the expression of intensely negative emotions in the play she witnessed, but also, through the concept of the depressive position, she paved the way for constructive recognition of the child's sense of morality.

Klein's work was very empirically based and sometimes shockingly direct. Thus, Lacan criticised Klein's crude deterministic account of certain observations of child's play[49] but, as already stated, this work became a foundation for a major development in psychoanalysis. It offers the possibility of less emphasis on Oedipal development and more account of the child's relationship to his/her environment, even though Klein herself remained completely committed to Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex.[50] Thus some defenders of Klein emphasise her proximity to Freudian concepts and argue that her work resists reduction to a psychology centred on the ego.[51] It is indisputable that, for Klein, therapy seeks to integrate the ego, whilst mental illness and neurosis stem from the ego in crisis. However, through the central role given to what Klein calls phantasy, which I see as a contribution to the understanding of imagination, she fully recognises how the ego may be

assailed by forces that are deep and that require interpretation as well as observation.

Connected to this emphasis on interpretation and the depths of the psyche is Klein's distinctive emphasis on the significance of the maternal. This approach has not always been welcomed, and was criticised by Anna Freud and her followers for the failure to analyse the actual roles played by mothers.[52] However, in the context of psychoanalysis it provides an enormous counterpoint to Freudian and Lacanian emphasis on the structural power of the father as a real person and as a concept. Of course, the structural significance of the maternal in Klein does not necessarily provide a wide-ranging feminist alternative to Freudianism, but there is an interesting correspondence with the powerful position of women in a large number of Bergman's works, albeit in various roles from mothers to femme fatales. In Sartre's work we find recognition of the maternal most strongly in his autobiographical and literary biographical work, including his analysis of Gustave Flaubert's relationship with his mother.[53]

Having moved to Britain in the 1930s, Klein worked continuously until her death in 1960. During this period she continued to be a specialist focusing on the experience of her clinical practice and developing her focus on the mother. At key points we can see how a more social perspective emerges from this material, including her analysis of such phenomena as criminality, art and the dangers of envy and jealousy. I will return to this broader perspective in subsequent chapters as Klein's work is developed and applied to Bergman's films.

Sartre

A year after Sartre's birth in 1905 his father died, leaving the young Sartre to be brought up by his mother, and influenced by his patriarchal grandfather. Later, Sartre became deeply resentful of his stepfather. Sartre's 1963 autobiography, *Words*, recalls his childhood, including the way he became an intellectual, with his grandfather's books dominating his imagination. Sartre sees himself as someone drawn to an abstract intellectual and imaginary universe even before he could read. As he puts it:

> A Platonist by condition, I moved from knowledge to its object; I found ideas more real than things, because they were the first to give themselves to me and because they gave themselves like things.[54]

Whilst continuing his early attraction to intellectual existence Sartre, as a reader, was taken, in his childhood, by action adventure stories,[55] one origin for his later emphasis on heroic individual commitment as a fundamental philosophical principle.

At school Sartre was already highly imaginative, writing stories inspired by the detective fiction he adored and acting out the films he saw at the cinema with his mother. As David Drake records:

> At local venues as well as the bigger picture houses they watched melodramatic adventure films, many of their features borrowed from popular literature: the rescuing of damsels in distress, the dastardly machinations of the villains and the courage and daring of the heroes.[56]

According to Drake, Sartre's early fiction, written after he left school, already reveals a number of themes and preoccupations that return later, including a strong awareness of self-deception as a psychological process and contempt for the bourgeoisie. Drake emphasises how Sartre moved beyond the simple moral binaries of the fiction he loved as a child, and in its place emerged a fascination with the lack of certainty in human affairs. As Drake tells us:

> Life, he observed, was nothing but contingency. He was struck by the contrast with what happened in the cinema. In films everything has a significance and contributes to the story, which has a beginning, a middle and a (usually happy) end. In life, on the other hand, there is no necessity.[57]

While Sartre's early adult life reveals his precocity and intelligence, there is also a disturbing unstable element at work. Sartre's study of philosophy during the 1930s involved some time spent in Berlin on a scholarship, a situation which brought him into contact with fascism. Sartre developed his ideas about the individual's responsibility in the face of a world in which political action could appear absurd in its futility. He became preoccupied with the terrible nature of 'freedom' that confronts the individual consciousness. His early work on the imagination can be regarded as bound up with this problem of responding to the negative, annihilating quality of consciousness that goes with the possibility of freedom. At the same time this work is influenced by his non-conformist lifestyle, such that during his work on the imagination he felt negatively affected by his experiments with mescaline and the resulting