Individuality and Mortality in the Philosophy of Portrait-Painting: Simmel, Rousseau, and Melanie Klein

Individualidad y mortalidad en la filosofía de la pintura de retratos: Simmel, Rousseau y Melanie Klein

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores some connections between depictions of mortality in portrait-painting and philosophical (and psychoanalytic) treatments of our need to be recognized by others. I begin by examining the connection that Georg Simmel makes in his philosophical study of Rembrandt between that artist's capacity for depicting his portrait subjects as non-repeatable individuals and his depicting them as mortal, or such as to die. After noting that none of Simmel's explanations of the tragic character of Rembrandt's portrait subjects seems fully satisfactory, I then turn to Rousseau's writing on our need for the recognition of others in order to argue that (1) it is at least as sources for the satisfaction of this need that other persons figure for us as irreplaceable (in a way that contrasts with the kinds of satisfaction that intersubstitutable things afford us); and that (2) it is exactly this kind of irreplaceability that Simmel is gesturing at in connecting the concepts of individuality and mortality in his writing on Rembrandt's portraits. For the remainder of the paper I argue that the foregoing ideas are in fact central to the psychoanalytic writing of Melanie Klein, and in particular (a) Klein's understanding the infant's apprehension of other persons as internally related to their anxieties about the possibility

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of those persons' irretrievable loss; (b) her understanding that it is as sources of recognition that others' personhood is made salient to us; and (c) her treatment of portrait-painting as an activity for working through those aforementioned anxieties.

KEYWORDS
PORTRAITURE, AESTHETICS, PSYCHOANALYSIS, RECOGNITION, INDIVIDUALITY, MORTALITY, GEORG SIMMEL, JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, MELANIE KLEIN

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora ciertas conexiones entre la representación de la mortalidad en el retrato y el tratamiento filosófico (y psicoanalítico) de nuestra necesidad de ser reconocidos por los demás. En primer lugar, se examina la conexión que establece Georg Simmel en su estudio filosófico sobre Rembrandt entre la capacidad del artista para representar en sus retratos individuos irrepetibles, y su capacidad para capturar la finitud de los mismos en tanto que seres mortales. Tras señalar que ninguna de las explicaciones de Simmel sobre el carácter trágico de los sujetos de los retratos de Rembrandt resulta completamente satisfactoria, recupero los escritos de Rousseau sobre nuestra necesidad de ser reconocidos por los otros, para argumentar que (1) consideramos que los otros son insustituibles porque son capaces de satisfacer esta necesidad (de una manera que no tiene nada que ver con los tipos de satisfacción que nos brindan las cosas sustituibles); y que (2) es, precisamente, a esta clase de insustituibilidad a la que apunta Simmel al enlazar los conceptos de individualidad y mortalidad en sus escritos sobre los retratos de Rembrandt. A partir de este punto, sostengo que las ideas anteriores son, de hecho, centrales para la comprensión de la escritura psicoanalítica de Melanie Klein, y, en particular, (a) al planteamiento de Klein sobre la percepción de las otras personas por parte de los niños, que relaciona con sus ansiedades acerca de la posibilidad de la pérdida irreparable de esas personas; (b) su planteamiento de que la condición de persona del otro se debe a que los percibimos como fuentes de reconocimiento; y (c) su análisis de la pintura de retratos como una actividad con la que abordar estas ansiedades.

PALABRAS CLAVE
RETRATOS, ESTÉTICA, PSICOANÁLISIS, RECONOCIMIENTO, INDIVIDUALIDAD, MORTALIDAD, GEORG SIMMEL, JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, MELANIE KLEIN

In memory of Marcela Josefina Ríos Dordelly (1946-2018), a painter

WHAT RELATIONSHIP MIGHT THERE BE between depictions of death and mortality in portrait-painting and our need to be recognized by others? Here I want to carry through a provocative line of thought that I find in the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel's 1916 philosophical study of Rembrandt, though it will require discussing two other writers, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and (at some length) Melanie Klein, also concerned with recognition and the peculiar kind of loss characteristic of our relations to other persons.

I. Themes from Simmel

Simmel begins the second chapter of his study (titled «Individualization and the General») by noting that «the portrait figures of the Renaissance always appear to be somehow typical, while Rembrandt's give the impression of individual uniqueness» (*R*: 61). And throughout his book he grounds this supposed contrast—between the depiction of types characteristic of the Renaissance (especially the Italian Renaissance), and Rembrandt's depiction of unique individuals—in their contrasting conceptions of a human being. On the Renaissance conception, according to Simmel, there is nothing distinctive, among all particulars, about the ways in which human beings instantiate general concepts: «all individual characteristics are generalities» (*R*: 67). Thus, on this conception, a human being is not anything above and beyond the general and repeatable traits they instantiate. Simmel opposes this to a conception whereby a human being is more than the instantiation of their general traits, in the sense that the unification of those traits in that individual is not a repeatable phenomenon. That individual human being *is* the way they unify their general traits. And, according to Simmel, Rembrandt's particular talent in his portraits was to capture the unique and unrepeatable way in which an individual brings those traits together.

My aim is not to defend the preference Simmel clearly has for Rembrandt over Italian Renaissance painting (a preference that occasionally reads as northern European chauvinism). And it is not always clear what it is about human beings such that they allow for the peculiar kind of unification of traits of concern to Simmel—their condition as living things, or as exhibiting what Simmel calls «inner life»—just as it is not clear whether he thinks that all human beings are in his sense a unity or «totality.» (I will soon return to this question.) But Simmel's fundamental contrast, represented by his opposition between the Italian Renaissance and Rembrandt, allows him to express undeniably real contrasts that tend to arise in portrait-painting. For example, it allows him to express the apparent paradox that adding further (repeatable) details to a portrait can take us even further from capturing a subject's individuality:

> At least in many appearances it is precisely the specific, the minutia, that which turns the large general overview into the details of immediate reality—it is exactly this that is general, and it is exactly this that a large number of appearances have in common. It is precisely only in disregarding all of this in favor of the unity of the appearance not sundered into details that one grasps its individual essence and uniqueness (*R*: 49).

So long as one just adds further details to a portrait, that does not take us outside the ambit of general traits. And typically it is through a single expressive *stroke* in a portrait that one can capture someone's distinctive presence. Therefore, it is one of Simmel's theses that through such means Rembrandt «transcends the naïve identification of detailing and individuality» characteristic of a focus on individuals as bearers of general traits (*R*: 49).[1] (This phenomenon is certainly present in Rembrandt's paintings, though the best illustrations of it might be in the single expressive strokes typical of his drawings.)

This discussion takes an important turn when Simmel connects the individuality of Rembrandt's portrait subjects with their mortality or perishability. For example, about Rembrandt's «laughing self-portrait of the Carstanjen collection» (1666-9),[2] Simmel says, «The whole is as if infused by, and oriented toward, death» (*R*: 74). And he later adds, «the thought of death has a remarkable relationship to the artistic relationship of the human being» (*R*: 76). From a certain angle, this is not a unique point: many writers on portraiture have noted that genre's characteristic concern with mortality, especially in its giving expression to the fantasy of surviving death.[3] But what guides Simmel's writing here is something different and more specific: his sense that, whereas in Italian Renaissance portraits the subjects are depicted as imperishable (except by external violence), Rembrandt's subjects, including those of his self-portraits, are (in their internal nature) *such as to die*.

> With many Italian portraits one gets the impression that death would come to these people in the form of a dagger thrust. With Rembrandt's portraits it as if death were the steady development of this flowing totality of life—like the current with which it flows into the sea, and not through violation by some new factor but only following its natural course from the beginning (*R*: 74).

This contrast in treatments of mortality is another contrast that undeniably arises in portrait-painting, and Simmel is making a suggestive point in connec-

1 Incidentally, Georg Lukásc, who famously combined the insights of both Marx and Simmel in order to understand how a typifying or «reifying» treatment of persons is an expression of the commodity-form under capitalism (in «Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,» in *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone [Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press: 1971], 83-222), was also evidently very familiar with Simmel's study of Rembrandt. See Lukásc, «Georg Simmel,» trans. Margaret Cerullo, *Theory, Culture & Society* 8 (1991): 145-50.

2 This self-portrait is now in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne.

3 For example, John Berger, «The Fayum Portrait Painters,» in *Portraits: John Berger on Artists*, ed. Tom Overton (London: Verso, 2015).

ting it with his earlier contrast between the representation of general traits and the representation of unified individuals. But what exactly is that connection?

Before coming to what I think Simmel *should* say, I want to note that he occasionally bypasses his own sense of this connection's importance by reaching for disappointing metaphysical explanations of the tragic dimension of Rembrandt's portraits. These explanations are disappointing because they are either perfectly consistent with a schema of portraits as consisting just of general traits, or because they escape that schema only on an ad hoc basis. For example, Simmel tentatively suggests that, in their subjects' evident perishability, Rembrandt's portraits may be registering the idea that «life and death [are] only relative opposites,» a relationship characterized by «mutual limitation and conditioning» (*R*: 72). But obviously there is nothing, by itself, about understanding mortality and life as «mutually conditioning,» or in a dialectical union of opposites, that excludes either's being rendered (in philosophy or in painting) as a general or repeatable trait. (After all, in characterizing this view, Simmel is talking about a *general tendency* in the relationship between life and mortality.)

More interestingly, Simmel later suggests that «the generality of death negates itself,» in that each dies «a death of [one's] own» (*R*: 78-79). But even a highly specific way of dying can be described in general terms, and can in principle be shared among multiple individuals; suggesting otherwise would be either a vacuous appeal to singular reference («Only *x* can die *x*'s death») or an ad hoc limitation on the schema of general traits. And, needless to say, there are deeper ways of understanding the phrase «death of one's own,» a phrase that Simmel draws from Rilke.[4] But any one of these, say that of the absolute *aloneness* of death, will take us far from any questions about the schema of general traits, or Simmel's contrasting picture of non-repeatable unities.

It seems that if we want to understand Simmel's own connection between depictions of individuality and depictions of mortality in portraiture, that cannot turn on questions about what kind of *trait* (or property) mortality might be, but rather on questions about the categorical difference between individuals and traits (or between individuals and properties). And that requires considering differences in our relationships to individuals and to traits, and why traits admit of substitution (among their instances), whereas individual persons are (to us) irreplaceable. Simmel hovers around this point when he says, «the more individual, therefore, a person is, the more 'mortal' he is, because the unique is simply irreplaceable» (*R*: 77); and also when he says, «Only the individual dies, the type does not» (*R*: 76). But while those are indeed remarks about the

4 Rainer Maria Rilke, *Das Stunden-Buch* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1905), Book Three.

difference between individuals and types, they do not illuminate anything specifically about portraits, which focus on persons, as opposed, say, to still life paintings, which focus on inanimate things. Some inanimate things are, in some sense, irreplaceable; and all inanimate things perish while their types may persist. What then happened to Simmel's insight that there is something specifically about human beings, as depicted in Rembrandt's portraits, such that they *are* non-repeatable unifications of traits? In what special sense are human beings irreplaceable?

II. Themes from Rousseau

I do not think we are immediately forced into a *moral* understanding of humans' or persons' irreplaceability: for example, Kant's characterizing the inherent dignity of rational wills by saying that persons are «above all price» and admit of «no equivalent» (Kant 4:429, 4:434). Of course, I am not excluding the possibility that such moral notions might somehow be registered in portrait-painting; I am only suggesting that we might first want to consider the possibility that some notion of persons as irreplaceable predates (either phylogenetically or ontogenetically) the development in humans of moral concepts. And I think we find such a sense of irreplaceability in the writings of a philosopher who rarely wrote on the visual arts, but who was famously concerned with «pre-moral» relations among humans (and whose writings are an important background for both Simmel and Kant): namely, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.[5]

In the phylogenetic account of human development in his *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau examines at least two stages of human history prior to the origin in humans of a notion of «right» in a social compact.[6] In the first

5 Strikingly, Rousseau's avowed preference for music over painting (accounting for his comparative neglect of the visual arts) turns on questions of which medium better allows us to feel the presence of another person. Music, he says, «always gives us some idea about our own kind…it is not possible to hear a song or a symphony without immediately telling oneself: another sentient being is present» (*EO*: 292/*OC*: 5:411). The following two paragraphs summarize the reading of Rousseau I present in «Speech, the Affective, and the Insult in Not Being Believed: Rousseau and Adam Smith» (*The Adam Smith Review*, vol. 11, ed. Fonna Forman, London: Routledge, 2019, 53-66) and at length in «*Amour-Propre* and Seeing Others as Persons» (unpublished manuscript).

6 These are not the only stages prior to such a compact that Rousseau examines: others include (just before nascent society) the gathering of humans in primitive dwellings (*DI:* 164/*OC*: 3: 167), and (bringing nascent society to an end) the invention of private property (*DI*: 167-9/*OC*: 3: 171-4); I am only above considering those stages relevant to marking a distinction between *amour de soi* and *amour-propre*. The fact that these stages precede a social compact (either the inegalitarian compact discussed in the

of these, the original state of nature, the life of the asocial *sauvage* was principally governed by the passion Rousseau calls *amour de soi*, or the desire for self-preservation. And the objects of *amour de soi*, such as food and shelter, were «ready to hand» (*DI*: 143/*OC*: 3:144) at least in the sense that there was nothing in the nature of those objects such that they could not be had, and without spoiling their satisfactoriness, through force or through exercises of the will. Therefore, the world, from the perspective of the *sauvage*, was a world of *things*, in that he desired nothing that was unavailable to exercises of his will and the contingent limitations of his abilities. Indeed, this way of relating to the world even characterized his relations to others of his kind: he related to other humans just as instruments or impediments to the satisfaction of his *amour de soi*, and so when they stood in his way, he saw them just as «natural occurrences, without the slightest stirring of arrogance or resentment,» and he reacted to them «with no other passion than the pain or pleasure at success or failure» (*DI*: 218/*OC*: 3:219-20).

But things fundamentally change with the birth of social relations, when «everyone began to look at everyone else and wish to be looked at himself, and public esteem [became prized]» (*DI*: 166/*OC*: 3:169-70). In this moment (what Rousseau calls «nascent society;» *DI*: 167, 172/*OC:* 3:170, 176) humans' mutual relations are indeed governed by *amour de soi*, but also by the passion he calls (a few pages following this passage: *DI*: 170/*OC*: 3:174) *amour-propre*, or the desire for differential recognition from others: that is, the desire to be «picked out» from among the manifold of persons, say for one's talents as a singer or a dancer (but more generally, the desire to have one's presence noticed).[7] Thus, whereas the *sauvage* had related to others of his kind just as instruments or impediments to his self-preservation, members of nascent society came to care about what others think of them, and thereby came to value something

Discourse on Inequality, or the egalitarian «contract» treated in *The Social Contract*), and thus precede the appearance in humans of notions of «right,» helps to isolate the sense in which these stages are «pre-moral.» (In *The Social Contract* Rousseau says of right that it «does not come from nature [but] is founded on conventions;» *SC*: I.1.2; and in the Geneva Manuscript of that same book Rousseau says, «the law precedes justice, not justice the law;» *G*: 160/*OC*: 3:329.) I am also understanding as «pre-moral» the natural *pitié* (or compassion) characteristic of the *sauvage*, as that is a capacity he shares with the non-human animals (*DI*: 152/*OC*: 3:154). (I will follow Rousseau in using masculine pronouns to refer to the *sauvage*, just as I will below follow him in using masculine pronouns when discussing his account of the infant.)

7 It is as *differential* that this recognition's character as pre-moral is relevant: it contrasts with the non-differential recognition, or respect, owed another in virtue of, say, their status as a person or citizen, and which, for Rousseau, is principally afforded by a social compact.

(another's differential recognition) outside of what is available to exercises of their wills and the contingent limitations of their abilities.

There are several important categorical differences between *amour de soi* and *amour-propre*, but I want to focus on how these two passions allow for a categorical difference (relevant to the satisfaction of our passions) between general traits and non-repeatable individuals. The objects of *amour de soi* are interchangeable: relative to that passion, any two qualitatively similar sources of satisfaction are equally satisfying. Thus, it is no loss (relative to *amour de soi*) to have one's apple snatched, so long as a qualitatively similar one is available. In contrast, in valuing another's differential recognition, the insult characteristic upon having that desire frustrated is in no way made up for by the recognition of yet another person (in some relevant way) qualitatively similar to the one I care about.[8] As welcome as the differential recognition of yet other might be, none of them can make up for the insult or disappointment elicited by *this one*'s thwarting of my *amour-propre*. Therefore, if *amour-propre* makes available to us a distinctive way of being affected by persons, then we can say that that at least involves seeing others as *individuals*: as irreducible to their general traits, and as not satisfactorily exchangeable with other, qualitatively similar sources of satisfaction.

From Rousseau's writing I am thus drawing the idea that it is in virtue of one's valuing another's capacity for differential recognition of oneself that one appreciates or acknowledges them as a person (as opposed to a thing): indeed a person bearing general or repeatable traits, but also (as Simmel would put it) unifying those traits in the form of a non-repeatable individual. And it is also from Rousseau that I am drawing the idea that our relations to other persons, in that sense, are characterized by a peculiar kind of loss. We can lose objects of *amour de soi*, but since those objects are only satisfying to us in virtue of their instantiating types, that kind of loss is remediable; it is not a «real loss.» In contrast, losing an object of *amour-propre*, in the sense of understanding that that person's recognition is not forthcoming—and that, through death or disappearance from our lives, it may never be forthcoming—*is* a real loss; its characteristic pain can survive the discovery of another person of a relevantly similar type (prepared to recognize us in the desired way). It is for this reason that, as objects of our *amour-propre*, persons appear to us at once as non-repeatable individuals and as mortal. Or in other words: it is as sources of differential recognition that their individuality and their mortality come to matter to us.

8 On the connection between the thwarting of *amour-propre* and feelings of insult, see *DI*: 154, 218/*OC*: 3:157, 219.

Thanks to these ideas drawn from Rousseau, we are now in a better position to address some of those questions from Simmel that we left hanging. At the beginning I noted it is not always clear what it is about human beings such that they allow for the peculiar kind of unification of traits that Simmel discusses: he mentions both «life» and «inner life.» But Rousseau's writing allows us to take seriously the hypothesis that it is humans' capacity to bestow differential recognition (when we understand them to have that capacity) that figures fundamentally in our appreciation or acknowledgment of them as non-repeatable individuals. One advantage of this shift in focus is that it turns us away from needing to locate criteria, or features relevant for being a person, in order to understand the connection between being a person and being a non-repeatable individual. Of course, in some contexts, being alive (or exhibiting inner life) should be considered a criterion for being a person in the relevant sense.[9] But, according to the present hypothesis, the possibility of eliciting such criteria is less important for understanding personhood's connection to individuality and even mortality (in the sense of allowing for irretrievable loss) than consideration of the *necessary consequences* of valuing another as a source of differential recognition. Therefore, Simmel's interest in human beings as non-repeatable individuals may need to be re-oriented toward the observation that it is principally other human beings (and typically not inanimate objects) whom we value in that peculiar way.

Moreover, I earlier suggested that the root of Simmel's disappointing metaphysical explanations of the tragic character of Rembrandt's portraits consists in Simmel's trying to specify what kind of trait mortality might be: this is why none of his proposals (that mortality is in a kind of dialectical union with life, that each person dies «a death of [one's] own») really moves out of the schema of general, repeatable traits that Rembrandt's portraits are supposed to help us out of. I therefore suggested that we turn to consideration of the categorical difference between general traits and individuals, and I argued that Rousseau's distinction between *amour de soi* and *amour-propre* makes that categorical difference salient to us, in that (according to Rousseau's phylogenetic account) it is only in being subject to the latter passion that other humans' characters as non-repeatable individuals becomes relevant to the satisfaction of our desires.

9 Nevertheless, a major theme of Stanley Cavell's writing is the distortion involved in treating «inner life» as merely an object of knowledge (admitting criteria that our experience of others may either fulfill or fail to fulfill), as opposed to treating it as eliciting the range of responses that Cavell calls «acknowledgment»: Cavell, «Knowing and Acknowledging,» in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 238-66, and Part IV of *The Claim of Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 329-496.

Therefore, this allows for a further orientation away from Simmel's treatments of mortality as a trait or property: the sense of «mortality» relevant to understanding the tragic character of Rembrandt's portraits, and its connection to non-repeatable individuality, characterizes not a *trait* (or property) of persons, but rather a *way of relating* to persons such that they allow for irretrievable loss. (Again, as I read Rousseau's phylogenetic account, it is only as objects of *amour-propre*—as persons whose differential recognition we value—that the possibility of irremediably losing them, or at least irremediably losing access to their recognition, becomes salient.) This re-orientation is not a distraction from the brute biological topic of death that seemed to be Simmel's initial concern; it is rather a reminder of one of the reasons why that biological topic is important to us (at least when it comes to others' deaths) in a way that contrasts with the loss of those things we value just because they instantiate general types. So long as we take our focus to be the biological topic of death (indeed, more generally, so long as we take our focus to be mortality's status as a trait or property of persons) it will seem incredible that we can draw conclusions about the nature of mortality from considerations about recognition. But once we understand our real interest to be our ways of relating to persons (such that they allow for irretrievable loss), the turn to recognition no longer seems incredible, but rather forced by serious consideration of the various respects in which we value other people.[10]

In summary, then: when a person is valued as a source of differential recognition, they are taken out of the ordinary economy of exchange and substitution (derived from our seeing things as objects of *amour de soi*).[11] This is not just a way of rendering them as individuals to us; it is also an important way of rendering them as mortal to us, since their loss (especially through death) cannot be made up for by any other (even qualitatively similar) person. At this point my principal claims, therefore, are (1) that Simmel's writing is responding to Rembrandt's depictions of the possibility of irretrievable loss in his portrait subjects; (2) that this is why mortality can pervade Rembrandt's portraits of any human, not just those who are close to death;[12] and (3) that this

10 I certainly do not want to deny that there are further respects (other than as sources of differential recognition) in which we value other people and that thereby allow for irretrievable loss. But one advantage of Rousseau's phylogenetic account of human development is that it allows us to isolate one factor (*amour-propre*) and understand the full extent to which it can account for the former phenomena.

11 I have borrowed the phrase «ordinary economy of exchange and substitution» from Richard Moran, «Kant, Proust, and the Appeal of Beauty,» *Critical Inquiry* 38.2 (2012): 298-329, 302, an essay that has shaped my understanding of many of the present issues.

12 For example, I would insist that a feeling of mortality, and the possibility

is the connection he is responding to (in those portraits) between mortality and individuality.

But what about self-portraits? As a re-orientation of Simmel's original framing of the connection between mortality and individuality in portrait-painting, the foregoing would seem to take us very far even from what I have relied on as my guide—Simmel's responses to Rembrandt's portraits—since I have focused on our valuing *others* as sources of differential recognition, whereas Simmel's evident paradigm of a portrait «infused by death» is Rembrandt's «laughing self-portrait of the Carstanjen collection» (1666-9). Obviously, if there is a problem here, it rests on the extent to which we want to consider self-portraiture an activity or genre distinct from, as opposed to derived from, portraiture of others. But it seems that the most important factor, in understanding questions about differential recognition and irretrievable loss as applicable to self-portraits, is the extent to which a self-portrait is directed to an audience. Typically, for a painting to be intelligible (to an audience) as a self-portrait, it must also be intelligible (to that audience) as a portrait; and that typically means that the self-portraitist must somehow render themselves *as other*.[13] Therefore, it is hardly surprising whenever a painter who successfully removes their portrait subjects from the ordinary economy of exchange and substitution (derived from our seeing things as objects of *amour de soi*), and whose portrait subjects therefore escape typification, *also* successfully removes their own self-depictions from that economy. That may indeed depend on rendering themselves as persons capable of differential recognition, and especially on the fantasy that they are among those who might receive it (that is, their own recognition). But it is also hardly surprising that self-portraiture might require a significant degree of fantasy.

of irretrievable loss, pervades Rembrandt's portrait of a young boy (1655-60) in the Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena.

13 I think that this relationship between *being intelligible as a self-portrait* and *being intelligible as a portrait* even characterizes modernist self-portraits in which no human figure is discernible (and thus otherwise outside the ambit of the present discussion): for example, Frances Hodgkin's «self-portrait» as still life items (in the Auckland Art Gallery); or modernist self-portraits that bypass altogether the representation of distinguishing traits, such as Philip Guston's «self-portrait» as eyes behind a hood. (For discussion of the former, see Shearer West, *Portraiture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 198-9; for discussion of the latter, see Harry Cooper, «Recognizing Guston (in Four Slips),» *October* 99 (2002): 96-129, 127.)

III. Themes from Klein

A natural additional place to turn in understanding the connection between loss and the acknowledgment of others as persons is the psychoanalytic theories of Melanie Klein. This is because Klein provides an ontogenetic account of human development according to which the infant's first coming to appreciate its mother as a «complete person,» as opposed to a «part» (principally the nourishing or life-giving breast) gives rise to a distinctive concern with losing that person.[14] (This concern marks the moment in infant development that Klein calls the «depressive position.»[15]) Moreover, in her writing related to art and creativity Klein explicitly mentions *portraiture* as a means of registering that fear of loss, and also (more positively, given what I have been able so far to draw from Simmel) as a means of «repairing» for the extent to which that fear arises from our own destructive tendencies toward others. Therefore, in the remainder of this essay I want to consider some moments in Klein's writing that help strengthen the connections within that circle of concepts (portraiture, loss, individuality, differential recognition) that has emerged from our considering Simmel's writing on Rembrandt.

III.1. Klein on personhood and loss

Klein understands the infant's relationship to its outside environment as principally mediated by its need for gratification (its need to be fed) and its

14 In referring to infants generally, Klein varies between using masculine pronouns and using «it.» Neither is satisfactory, but I will here follow her latter practice.

15 For Klein's reasons for using the term «position,» as opposed to «phase,» see *MD*: 275-6n1. As Hanna Segal puts the point, «The depressive position never fully supersedes the paranoid-schizoid position; the integration achieved is never complete and defenses against the depressive conflict bring about regression to paranoid-schizoid phenomena, so that the individual at all times may oscillate between the two;» Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein* (London: Karnac, 1973), ix. I understand Klein's ontogenetic account of seeing others (as persons) as «pre-moral» in a way that parallels Rousseau's in that the major components of her account (the depressive position, the «introjection» of complete persons) do not presuppose a developed super-ego, but in fact figure in the explanation of the latter's development. There may in fact be an even deeper parallel between the two accounts, insofar as we take seriously Frederick Neuhouser's suggestions about the role that *amour-propre* plays in the formation of the super-ego, Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love: Evil, Rationality, and the Drive for Recognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 247-50. Earlier in his book Neuhouser also draws on some Kleinian themes from N.J.H. Dent's significantly Klein-influenced reading of Rousseau, *Rousseau: An Introduction to His Psychological, Social and Political Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); cf. Neuhouser, 132n15, 140n22, 149n32, but see note 25 below for my differences with Dent.

desire to avoid frustrations (particularly in being fed). Beginning in the first three or four months of life (*TC*: 61), the objects that supply gratification figure for the infant as «good» objects, while sources of frustration figure as «bad» objects: indeed, since at this stage the infant's main source of nourishment is the mother's breast or a breast-substitute like a bottle, the infant's conception of reality is bifurcated into the gratifying *good breast*, which the infant loves, and the denying *bad breast* (the breast that withholds nourishment), which the infant hates. Already at this stage the infant fears a kind of loss—when the good breast withdraws, the infant fears it will not return—thus providing its characteristic anxiety or paranoia. (Klein refers to these first months of life in terms of the «paranoid position,» and in her later writing in terms of the «paranoid-schizoid position.»[16])

But the second quarter of the infant's life is characterized by an increased «differentiation» in its relation to the external world: «The range of his gratifications and interest widens, and his power of expressing his emotions and communicating with people increases» (*TC*: 72). This eventually allows for the possibility of the infant's relating to, or «introjecting,» the *person* of the mother (or mother-figure) and later that of others in its environment. And, according Klein, this is immediately associated with a new concern about the possibility of losing that complete person.

> Hand in hand with this development goes a change of the highest importance; namely, from a partial object-relation to the relation to a complete object. Through this step the ego arrives at a new position, which forms the foundation of the situation called the loss of the loved object. Not until the object is loved as a whole can its loss be felt as a whole (*MD*: 264).

Klein refers to this development as the «depressive position»: whereas in the paranoid-schizoid position the infant principally fears the bad or denying breast, in the depressive position the infant additionally fears losing those objects (its internalized parents) it has successfully introjected. Therefore, this new relationship to complete objects (or persons) generates in the infant a new kind of distress.

> It seems to me that only when the ego has introjected the object as a whole, and has established a better relationship to the external world and to real people, is it able fully to realize the disaster created through its sadism and especially through its cannibalism, and to feel distressed about it (*MD*: 269).

16 Klein came to adopt the latter term under the influence of W.R.D. Fairbairn's writing on schizoid mechanisms and the splitting of the ego (*SM*: 2n1; *TC*: 61n1).

That is, the infant's fears of losing its internalized parents come about mainly through its fearing the consequences of its own sadism: the destructive tendencies of its id, of its internalized bad objects, as well as its own «cannibalism,» or the fact that its relations to the external world have principally been through introjecting parts of persons (paradigmatically, the mother's breast). The healthy development following this depressive position is the infant's creatively restoring those objects it has destroyed in its imagination, thereby feeling secure that those objects, as internalized parts of its ego, can survive its own sadistic fantasies. (This working through the depressive position is the earliest version of a process that the child will encounter later in life, and especially in mourning.[17]) Such reparation typically initiates with the infant's feeling guilty about those sadistic fantasies, though Klein also discusses a number of defenses against such guilt and the ensuing process of reparation. Perhaps the most important of these are the «manic defenses» characterized by a feeling of omnipotence or triumph over the injured object, as well as a «disparagement of the object's importance and…contempt for it» (*MD*: 278).[18] In other words, the manic defenses consist of an assertion of one's independence of these objects, and may consist in taking satisfaction in their perceived destructibility or mortality. Accordingly, when this feeling of manic omnipotence decreases, the child achieves greater trust in its capacity to love and in its own reparative powers (*MMD*: 353).

Therefore, when we recall that Simmel understood Rembrandt's portraits as depicting human beings as non-repeatable «unities» or «totalities» of traits, as opposed to aggregations of repeatable traits, we will want to ask to what extent this contrast is the same as Klein's contrast between the infant's apprehension of others as «complete persons» (allowing for a unification of good and bad aspects) and their earlier relations to others strictly in terms of good or bad «parts.» And, of course, this suggestion is strengthened when we recall that Simmel also associated depicting persons as unities or totalities with depicting them as mortal: this was a notion of «mortality» that, I argued,

17 In calling this the «depressive position,» and in locating this process in the infant's feared loss of its introjected parents—which notably reaches its height during weaning—Klein thereby offers her distinctive development of Freud's and Karl Abraham's theories of melancholia as, like mourning, involving the loss of an object (*MD*: 263-5). Cf. Freud, «Mourning and Melancholia,» in *S.E.*, vol. 14, 243-58; Abraham, «A Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders,» in *Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis* (London: Hogarth, 1927).

18 On manic defenses as ways of evading a feeling of guilt, see *MMD*: 348-9. Klein also discusses obsessional (as well as manic) defenses against guilt and overcoming the depressive position, *MD*: 283, 288-89; *MMD*: 350-53.

is best understood not as a trait or property of persons but as a way of relating to the possibility of their loss.

An immediate obstacle in developing this suggestion, however, is that, in trying to make sense of that distinctive possibility of loss characteristic of persons, I relied on the idea (which Simmel gestured at) that persons are irreplaceable in a way that contrasts with those things we value just as bearers of general or repeatable traits: unlike with those things valued in the latter way, the loss of a person is a «real loss.» And yet Klein emphasizes creative *reparation* as the healthy response to the loss of persons (either real or in fantasy); and she even mentions the infant's search for *substitutes*—that is, its search for further affective relationships—as a normal response to that fear of loss characteristic of the depressive position.[19]

But this may be only a superficial difference between Klein's views and the arguments I presented above. After all, in interpreting Klein we need to understand what difference there is between that fear the infant experiences in its first three or four months of life (which focuses on the loss of a «part,» namely the nourishing «good breast») and those fears that arise in the second quarter of life (which focus on the loss of complete persons). Why should the introjection of complete persons generate a new kind of distress in the infant? (Surely it is not as simple as the infant's fearing losing touch with something *bigger* than a mere part of a person.) And why should a common defense, generated by that fear, be the assertion of one's independence of, or power over, those complete persons? I want to point out that if (despite Klein's talk of «substitutes») the infant sees complete persons as irreplaceable in a way that contrasts with parts of persons, then we indeed have provisional answers to both those questions. On this proposal for reading Klein, the «distress» that she describes in the case of the infant who now relates to «complete persons» (as opposed to «parts») is a response to their experience of those persons as non-repeatable individuals. The infant's own sadism (as well as the destructive tendencies of its own id, and its already-introjected bad objects) strikes it as especially destructive when directed to complete persons exactly because persons do not admit of substitution and easy reparation in the way that parts of persons do.

This would also help to explain why a dependence on «complete persons» (rather than «parts»), whose irretrievable loss is experienced as threatened by the infant's own sadism and destructive tendencies, might generate

19 Klein says, «In both sexes, the fear of the loss of the mother, the primary loved object—that is to say, depressive anxiety—contributes to the need for substitutes; and the infant first turns to the father, who at this stage is also introjected as a complete person, to fulfil this need» (*TC*: 79).

manic defenses and a feeling of power over those persons: it is often easier (than feeling guilt and working through the depressive position) to evade any acknowledgment of one's dependence on non-repeatable individuals, and for whose irretrievable destruction (at least in fantasy) one might have to make reparation.[20] And that last point might help to explain why Klein's talk of finding «substitutes» is meant in a sense rather different from, and in fact compatible with, my talk above of persons as valued outside the «ordinary economy of exchange and substitution.»[21] It is exactly because persons are irreplaceable objects of value, in a way that contrasts with mere things and even parts of persons, that our ways of dealing with their loss typically involves what Klein calls *reparation*. (For example, on this interpretation of Klein, it is exactly because persons are irreplaceable that mourning their loss must involve coming to feel secure about their place, as introjected objects, in one's ego, *MMD*: 362-3.) After all, such «reparation» is a process of moving on from the (real or imagined) destruction of that person; but only with what's *irreplaceable* is there any question of how to move on from its destruction.

On this proposal, when Klein talks about finding «substitutes» as a way of working through the depressive position (or working through mourning), she is not in fact talking about treating persons just as inter-substitutable instances of general types. (For example, she is not suggesting it is healthy what Rousseau, in his autobiographical writings, confesses to have done in treating his lover and later wife Thérèse Levasseur as a «substitute» for his earlier lover Françoise-Louise de Warens, whom he also consistently refers to as *Maman*; *C*: 310-311/*OC*: 1:331-2.[22]) In fact, such typifying (or reifying) treatment of persons suggests something closer to the desire to assert control over others characteristic of those manic defenses formed in order to *avoid* working through the depressive position.[23] Rather, for Klein, working through the depressive

20 The above constitutes my interpretation of one remark in which Klein explicitly refers to the loved object as «irreplaceable»: she talks about «the greatness of [the manic person's] omnipotence, by which he defends himself against the fear of losing the one irreplaceable object, his mother, whom he still mourns at bottom» (*MMD*: 352). Moreover, in her elaboration and extension of Klein's work, Hanna Segal mentions the *uniqueness* of the complete object as distinguishing guilt over its loss from earlier forms of guilt characteristic of the infant's relations to part-objects; Segal, «A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics,» in *The Work of Hanna Segal: A Kleinian Approach to Clinical Practice* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1981).

21 Again, I have borrowed this phrase from Richard Moran's writing on Kant and Proust.

22 In this context it is important to recall that Rousseau's own mother died nine days after his birth.

23 This suggestion is not incompatible with social accounts of the reification of persons, such as Lukásc's aforementioned account in terms of the commodity-form

position by finding «substitutes» (in her sense) is creative in that it allows for the creation of further affective attachments with others. (That is, this process allows one to do the work of moving on from the loss of a person, instead of avoiding that work by looking for another «version» of that same person.) Even when the mother is in fact what Klein calls «the primary loved object,» and even when the need to repair the (imagined or real) destruction of that object leads one to form further affective attachments with others, that does not mean one is thereby reducing those others to members of the same general type («mother,» or some other general type one's mother instantiated). These further loved persons might in some sense be substitutes for one's primary loved object (that is, attachments that allow one to move on from its imagined or real destruction), but they are not thereby *mere* substitutes.[24]

III.2. Klein on personhood and differential recognition

I have therefore been following through on the proposal that Klein, like Simmel, understands the apprehension of «complete persons» as consisting in seeing them as non-repeatable individuals that, because they are irreplaceable (in a way that contrasts with mere things or «parts») are also in a special sense mortal (since they allow for irretrievable loss). But in making sense of Simmel's connection between seeing others as non-repeatable individuals and seeing them as mortal, I turned to Rousseau in order to suggest that other persons' status as sources of differential recognition plays an important role in their standing outside the «ordinary economy of exchange and substitution.» Is there anything like that thought in Klein's writing?

In fact I think that Klein offers a fascinating expression of that thought, though appreciating this cannot be as straightforward as applying Rousseau's distinction between *amour de soi* and *amour-propre* to Klein's account of early infancy. That is, we cannot suppose that Klein's infant is, in its first three or four months, governed principally by the desire for self-preservation (*amour de soi*), and only later, when it reaches the depressive position and sees others as «complete persons,» cares about others' differential or evaluative recognition. This is because in its first months of life (characterized by the paranoid-schizoid

under capitalism, or with Axel Honneth's recent account in terms of the «forgetting» of a prior act of recognition. See Honneth, *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

24 If I am correct in how I read Klein here, then her account of the depressive position likely constitutes a significantly increased sensitivity to the importance of responding to the non-repeatable individuality of others than is found in Freud's writing on love. I am in particular thinking of Freud's remark that «love consists of new editions of old traits,» and that this is «the essential character of every state of being in love;» Freud, «Observations on Transference-Love,» in *S.E.*, vol. 12, 157-71, 168.

position) the infant *already* experiences its gratifications and frustrations as somehow evaluative (and even «persecutory»): its gratifications are expressions of the loving «good breast,» and elicit the infant's own love; while its frustrations are expressions of the hating «bad breast,» and elicit the infant's own hate. Thus, in contrast with Rousseau's phylogenetic account, there is no moment in Klein's ontogenetic account (of early infancy) in which gratifications and frustrations exist apart from some kind of sensitivity to evaluation by the outside world.[25]

But even with that caveat about Klein's account of early infancy, we can nevertheless see the connection I drew from Rousseau (between seeing others as persons and seeing them as sources of differential recognition) in her account of the case of an older child with an impaired ability to appreciate others as persons. In her 1930 paper «The Importance of Symbol-Formation in

25 It may be difficult for us to understand rationally how anything other than a «complete person» could express evaluation or differential recognition (and indeed I think that a concern with that difficulty figures centrally in Rousseau's thinking); but here of course Klein means to be characterizing features of the infant's fantasy life in the paranoid-schizoid position, not what can survive rational scrutiny. Also, though no one has done more to demonstrate the promise of a Kleinian reading of Rousseau than N.J.H. Dent, with the above I depart from Dent's Kleinian understanding of Rousseau's account of infancy (as presented in his novel and educational treatise *Emile*). Characterizing the latter, Dent says that the infant normally passes through the «paranoid fantasy» that he is surrounded by malicious wills: «Our first apprehension projects a world animated almost through and through by wills intent on spiting us» (*Rousseau*, 72). But here I think that Dent reads as normal what Rousseau insists on as pathological. That is, in *Emile* Rousseau repeatedly insists that the infant must be kept «in dependence only on things,» as opposed to persons (*E*: 85/*OC*: 4:311; cf. *E*: 38, 89, 91, 92-3/*OC*: 4:247, 316, 320, 322). This is because the infant becomes acquainted with its environment through trying to control it, an «active principle» (*E*: 67-8/*OC*: 4:28) that is innocent when carried out on things, but that generates a «spirit of domination» when carried out on persons (*E*: 68/*OC*: 4:289). Therefore, in non-pathological cases, apprehension of others as persons requires having been weaned from the active principle. It is true that Rousseau says that the infant «senses within himself…enough life to animate everything surrounding him» (*E*: 67/*OC*: 4:298). But there Rousseau is not obviously attributing a paranoid fantasy to the infant, but rather describing how the infant «animates» his environment in the sense of trying to control it, as when «he smashes, breaks everything he can reach» (*E*: 67/*OC*: 4:288). It is also true that Rousseau later says, of the child who «believes himself to be the owner of the universe» that he «sees ill will everywhere» (*E*: 87/*OC* 4:314). But there again Rousseau is evidently describing a degenerate case. Related differences between Rousseau and Klein (making a Kleinian reading of Rousseau's account of infancy risk anachronism) consist in their being separated by the Freudian revolution and the idea of the normalcy of infantile sexuality.

the Development of the Ego,» Klein describes her analysis of a four-year-old boy, there called «Dick,» who «was largely devoid of affects, and…indifferent to the presence or absence of mother or nurse.» Klein adds, «it was not only that he was unable to make himself intelligible: he had no wish to do so» (*SF*: 221).[26] Here we do not need to be too concerned with the specific therapy that Klein pursued with Dick, which by her account consisted of playing with him, via those few toys and objects that interested him (trains, train stations, doors, and door-handles), and suggesting symbolic meanings for those toys and objects, in order to ignite in him a capacity for symbol-formation that, until then, «had come to a standstill» (*SF*: 224).[27] My interest is rather in the criterion that Klein presents for Dick's successfully appreciating others as persons and forming affective attachments to them: he comes to express caring about their loss or absence (when he did not before), and most importantly he comes to try to elicit their differential recognition (which they may or may not grant) by *calling* them.

For example, Klein says that after some months of this therapy Dick's relationships to his mother and his nurse were no longer indifferent: «He now desires their presence, wants them to take notice of him and is distressed when they leave him» (*SF*: 228). In other words, though Klein could not yet make it explicit in this early paper, through her therapy Dick arrived at that concern for the loss of «complete persons» characteristic of what Klein would five years

26 Klein also says, «He had let his nurse go without manifesting any emotion, and had followed me into the room with complete indifference» (*SF*: 222). Later in the paper Klein diagnoses Dick with schizophrenia (*SF*: 229-31). William Bracken suggests that Dick would today be diagnosed with autism, and indeed may have been one of those cases of autism that, following Frances Tustin's work, are amenable to psychotherapeutic treatment; Bracken, «Becoming Subjects: The Agency of Desire in Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud» (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1998), 172. I am myself not qualified to enter into such questions of diagnosis.

27 In particular, in her play with him Klein interpreted the toys to Dick according to the Oedipus schema: «I took a big train and put it beside a smaller one and called them 'Daddy-train' and 'Dick-train'. Thereupon he picked up the train I called 'Dick' and made it roll to the window and said 'Station'. I explained: 'The station is mummy; Dick is going into mummy' (*SF*: 225). As Hanna Segal summarizes the case, «analysis revealed that [Dick's fantasized] attack on his mother's body led to such severe anxiety that he denied all interest in her and count not therefore symbolize this interest in other objects or relations;» Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein*, 5. For considerations in favor of the idea that symbol-formation is itself a form of creative reparation rooted in working through the depressive position (thereby explaining why such severe anxiety would inhibit not just the acknowledgment of others as persons, but symbol-formation more generally) see Segal, «A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics,» 196.

later call the depressive position (or «depressive anxiety»).[28] According to Klein, this change was already evident in her first session with Dick, in which, after she suggested to him the symbolic significance of some of his toys, he began to say «Nurse?»; and «He kept repeatedly asking, 'Nurse coming?'» (*SF*: 225). In fact, the significance of this moment, and of Dick's coming to care about others' recognition (in his coming to appreciate them as persons) was developed over two decades later by Jacques Lacan in his own commentary on Klein's case. Lacan drew specific attention to the idea that Dick «verbalises a first call—a spoken call» (namely, a call for the attention of his nurse), which consists of a «dependency» on the person called, who can either accept or reject that call.[29] And, in a more recent development of Lacan's commentary, William Bracken has noted that, in this moment, Dick «begins the work of acceding to his fundamental desire for recognition, opening himself up to the possibility that the other will refuse to reply…»[30]

Therefore, following these readings of Klein's case, it is reasonable to suppose that (on her view) coming to see others as «complete persons» is indeed (as I have been arguing) a matter of seeing them as non-repeatable individuals capable of irretrievable loss; but also that a significant reason why «complete persons» stand outside the economy of exchange and substitution is that they are valued as sources of differential recognition (recognition that can be either granted or withheld). On this interpretation of Klein's case, the nurse's acceptance of Dick's call matters to Dick in part because no one else can accept that call (made specifically to her); and when he experiences her not coming to him as refusal, no one else's response can make up for that feeling of rejection. (Klein herself is, after all, present while Dick repeatedly asks after his nurse.) This is part of the significance of Klein's understanding such a «call» as a criterion for Dick's relating to others as persons: in directing a call to others, he thereby relates to them as beings that refuse inter-substitution or replacement.[31]

28 Klein introduced the term «depressive position» in her 1935 paper «A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States» (*MD*: 262-89).

29 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 85, 87.

30 Bracken, «Becoming Subjects,» 162. The over-arching argument of Bracken's dissertation connects Lacan's treatment of the desire for recognition to the struggle for recognition in Hegel's master-slave dialectic, and especially to Lacan's reception of Alexandre Kojève's lectures on Hegel. I am indebted to Bracken's dissertation for introducing me to the significance of both Klein's case of Dick and Lacan's comments on it.

31 Moreover, if we think of the human face (ordinarily, the focus of portraiture) as an especially important axis for the expression of differential recognition, and if

III.3. Klein on portrait-painting

All of this would seem to take us very far from the topic of portraiture. But the point I have been leading up to is that, in developing these ideas (about the connections between the appreciation of others as «complete persons,» as capable of irretrievable loss, and as sources of differential recognition) portrait-painting is evidently not far from Klein's mind. For example, at the end of her 1929 paper «Infantile Anxiety Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse» (the earliest of her papers that I have here drawn from) Klein develops portrait-painting as an example of the «reparation» required in order to work through those destructive tendencies (against the internalized parents) that initiate the depressive position.[32] Specifically, she considers an account from a German magazine by the Danish novelist Karin Michaëlis of the latter's friend, a painter there called «Ruth Kjär,» and of how Kjär arrived at portrait-painting.[33] According to Michaëlis's article, Kjär lived a comfortable bourgeois life and traveled frequently; but she was also intermittently subject to suicidal depression, something she described by saying, «There is an empty space in me, which I can never fill» (*IA*: 215). In addition, she married the brother of «one of the greatest painters in the country,» and their house was consequently filled with modern art (*IA*: 215).[34] When one day her brother-in-law sold a painting he had lent to her, this «left an empty space on the wall, which in some inex-

we think of any such axis as refusing inter-substitution or replacement (in a way that contrasts with «parts» or mere instantiations of general traits), then we might better understand the special fascination that the face holds for the infant once it apprehends others as «whole people.» Indeed, Klein says that at about the age that the infant «begins to see his mother and others around him as 'whole people,' his realistic perception of her (and them) [comes] gradually as he connects her face looking down at him with the hands that caress him and with the breast that satisfies him…» (*W*: 291). And in his brief aesthetic study of the human face (which anticipates many of the themes of his study of Rembrandt), Simmel claims that, «Of all the parts of the human body, the face has the highest degree of…inner unity…Aesthetically, there is no other part of the body whose wholeness can as easily be destroyed by the disfigurement of the one of its elements» (*F*: 276).

32 According to Ole Andkjær Olsen, Klein's first significant use of the term «reparation» appears in this paper. Again, Klein would only introduce the term «depressive position» six years later in «A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States» (1935). Cf. Olsen, «Depression and Reparation as Themes in Melanie Klein's Analysis of the Painter Ruth Weber,» *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review* 27.1 (2004): 34-42.

33 Olsen has discovered that this was in fact the Danish painter better known as Ruth Weber (1894-1977): «Depression and Reparation,» 37-42.

34 According to Olsen, this was the Danish artist Niels Hansen (1880-1946): «Depression and Reparation,» 38.

plicable way seemed to coincide with the empty space within her» (*IA*: 215). Following a moment of despair, Kjär then proceeded to fill this empty space by buying paints and drawing with chalk directly onto the empty space on the wall, despite having no previous training in painting. The convincing result (apparently a painting of Josephine Baker) astounded herself and others, and «after this first attempt Ruth Kjär painted several masterly pictures, and had them exhibited to critics and the public» (*IA*: 216).[35] Many of these paintings were in fact portraits of family members.

Klein's particular interests take her somewhat far from the rather conspicuous social and feminist questions arising about the liberated creativity of a bourgeois woman in northern Europe in the interwar period. Her account of Kjär's liberated creativity is gendered only to the extent that she is interested in rooting Kjär's despair about empty spaces in a «sadistic desire,» which Klein claims is characteristic of infant girls, «to rob the mother's body of its contents…and to destroy the mother herself» (*IA*: 217). More generally, Kjär's response to empty spaces, and her feeling of suffering from an empty space inside her, can be understood as expressive of what Klein calls «the dread of being alone, of the loss of love and loss of the love-object,» and which we have seen as following the introjection of «complete persons» in what Klein would later call the depressive position. Since, on Klein's view, this feeling of loss comes about from the child's own sadistic tendencies (including her imagining the loss of her mother), a feeling of emptiness results when an individual cannot creatively repair, or move on from, the imagined destruction of the loved object.[36] Therefore, Klein's claim is that, for Kjär, portrait-painting constituted a form of creative reparation that had been heretofore unavailable to her. (Klein notes that «In the analysis of children,» following the expression of destructive tendencies, «we constantly find that drawing and painting are used as means to restore people,» *IA*: 217-8.[37])

35 Olsen reproduces a version of this painting of Josephine Baker: «Depression and Reparation,» 39.

36 Indeed, in Klein's analysis of Dick, it was exactly Dick's lacking this capacity, and consequently his being unable to work through his anxiety about the imagined destruction of his loved objects, that impeded the development of his capacity for symbol-formation (and thus impeded his capacity to take affective interest in his environment, particularly other persons). Again, for an understanding of symbol-formation as itself a kind of creative reparation, or working-through of the depressive position, see Segal, «A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics,» 196.

37 According to Olsen, this particularly arose during Klein's analysis of the ten-year-old boy Richard (*OCEA*: 370-97; *NC*): «His long series of abstract coloured drawings lend themselves to interpretation as attempts to bring forward the inner images of his parents' entangled body parts (which manifest themselves in the paranoid-schiz-

Indeed, Klein draws specific attention to the fact that «apart from one picture of flowers, [Kjär] had confined herself to portraits.» And it is important to consider how Klein countenances Michaëlis's description of the difference between two portraits that Kjär painted. Michaëlis describes one picture representing «an old woman, bearing the marks of years and disillusionments»:

> Her skin is wrinkled, her hair faded, her gentle, tired eyes are troubled. She gazes before her with the disconsolate resignation of old age, with a look that seems to say: «Do not trouble about me any more. My time is so nearly at an and!»
>
> This is not the impression we receive from Ruth's latest work—the portrait of her Irish-Canadian mother. This lady has a long time before her before she must put her lips to the cup of resignation. Slim, imperious, challenging, she stands there with a moonlight coloured shawl draped over her shoulders: she has the effect of a magnificent woman of primitive times, who could any day engage in combat with the children of the desert with her naked hands. What a chin! What force there is in the haughty gaze! The blank space has been filled (*IA*: 217).

About the contrast between these portraits Klein says:

> It is obvious that the desire to make reparation, to make good the injury psychologically done to the mother and also to restore herself was at the bottom of the compelling urge to paint these portraits of her relatives. That of the old woman, on the threshold of death, seems to be the expression of the primary, sadistic wish to destroy. The daughter's wish to destroy her mother, to see her old, worn out, marred, is the cause of the need to represent her in full possession of her strength and beauty. By doing so the daughter can allay her own anxiety and can endeavour to restore her mother and make her new through the portrait (*IA*: 218).

It is understandable that Klein associates a portrait of a woman «on the threshold of death» with destructive tendencies and a portrait of one's mother «in full possession of her strength and beauty» with reparative tendencies.

oid position as anxiety-ridden part objects) to the depressive position and afterwards to a healing of the ruined parental images» (Olsen, «Depression and reparation,» 37). In a provocative commentary on his own portrait-making, which happens to speak to many of these Kleinian themes, Antonin Artaud remarks on a kind of destructiveness characteristic of seeing a human face (familiar from Klein's writing on the fantasies of destruction or loss characteristic of appreciating others as complete persons), which the portraitist must restore creatively: «For the human face,/ in fact, wears/ a perpetual death of sorts/ on its face/ which it is incumbent on the painter precisely/ to save it from/ by restoring/ its own features»: Artaud, «*Le visage humain…*,» trans. Roger McKeon, in *Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper*, ed. Margit Rowell (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 97. I am indebted to Luigi Patruno for pointing me to the latter work.

But Klein's deeper thought is that these tendencies are not in stark opposition: the reparative tendencies are the normal response to the destructive ones, and typically an individual will oscillate between the two.[38] Moreover, I have argued for an interpretation of Klein according to which both tendencies are responses to the non-repeatable individuality of persons: when we care about non-repeatable individuals (or about their differential recognition), the possibility of their loss or destruction is especially distressing, and so the question of their reparation through creativity (which cannot involve finding «mere substitutes,» or further versions of that same person) is especially urgent. Therefore, if we ever encounter a portrait that expresses one tendency to the exclusion of the other, we will likely be frustrated by its overly narrow range of response to the individuality of its subject.

To return to our original concerns, then: we can understand Simmel as registering the fact that Rembrandt's portraits do not elicit that frustration. Earlier I expressed confusion about the purpose of Simmel's suggestion that, at least in Rembrandt's portraits, life stands in a kind of dialectical unity with death. This suggestion did not seem relevant to the connection that Simmel was trying to establish between depictions of mortality and depictions of individuality, since it seemed consistent with the schema of general traits that Rembrandt's portraits (in their depictions of non-repeatable individuality) were supposed to escape. But if Simmel's metaphysical account was in fact gesturing at the mutual dependence of destructive and reparative tendencies that we find in Klein's writing, then the connection to individuality is now less obscure: unless we cared about non-repeatable individuals, we would not be either distressed at their destruction or motivated to do the work of reparation following that (imagined or real) loss.[39]

Therefore, for Simmel, Rembrandt's distinctive achievement was to capture the full range of those destructive and reparative tendencies through

38 Again, the ordinariness of such oscillation is a reason why Klein chose to talk about «positions» as opposed to «phases;» cf. Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein*, ix

39 For a remarkable Klein-inspired unearthing of themes of destruction and reparation in the paintings of Nicolas Poussin, but which tends to focus on Poussin's representations of «nature's ambivalence» in his landscapes, rather than on the special salience of those themes for representations of individuals in portraiture, see Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 226-31ff. See also Wollheim's treatment of the «resuscitation» of the father in Ingres's portrait of Louis-François Bertin (Louvre, Paris), op. cit. 277-80: a resuscitation that is not explicitly concerned with mortality but rather with humanizing the father after having idealized him (although this is an idealization that, from a Kleinian perspective, may itself be a defense against fear of losing objects).

which we respond to an individual's non-repeatability, not just across his works, and not just within particular portraits, but often in single expressive strokes.[40]

Abbreviations of Works by Simmel

F «The Aesthetic Significance of the Face» (1901), trans. Lore Ferguson, in *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 1959), 276-81.

R *Rembrandt: An Essay in the Philosophy of Art* (1916), trans. Alan Scott and Helen Staubmann (London: Routledge, 2005).

Abbreviations of Works by Rousseau

C *The Confessions* (1782), trans. J.M. Cohen (London: Penguin, 1953).

DI *Discourse on Inequality* (*Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men*) (1755), in *The 'Discourses' and Other Early Political Writings*, trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 111-222.

E *Emile, or on Education* (1762), trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

EO *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (1781), in *The 'Discourses' and Other Early Political Writings*, trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 247-99.

G *Geneva Manuscript*, in *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings,* trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 153-61.

OC *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1959-69), 5 vols.

SC *On the Social Contract* (1762), in *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 39-152. '*SC*: I.4.6.' refers to book I, chapter 4, paragraph 6.

40 I am grateful to Matthew Boyle (especially a talk he gave on «The Importance of Expression» in a 2012 workshop at Harvard University on «Self, Knowledge, Expression») for first introducing me to Simmel's *Rembrandt: An Essay in the Philosophy of Art* and its significance for questions surrounding «other minds.» I am also grateful to Marcela Cuevas Ríos and Bernhard Seubert for conversations about Melanie Klein, though I alone am responsible for any inaccuracies in my presentation of her writing. I thank Eric Johnson-DeBaufre for bibliographic assistance. And I am grateful to Iago Ramos for giving me the opportunity to write this paper in connection with his research project on the philosophy of pain. I acknowledge the support of UNAM's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program at the Institute for Philosophical Research, in which I am under the supervision of Carlos Pereda.

Abbreviations of Works by Klein

IA «Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse» (1929), in *Love, Guilt and Reparation & Other Works 1921-1945* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 210-18.

MD «A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States» (1935), in *Love, Guilt and Reparation & Other Works 1921-1945* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 262-89.

MMD «Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States» (1940), in *Love, Guilt and Reparation & Other Works 1921-1945* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 344-69.

NC *Narrative of a Child Analysis* (New York: Basic Books, 1961).

OCEA «The Oedipus Complex in the Light of Early Anxieties» (1945), in *Love, Guilt and Reparation & Other Works 1921-1945* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 370-419.

SF «The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego» (1930), in *Love, Guilt and Reparation & Other Works 1921-1945* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 219-32.

SM «Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms» (1946), in *Envy and Gratitude & Other Works 1946-1963* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 1-24.

TC «Some Theoretical Conclusions Regarding the Emotional Life of the Infant» (1952), in *Envy and Gratitude & Other Works 1946-1963* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 61-93.

W «Weaning» (1936), in *Love, Guilt and Reparation & Other Works 1921-1945* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 290-305.

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