The article is devoted to the topical and under-studied issue of comparing two fundamental psychoanalytic concepts of A. Freud and M. Klein in the field of child psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic pedagogy. The methodological background and conceptual foundations of the Viennese and British schools of child psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic pedagogy are analyzed. Special attention is paid to the comparison of the methodological approaches of A. Freud and M. Klein.

It is shown that the main category of children with whom A. Freud worked were older preschoolers who had already developed the speech function. The children M. Klein worked with were younger (approximately 2.5 to 3 years old). It was found that M. Klein’s views on children’s psychoanalysis and upbringing are in the plane of classical psychoanalysis of S. Freud, and in her practical activities she sought to find similar tools. On the contrary, the theory of A. Freud breeds, separates the adult and the child, puts the child in a dependent position on the parents and on the analyst.

It has been proved that A. Freud was wary of the sexualized interpretation of the child’s behavior, as she believed that this kind of interpretation would harm the child and destroy family relationships. M. Klein tried to interpret the child’s behavior and ways of playing, just like A. Freud, she considered the deformation of relations in the parent-child system unacceptable, but emphasized the need to discuss and work out conflict situations in this system.

Views on children’s play from the positions of A. Freud and M. Klein are explained. From the methodological position of A. Freud, children’s play is too difficult to interpret, because it is a reproduction of reality. Unlike A. Freud, M. Klein attached special importance to the interpretation of children’s play activities, considering a child’s play to be a place filled with symbolic manifestations.

The pedagogical connotations of the psychoanalytic concepts of A. Freud and M. Klein are revealed. It is shown that A. Freud compares psychoanalysis and pedagogy, because the psychoanalyst replaces the «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self». M. Klein believed that the strengthening of the «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self» is not necessary, since it is already too developed and repressive in relation to the weak, underdeveloped child’s «Ego»/«Self». A. Freud emphasized cooperation with the child’s parents, but M. Klein believed that cooperation with parents could be harmful and would not lead to positive results. It is proved that the main difference in the views of M. Klein and A. Freud regarding the child is that M. Klein sees the child as an independent subject, and A. Freud sees the child as not independent.

Key words: psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic pedagogy, upbringing, children’s play, interpersonal interaction, «Ego»/«Self», «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self», it/«id».
Problem statement. In the process of psychoanalytic work with children, there is an appeal to the child’s inner world and unconscious processes that color the child’s relationship with his environment. Psychoanalytic psychotherapy and pedagogy are not aimed at solving specific problems of the child, or at working with the symptom. The goal of psychoanalytic work with children is to restore the normal course of emotional development. Psychoanalysis will allow the child, together with a psychotherapist and a teacher, to explore his experiences in relation to himself and the world, discover their origin and approach the possibility of changing them.

The first attempts to use the principles of psychoanalysis in working with children were made by A. Freud and M. Klein in the period between the First and Second World Wars. In the years that have passed since those times, child psychoanalysis and child psychoanalytic pedagogy have emerged as an independent scientific direction with its own principles and forms of work, theoretical schools, and research methods. However, two principles – direct observation of children and the use of psychoanalytic theory to understand the personal manifestations of children – remain central to the professional activity of a child psychoanalyst and a psychoanalytically oriented teacher.

At the heart of psychoanalytic contact is the need to protect the child’s privacy. When working with adult patients, confidentiality is achieved more easily, since the psychoanalyst’s contact with other people from the analysand’s environment is minimal. When working with children, the psychoanalyst has to regularly maintain contact with adults who are important to the child. The complexity of the psychoanalyst’s therapeutic and pedagogical work with children lies in the fact that it is necessary to find a balance between the need to respect the child’s confidentiality and at the same time fully communicate with his parents and family.

The subject of work in child psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic pedagogy is the child’s subjective world. The inner world is a deeply personal world of thoughts, fantasies and feelings, many of which are difficult or impossible to express even to oneself, let alone to other people. This is a multi-level world, where already clearly formulated conscious attitudes turn into fantasies and thoughts, free from social prohibitions and values, where there are also many desires and feelings that are not fully realized by the person himself. It is this «theatre» of the inner world that is the subject of work in psychoanalysis.

What happens in the process of children’ psychoanalytic psychotherapy and psychoanalytic education? Children and adolescents, whose parents turn to a psychoanalyst or a psychoanalytically oriented teacher, have problems of a different nature, any symptom or problematic behavior. A child psychoanalyst, a psychoanalytically oriented teacher pays attention to the following parameters of a child’s development:

1) the child’s relationship with the people around him and his attitude towards himself;
2) the ability to regulate and cope with one’s inner impulses and feelings;
3) the ability to build psychological defenses against pain, anxiety and unacceptable desires;
4) the ability to adapt to changing requirements and conditions of reality. Thinking about child development should take into account many different aspects. The more areas of a child’s development are problematic, the more urgent is the need for psychoanalytic work.


Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the problem. The problem of the research is that, despite the wide popularity of both A. Freud and M. Klein, the general methodological and clinical aspects of their psychoanalytic concepts are explained to a greater extent in the scientific discourse, and the pedagogical aspects, unfortunately, remain neglected. Most of the original and innovative pedagogical ideas of the scientific heritage of A. Freud and M. Klein are still not sufficiently studied.

The aim of the article is to conduct a comparative analysis of the psychoanalytic concepts of M. Klein and A. Freud and explain their contribution to psychoanalytic pedagogy.

Main material. The first disputes regarding child psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic pedagogy between the psychoanalytic societies of Vienna and London occurred in the late 1930’s and continued
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until the mid-1940’s between A. Freud and M. Klein. The polemic between A. Freud and M. Klein flared up at the psychoanalytic congress in Marienbad. The reason for the dispute was the difference in views on child psychoanalysis. The subject of discussions were various tendencies of Freudianism, both in general methodological, clinical and pedagogical aspects.

The consequence of the methodological split between the British Psychoanalytic Society (M. Klein) and the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (A. Freud) are the following premises:

1) by the 40’s of the 20th century, there were practically no psychoanalysts of the «first generation» left; the founder of psychoanalysis, S. Freud (1939), also died, which led to a total rethinking and revision of the main body of ideas of classical psychoanalysis;

2) emigration of a large number of prominent psychoanalysts due to the threat of war and repression; the great centers of European psychoanalysis (Vienna, Berlin and Budapest) lost their importance due to the advent of fascist and national socialist regimes in Austria, Germany and Hungary, and most psychoanalysts were Jews;

3) the need for methodological reflection on the new views of psychoanalysts of the «second wave» of the British Psychoanalytic Society.

In this dispute were involved 28 psychoanalysts of different methodological orientations, of which 15 were representatives of Great Britain and 13 were from other European countries. Such a number clearly testifies to the theoretical and practical significance of the contradictions that arose between A. Freud and M. Klein. It should be noted that most of the participants in this controversy at that time determined the trajectory of the psychoanalysis development.

We can conditionally distinguish four groups that took part in the disputes between A. Freud and M. Klein in the period from 1940 to 1946. We will highlight the brightest representatives.


3. Psychoanalysts who took a neutral position from the very beginning: E. Glover, B. Low, W. Schmideberg, M. Schmideberg. Later, a «group of independents» was formed, whose representatives recognized the importance of both concepts. The group was led by P. Heimann, and joined by some consistent followers of M. Klein: M. Balint, M. Brierley, D. Winnicott, P. King, M. Dittle, S. Payne, R. Fairbairn, F. Sharpe, E. Sharpe.

4. Psychoanalysts who acted as intermediaries (this group later included some representatives of the «group of independents»): M. Balint, J. Bowlby, M. Brierley, W. Gillespie, E. Jones, S. Payne, J. Strachey, A. Steven, K. Steven, E. Sharpe [5].

A. Freud presented a strategic program for working with the child and put forward a number of requirements for the young analysand. M. Klein presented children’s psychoanalysis as useful for every child and considered it as a supplement to the education process. A. Freud claimed that only children with infantile neurosis are suitable for analysis. M. Klein equated children’s play with the method of free associations, which A. Freud did not agree with at all and insisted on a preparatory period before the beginning of child psychoanalysis. The preparation period consisted of the child visiting the analyst together with other children, and then discussing with the child the reasons why other children came to the psychoanalyst. This influence on the child made it convenient for analysis. Because A. Freud believed that the child is very dependent on adults in his development and believed that this hinders the analysis of the «adult type». There was no preparatory phase in M. Klein’s concept. The child came to a place specially prepared for him, where there are always toys. M. Klein reproached A. Freud for paying too much attention to the child’s conscious, i.e., external relations. She herself includes the game in the process of analysis and interprets it in approximately the same way as her father S. Freud interpreted dreams, phantasms, anxieties, and patient resistance [4].

M. Klein proposed an original concept of psychoanalytic work with children. The attention of the psychoanalyst should be focused on the spontaneous, unforced play activity of the child. Unlike A. Freud, M. Klein emphasized the possibility of direct research into the child’s unconscious «It/Id». In her opinion, a child’s action precedes speech, therefore a child’s play is similar to the flow of free associations in an adult, and the stages of play activity are nothing but analogs of an adult’s associations.

The system of work with children was based on the analysis of spontaneous play, for which specific conditions were created. The psychoanalyst offers the child a large number of small toys and allows the child to interact with them for an hour. For children’s play, according to M. Klein, simple, light toys without mechanical mechanisms are more suitable: figurines of people (children, men and women) of various sizes, made of wood, paint, pencils, chalk, glue, ropes, domestic and wild animals, vehicles (cars, buses, planes, ships), plants, trees, fences, houses of various sizes and configurations, a small, blunt knife, scissors, plasticine, colored paper, sets of balls, balls of various sizes, cubes, etc. A large selection of toys, their thematic variety, ease of use help the child to easily join the process of the role-play, explain his fantasies and project his own experience of conflict situations and their resolution.
M. Klein interpreted what she observed in the game as an unconscious manifestation of innate conflicts and used this material to build her theory. For her, any play indicated transference and, as in the case of adults, it indicated that a transference neurosis was occurring between the analyst and the child. M. Klein’s enormous contribution to the understanding of child phantasms should be acknowledged. Her methodology is based on observing the child’s games, which she considered as the language of the unconscious. She interpreted the games, thereby freeing the child from his phantasms, expressing through her intuition what the child cannot yet articulate, but with which he can agree [1].

Based on the fact that the rough treatment of children aged 2 to 3 years old with their toys testifies to the nature of early object relations, M. Klein came to the conclusion of the existence of an initial conflict between love and hate, between gentle and destructive urges, a symbolic expression of which there are fragmentary objects, in particular the beloved «good» and «evil» mother’s breasts, which are subject to real attacks from the infant.

According to M. Klein, the infant perceives the mother as an object that both externally and internally pursues and attacks him, threatening to castrate a male infant or to extort infants of both sexes. M. Klein was convinced that the basis of infantile neuroses is psychotic (that is, paranoid and schizoid) anxiety, which to some extent is an element of normal development in childhood. She divided the oral stage of development into two subphases – paranoid-schizoid and depressive – believing that the experiences characteristic of this stage of psychological evolution persist throughout life and are available for reactivation at any age. Judging by the results of M. Klein’s observations, during the development of the process of integration of pleasant and unpleasant for the child’s «Ego»/«Self» elements of the object, depressive anxiety arises, therefore, she called the subphase dated to the second half of the first year of life «depressive».

A stumbling block between A. Freud and M. Klein was the latter’s opinion that the Oedipus complex and «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self» are formed at an age that corresponds to the depressive subphase of development. M. Klein considered oral frustrations caused by external circumstances or the child’s «inability» to enjoy breastfeeding as a decisive factor in this process.

The controversial ideas of M. Klein and A. Freud about the process of child development and the origin of neuroses, of course, could not become the basis for similar methods of upbringing.

According to A. Freud, in working with children, it is necessary to apply all the methods and techniques used in working with adults: a) transference and resistance analysis, b) hypnosis, c) interpretation of parapraxias (erroneous actions), dreams and symbols, the method of free associations, but she clearly indicated the peculiar specificity of the application of these methods in working with children [7; 8].

For example, when applying the method of free associations, difficulties may arise that can be leveled with the help of analysis of children's drawings, fantasies, dreams, daydreams, game activities, etc. All these methods can replace the method of free associations and reveal the content of unconscious processes in an accessible and open form. Thanks to A. Freud, psychoanalysis was enriched with new techniques in the study of the «Ego» «Super-Self» of the child. One of A. Freud’s innovations is the analysis of the transformational processes of the child’s affective sphere. Using the analysis of the discrepancy between the expected (normal behavior in a similar situation) and demonstrated (instead of aggression – tenderness, instead of anxiety – joy) emotional-volitional reaction of the child, it is possible to track the effect of protective mechanisms, which in turn opens access to the unhindered study of «Ego»/«Super-Self». The development and functioning of protective mechanisms at different stages of development can be traced when analyzing the child’s behavior in the family and education institution. In the context of working with protective mechanisms, the analysis of a child’s phobias, especially of animals, is interesting.

A. Freud paid special attention to the methodological role of children’s play. She believed that in the process of game activity, «immersing» in the game, the child will definitely be interested in its interpretation, which will be offered by the psychoanalyst. A. Freud emphasized that the psychoanalyst should be an authoritative figure for the child, since the child’s «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self» is still poorly developed and may not be able to withstand the impulses released in the course of therapy, for this the help of an adult is needed.

The specificity of communication between children and adults is of great importance. A. Freud emphasized that in the work of a psychoanalyst, a teacher, and an educator, it is especially important to establish a strong emotional connection, and the more difficult the tasks a psychoanalyst or psycho-analytically oriented teacher sets before himself, the stronger this connection should be. The organization of psychoanalytic work with difficult-to-parent children should not be aimed at directly overcoming negative reactions, but at the formation of attachment and the development of libido. The influence of adults on the child has several important aspects: it provides hope for affection, protection and love and at the same time causes fear of being punished. This contradiction allows the child to control instinctive urges. It is almost impossible to determine the ratio of influence, since one part of the positive changes belongs to the «Ego»/«Super-Self» of the child, and the other to the
forces that press from outside. It is the influence of the outside world that is the catalyst for the launch of neurotic mechanisms, since the child’s «Ego»/«Super-Self» is weaker than that of an adult. A psychoanalyst who works with children, with the help of educational influences, must change the attitude to external reality in order to effectively counteract the instinctive tendencies of the unconscious «Id»/«Id» [3].

If A. Freud gravitated towards the «modification of classical methods», then M. Klein saw significant differences between the interpretation of children’s experiences and the analysis of the state of an adult, although she assumed that the level of psychological development should be taken into account when studying the «Ego»/«Self» of an adult is no less expedient than when studying the «Ego»/«Self» of a child. She recommended paying attention to the positive and negative manifestations of the transference without delay and to carry out a «deep» interpretation. At the same time, first there is a reactivation, and then the elimination of aggressive and sadistic impulses of an oral nature, which are not least caused by envy and hatred, arising in connection with the «unconscious knowledge» that the parents are entering into coitus, which is viewed through the prism of fantasies of oral direction [2].

A. Freud held a different opinion, although later she revised some of her ideas about modifying the techniques of psychoanalytic intervention taking into account the conditions of child psychoanalysis, in particular the concept of «non-analytic prelude» in therapy. She believed that children are less amenable to analysis than adults, because they usually do not experience the suffering that pressures the need to turn to an analyst, and they do not show a tendency to introspection, reflection, and enlightenment. The younger the analysand, the lower his ability to perceive the truth, the lower the threshold for experiencing anxiety and frustration, the more vulnerable the idea of object immutability, and therefore the higher the risk of transference. A. Freud also considered the fact that children prefer to express their feelings through actions rather than words to be a serious obstacle to the development of the process of psychoanalytic treatment and education. In addition, she believed that a delicate situation could arise due to the inevitable intervention of parents in the process of analyzing the child. In these circumstances, it is quite difficult to develop methods of treatment and upbringing in accordance with the canons of psychoanalysis, that is, to interpret the phenomena associated with transference and countertransference, to eliminate displacement and regression, to replace primitive pathogenic defense mechanisms with reasonable, adaptive reactions, to strengthen the general potential of the «Ego»/«Self» and create under which «Ego»/«Self» will be able to control a larger space of the psyche [6; 9].

Conclusions. So, having analyzed the difference between the views of the two founders of child psychoanalysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. A. Freud emphasized that in the process of child therapy and in psychoanalytic education there is no effect of countertransference, and M. Klein emphasized its leading importance, especially for young children who have not yet mastered the speech function.

2. According to A. Freud, children’s play is too difficult to interpret because it is a reproduction of reality. Unlike A. Freud, M. Klein attached special importance to the interpretation of children’s play activities, considering a child’s play to be a place filled with symbolic manifestations.

3. A. Freud emphasized that «preliminary data» about the child’s development and characteristics must be taken from the parents, cooperate with them, and through direct influence on the parents, indirectly influence the child. M. Klein believed that cooperation with parents will not lead to positive results, moreover, it can be harmful. According to M. Klein, the main task of psychoanalysis is to help the child adapt to the already formed models of interpersonal interaction in the family.

4. A. Freud, unlike her father S. Freud, was extremely cautious about the sexualized interpretation of the child’s behavior, because she believed that this kind of interpretation would harm the child and destroy family relationships. M. Klein tried to interpret the child’s behavior and ways of playing, just like A. Freud, she considered the deformation of relations in the parent-child system unacceptable, but emphasized the need to discuss and work out conflict situations in this system.

5. The main category of children with whom A. Freud worked were senior preschoolers who had already developed the speech function. The children M. Klein worked with were younger (approximately 2.5 to 3 years old).

6. According to A. Freud, the main task of therapy and education is the strengthening of the weak, repressed «Ego»/«Self» and the development of the «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self». M. Klein takes a radically opposite position, for her the main task in working with the child was the weakening of the «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self», since she considered his exactingness as the source and basis of the internal conflict, so its weakening, in her opinion, leads to internal consistency and harmony.

7. A. Freud compares psychoanalysis and pedagogy, because the psychoanalyst replaces the «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self». M. Klein believed that the strengthening of the «Super-Ego»/«Super-Self» is not necessary, since it is already too developed and repressive in relation to the weak, underdeveloped child’s «Ego»/«Self».
8. M. Klein’s views on children’s psychoanalysis and education are in the plane of classical psychoanalysis of S. Freud, and in her practical activities she sought to find similar tools. And the theory of A. Freud breeds, separates the adult and the child, puts the child in a dependent position on the parents and on the analyst. The proof of this is the description of one clinical case by A. Freud, where she strives to become an indispensable figure for the child during the preparatory phase.

9. The main difference in the views of M. Klein and A. Freud regarding the child is that M. Klein sees the child as an independent subject, and A. Freud sees the child as not independent.

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