

The family affiliations can be reconstructed partially from the Autobiography and, more reliably, from the recently recovered correspondence. The picture of Emanuel that emerges from Klein's account is that of a willful, restless, angry youth, at odds with his father and a source of perpetual worry to his mother, to whom he was nevertheless attached. When he was twelve he had scarlet fever followed by rheumatic fever, which affected his heart. What Klein fails to mention is that he also developed tuberculosis. It probably preceded the rheumatic fever, which would have produced subacute bacterial endocarditis.¹⁶ Melanie knew that her mother was filled with self-reproach because she had allowed him, while he was still convalescing, to join a family excursion to the Prater. As a result he suffered a relapse from which he never fully recovered; and his sister was always bitter that "the family" had forced him to go with them.

In many little ways, Libussa conveyed to the rest of the family the contempt she felt for her husband. Scholarly, withdrawn, inept at business, he left the management of the household in the hands of his wife. The only way he could assert his superiority was by his intellectual prowess, and it was particularly galling to be challenged by his clever, conceited son. Libussa did not hide her pride in Emanuel and in Melanie, whose beauty was bound to catch a good husband. Emilie, on the other hand, is something of a cipher — not very pretty and not at all clever. Nevertheless, her father befriended her, preferring her to the assertive Melanie. It was made clear to father and daughter, in the subtle ways families express such things, that they were excluded from the humid, symbiotic entanglement of Libussa, Emanuel, and Melanie.

Klein later claimed that Emanuel entered medical school despite the objections of his parents, who were concerned about his health. However, his letters do not give the slightest indication that he had any interest in medicine; he fancied himself as an artist, a writer, a musician — he wasn't exactly sure which. In any event, his lack of practical ambition filled his mother with impatience. He stuck out medical school until October 1900, when he transferred to the Faculty of Arts. In her Autobiography, Klein says that Emanuel, knowing that he had not long to live, "stopped his studies, and got permission to do some travelling, because he felt that he wanted to use his gifts as a writer as much as possible." She then adds a cryptic comment: "I know another factor which might have driven him from home, but I will speak of that later on." She never reverts to the subject. She is probably referring to her resentment that Emilie and her husband seemed to be taking over the family home so that there was no room for her brother.

Emanuel convinced himself that his main motive for abandoning his medical studies and leaving Vienna was his certainty that he was doomed to an early death; he intended to live life to the full in the time left to him. His mother shared his view that the climate of Vienna was detrimental to his health, and she settled a small allowance on him to enable him to seek lands of sun and beauty in the traditional pattern of the dying artist. It was in this