

Horney & Humanistic Psychoanalysis

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Introduction

Because her thought went through three distinct phases, Karen Horney has come to mean different things to different people. Some think of her primarily in terms of her essays on feminine psychology, written in the 1920s and early 1930s, in which she tried to modify Freud's ideas about penis envy, female masochism, and feminine development while remaining within the framework of orthodox theory. These essays were too far ahead of their time to receive the attention they deserved, but they have been widely read since their republication in *Feminine Psychology* in 1967, and there is a growing consensus that Karen Horney was the first great psychoanalytic feminist.

Those who are attracted to the second stage of Horney's thought identify her primarily as a neo-Freudian member of "the cultural school," which also included Erich Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan, Clara Thompson, and Abraham Kardiner. In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1937) and *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (1939), Horney broke with Freud and developed a psychoanalytic paradigm in which culture and disturbed human relationships replaced biology as the most important causes of neurotic development. *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* made Horney famous in intellectual circles. It created a heightened awareness of cultural factors in mental disturbance and inspired studies of culture from a psychoanalytic perspective. Because of its criticism of Freud, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* made Horney infamous amongst orthodox analysts and led to her ostracism from the psychoanalytic establishment. Although it paid tribute to Freud's genius and the importance of his contribution, it rejected many of his premises and tried to shift the focus of psychoanalysis from infantile origins to the current structure of the personality. It laid the foundations for the development of present-oriented therapies, which have become increasingly important in recent years (Wachtel 1977).

In the 1940s Horney developed her mature theory, which many feel to be her most distinctive contribution. In *Our Inner Conflicts* (1945) and *Neurosis and Human Growth* (1950), she argued that individuals cope with the anxiety produced by feeling unsafe, unloved, and unvalued by disowning their real feelings and developing elaborate strategies of defense. In *Our Inner Conflicts*, she concentrated on the interpersonal defenses of moving toward, against, and away from other people and the neurotic solutions of compliance, aggression, and detachment to which they give rise. In *Neurosis and Human Growth*, she emphasized intrapsychic defenses, showing how self-idealization generates a search for glory and what she called "the pride system," which consists of neurotic pride, neurotic claims, tyrannical shoulds, and self-hate. The range and

power of Horney's mature theory has been shown not only by its clinical applications, but also by its use in such fields as literary criticism, biography, and the study of culture and gender.

The object of therapy for Horney is to help people relinquish their defenses -- which alienate them from their true likes and dislikes, hopes, fears, and desires -- so that they can get in touch with what she called the "real self." Because of her emphasis on self-realization as the source of healthy values and the goal of life, Horney is one of the founders of humanistic psychology.

Personal History

Karen Horney was born Karen Danielsen in a suburb of Hamburg on September 15, 1885. Her father was a sea captain of Norwegian origin; her mother was of Dutch-German extraction. Karen had a brother, Berndt, who was four years older than she. Karen sided with her mother in the fierce conflicts between her parents, who were ill-matched in age and background, and her mother supported Karen's desire for an education against her father's opposition.

Karen decided that she wanted to be a physician when she was thirteen and was one of the first women in Germany to be admitted to medical school. She received her medical education at the universities of Freiburg, Göttingen, and Berlin. In 1909, she married Oskar Horney, a social scientist she had met while they were both students in Freiburg. In 1910, she entered analysis with Karl Abraham, a member of Freud's inner circle and the first psychoanalyst to practice in Germany. She decided to become an analyst herself and in 1920 was one of the six founding members of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute. She taught there until 1932, when Franz Alexander invited her to become Associate Director of the newly formed Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute. She joined the faculty of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute in 1934 but was driven out in 1941 as a result of the publication of *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*. She founded the American Institute for Psychoanalysis the same year and was dean until her death in 1952. She was also founding editor of *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*.

Karen Horney was introspective and self-analytical in her youth, partly because of her temperament and partly because of her unhappy childhood. She felt that she had been unwanted and that her brother was much more highly valued than she, principally because he was a male. Since she disliked her father, whom she regarded as religious hypocrite, and her mother confided in her brother, she felt alone and unsupported in the family. To compensate for this, she tried to attach herself to her brother, with whom she seems to have engaged in some kind of sex play between the ages of 5 and 9. When her brother distanced himself from her on reaching puberty, Karen felt rejected and tried to gain a sense of worth by becoming fiercely competitive in school.

As a child, Karen was bitter, angry, and rebellious, but when she reached puberty, she could no longer tolerate her isolation and won a position in the family by joining the circle of her mother's admirers. At the age of thirteen, she began keeping a diary (Horney 1980) in which she expressed adoration of her mother and brother. Her buried hostility toward them erupted when she was twenty-one, however, and her relations with them were strained thereafter. The diaries that were written while Karen was repressing her anger give a misleading picture of her relations with her family and must be read in light of the Clare case in *Self-Analysis* (1942), which is

highly autobiographical. This case, which appears in three other places as well, provides information about Karen's earlier history and explains her behavior during adolescence.

Although Karen's diaries are misleading about her relations with her family, they reveal her emotional problems quite clearly. She suffered from depression, timidity, and paralyzing fatigue, could not bear being without a boyfriend, was insecure about her mental abilities, and felt like an ugly duckling who could not compete with her beautiful mother. She had great difficulty focusing on her work and was able to succeed academically only because of her exceptional intelligence.

Karen's diaries were mostly devoted to her relationships with males, from whom she desperately needed attention. The typical pattern of her relationships was first idealization of the male, followed by disappointment, depression, and efforts to comprehend why the relationship failed. Because of her disappointments, she moved from man to man, often trying to hold onto several at once because each satisfied different demands. She hoped to find a great man who could fulfill her conflicting needs for dominance and submission, crude force and refined sensibility, but she was perpetually disappointed. Deeply unhappy, she tried to understand the sources of her misery, first in her diaries and then in her psychoanalytic writings, many of which are covert autobiography.

At first Karen thought that Oskar Horney was the great man for whom she had been looking, but he was not forceful enough, and the marriage was soon in trouble. She sought help in her analysis with Karl Abraham, but her symptoms were the same after two years of treatment as they were when she began. The failure of her analysis is one reason why she began to question orthodox theory, especially with respect to the psychology of women. After having three children, Karen and Oskar separated in 1926 and divorced in 1938. Karen never remarried, but she had many troubled relationships of the kind she describes in her essays on feminine psychology and the Clare case in *Self-Analysis*.

Although she had begun to emphasize culture in her writings of the 1920s, it was her move to the United States in 1932 that convinced her that Freud had given too much importance to biology and too little to social factors. First in Chicago and then in New York, she found patients with very different kinds of problems than those she had encountered in Germany. This experience, combined with her reading in the burgeoning sciences of sociology and anthropology, made her doubt the universality of the Oedipus complex and led her to explore the impact of culture on individual psychology. In 1935, she lectured on this topic at the New School for Social Research and was invited by W. W. Norton to write the book that became *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*. As Horney's disagreements with Freud deepened, she felt it important to contrast her thinking with his in a systematic way, and this she did in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*.

Horney's third book, *Self-Analysis* (1942), was an outgrowth of the breakdown of her relationship with Erich Fromm. She had known Fromm when he was a student at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute (he was fifteen years younger than she), and she met him again when he lectured at the University of Chicago in 1933. They became lovers when both moved to New York in 1934. Their relationship was intellectual as well as emotional, with Fromm teaching Horney sociology and Horney teaching Fromm psychoanalysis. The relationship deteriorated in

the late 1930s, after Horney sent her daughter Marianne, who was specializing in psychiatry, to Fromm for a training analysis. When Marianne's hostilities toward her mother emerged in the course of analysis, as was to be expected, Horney blamed Fromm. The breakdown of the relationship was extremely painful to Horney and led to a period of intense self-analysis. This issued in the writing of *Self-Analysis*, in which the story of Clare and Peter is a fictionalized account of what happened between Horney and Fromm. Despite their estrangement, Fromm became a member of the American Institute for Psychoanalysis when it was founded in 1941, but Horney drove him out in 1942, using his status as a lay analyst (he had a Ph.D. rather than an M.D.) as a pretext.

The 1930s were a turbulent period for Horney, culminating with the hostile reaction of her colleagues at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute to her criticisms of Freud and her split with Erich Fromm. The 1940s were equally turbulent, since many of Horney's most distinguished colleagues left the American Institute, one group (including Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan, and Clara Thompson) to form the William Alanson White Institute and another to join the New York Medical College. These splits were partly the result of Horney's need for dominance and her inability to grant others the kind of academic freedom she had demanded for herself at the New York Psychoanalytic. Horney continued to have difficulties in her love life, and these often contributed to dissension at her institute, since she tended to place men with whom she was having relationships in positions of power. Despite the political turmoil it involved, heading her own institute enabled Horney to flourish. It gave her the intellectual freedom she had always sought and facilitated the development of her mature theory. Toward the end of the decade, Horney became interested in Zen, and not long before her death in 1952, she traveled to Japan with D. T. Suzuki, who had written and lectured about Zen in America, to visit Zen monasteries.

Although Horney was a brilliant clinician, she suffered all her life from not having had an analyst who could really help her. After her disappointing experiences, first with Karl Abraham and then with Hanns Sachs in the early 1920s, she turned to self-analysis in an effort to gain relief from her emotional difficulties. Combined with her clinical experience, her self-analysis generated many of her psychoanalytic ideas. Her constant struggle to obtain relief from her problems was largely responsible for the continual evolution of her theory and the deepening of her insights. Horney had a remarkable ability to see herself clearly and to be brutally honest about her own problems. With the exception of her earliest essays, she did not construct a theory that universalized or normalized her difficulties.

Although Horney made little progress with some of her problems, she was remarkably successful with others. As a young woman, she had suffered severely from depression, fatigue, and inability to work, but she became extraordinarily creative, energetic, and productive. Like Clare in *Self-Analysis*, she was a late-bloomer, since she did not write very much until she was in her forties. The last fifteen years of her life are remarkable: she published five ground-breaking books; she was in great demand as an analyst, supervisor, and speaker; she founded and directed the American Institute for Psychoanalysis; she founded and edited *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*; she taught at the New School on a regular basis; she read widely; she learned how to paint; she had many eminent friends and a busy social life; she spent much time in the summers with her daughters; and she traveled a great deal. Her failure to overcome some of her problems made her realistic, while her successes were the source of her famous optimism. Her

belief both in the human potential for growth and in the difficulty of achieving it was based on her own experience.

Intellectual Antecedents

Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalysis

Although a reviewer described *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* as "a fourteen-round ring battle between the 'new ways' (Horney) and the 'old ways' (Freud)" (Brown, 1939, p. 328), Horney acknowledged that she was deeply indebted to Freud, who had provided the foundation for all subsequent psychoanalytic thought. It is not difficult to see why the young Karen Horney was attracted to psychoanalysis. She suffered from many mysterious complaints and her ability to function was impaired. Of an introspective temperament, she had been in the habit of seeking relief by scrutinizing her feelings and motivations. Psychoanalysis offered the most powerful tools available for such an enterprise. She frequently recognized herself, moreover, in Freud's description of women's problems. Given her suffering, her temperament, and her craving for self-understanding, psychoanalysis as a theory and a therapy must have seemed to be exactly what she was looking for.

While some aspects of Freudian theory fit Horney's experience well, others did not. By the early 1920s she began to propose modifications in the light of her observations of her female patients and her own experiences as a woman. Perhaps the most important factor in Horney's initial dissent was that she came to see psychoanalytic theory as reproducing and reinforcing the devaluation of the feminine from which she had suffered in childhood. Disturbed by the male bias of psychoanalysis, she dedicated herself to proposing a woman's view of the differences between men and women and the disturbances in the relations between the sexes. This eventually led to the development of a psychoanalytic paradigm that was quite different from Freud's, but Horney always paid tribute to what she regarded as Freud's enduring contributions. These included the doctrines "that psychic processes are strictly determined, that actions and feelings may be determined by unconscious motivations, and that the motivations driving us are emotional forces" (Horney, 1939, p. 18). She valued Freud's accounts of repression, reaction formation, projection, displacement, rationalization, and dreams; and she felt that Freud had provided indispensable tools for therapy in the concepts of transference, resistance, and free association (Horney, 1939, p. 117).

Alfred Adler

Fritz Wittels (1939) argued that neo-Freudians like Horney were really closer to Adler than to Freud and should really be called neo-Adlerians. Horney began reading Adler as early as 1910, and despite the fact that she did not give him a great deal of credit as an intellectual antecedent, there are important similarities between her later thinking and his.

Adler's influence first appears in a diary entry in 1911. In her work with Karl Abraham, Horney struggled to understand her fatigue, and in her diary she recorded the numerous explanations he proposed, most of which had to do with unconscious sexual desires. In one entry, however, she looked at herself from an Adlerian perspective and arrived at an explanation that sounds very

much like her own analysis of Clare, written thirty years later. She wondered whether her fear of productive work derives not only from her mistrust of her own capacity but also from the need to be first that Adler considered characteristic of neurotics.

Horney was especially intrigued by Adler's account of the "masculine protest" that develops in every woman in response to her sense of inferiority to men. She had no difficulty in identifying the masculine protest in herself. She "envied Berndt because he could stand near a tree and pee" (Horney, 1980, p. 252), she liked wearing pants, she played the prince in charades, and at the age of twelve, she cut off her hair to the neckline. She compensated for her physical inferiority to males by excelling in school, taking great pride that she was a better student than her brother. In the terms of her culture, she was behaving like a man by studying medicine and believing in sexual freedom.

According to Horney's Adlerian self-analysis, she needed to feel superior because of her lack of beauty and feminine sense of inferiority, which led to her to try to excel in a male domain. But her low self-esteem made her afraid she would fail, so she avoided productive work, as do "women in general" (Horney, 1980, p. 251), and experienced disproportionate anxiety over exams. Her fatigue was at once a product of her anxiety, an excuse for withdrawing from competition with men, and a means of concealing her inferiority and gaining a special place for herself by arousing concern.

Horney did not pursue this Adlerian way of thinking for the next two decades, but she returned to it in the 1930s and 40s, when it became highly congruent with her own approach to psychoanalysis. Although she tended to characterize Adler as superficial, she recognized his importance as an intellectual antecedent, acknowledging that he was the first to see the search for glory "as a comprehensive phenomenon, and to point out its crucial significance in neurosis" (Horney, 1950, p. 28).

Other Intellectual Influences

While still in Germany, Horney began to cite ethnographic and anthropological studies, as well as the writings of the philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel, with whom she developed a friendship. After she moved to the United States, her sense of the differences between central Europe and America made her receptive to the work of such sociologists, anthropologists, and culturally oriented psychoanalysts as Erich Fromm, Max Horkheimer, John Dollard, Harold Lasswell, Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict, Ralph Linton, Margaret Mead, Abraham Kardiner, and Harry Stack Sullivan, with most of whom she had personal relationships. In response to these influences, Horney argued not only that culture is more important than biology in the generation of neuroses, but also that pathogenic conflict between the individual and society is the product of a bad society rather than being inevitable as Freud had contended. Following Bronislaw Malinowski, Felix Boehm, and Erich Fromm, Horney regarded the Oedipus complex as a culturally conditioned phenomenon; and following Harry Stack Sullivan, she saw the needs for "safety and satisfaction" as more important than sexual drives in accounting for human behavior.

Although at first she saw conceptions of psychological health as relative to culture, in the late 1930s she began to develop a definition of health that was universal in nature. Drawing on W.

W. Trotter's *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (1916), she described emotional well-being as "a state of inner freedom in which 'the full capacities are available for use'" (Horney, 1939, p. 182). The central feature of neurosis was now self-alienation, loss of contact with "the spontaneous individual self" (Horney, 1939, p. 11). Horney gave Erich Fromm primary credit for this new direction in her thinking, but other important influences were William James and Søren Kierkegaard. In her descriptions of the "real self," she was inspired by James's account of the "spiritual self" in *Principles of Psychology* (1890), and in her discussions of loss of self, she drew on Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death* (1949). Horney also cited Otto Rank's concept of "will" as an influence on her ideas about the real self, and in her later work she invoked the Zen concept of "wholeheartedness."

It is difficult to determine why Horney shifted from an emphasis on the past to one on the present, but she acknowledged the influence of Harald Schultz-Henke and Wilhelm Reich, analysts whom she knew from her days in Berlin. The Adlerian mode of analysis she had employed in her diary and to which she returned also focused on the present.

Major Concepts

Since Horney's thought went through three phases, it will be best to discuss the major concepts of each phase separately. We shall look first at her ideas about feminine psychology, then at the new psychoanalytic paradigm she developed in the 1930s, and finally at her mature theory.

Feminine Psychology

Nancy Chodorow locates the "political and theoretical origins" of psychoanalytic feminism with Karen Horney, whose theories form the basis "for most of the recent revisions of psychoanalytic understandings of gender and for most psychoanalytic dissidence on the question of gender in the early period as well" (1989, pp. 2-3). Horney's ideas were ignored for many years but now seem remarkably astute.

The Male View of Women

In her earliest essays on feminine psychology, Horney strove to show that girls and women have intrinsic biological constitutions and patterns of development that are to be understood in their own terms and not just as products of their difference from and presumed inferiority to men. She argued that psychoanalysis regards women as defective men because it is the product of a male genius (Freud) and a male dominated culture. The male view of the female has been incorporated into psychoanalysis as a scientific picture of woman's essential nature.

An important question for Horney is why men see women as they do. She contended that male envy of pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood, and of the breasts and suckling, gives rise to an unconscious tendency to devalue women and that men's impulse toward creative work is an overcompensation for their small role in procreation. The "womb-envy" of the male must be stronger than the so-called "penis-envy" of the female, since men need to depreciate women more than women need to depreciate men.

In later essays, Horney continued to analyze the male view of woman in order to expose its lack of scientific foundation. In "The Distrust between the Sexes" (1931), she argued that woman is seen as "a second-rate being" because "at any given time, the more powerful side will create an ideology suitable to help maintain its position. . . . In this ideology the differentness of the weaker one will be interpreted as inferiority, and it will be proven that these differences are unchangeable, basic, or God's will" (Horney, 1967, p. 116). In "The Dread of Woman" (1932), Horney traced the male dread of woman to the boy's fear that his genital is inadequate in relation to the mother. The threat of woman is not castration but humiliation; the threat is to his masculine self-regard. As he grows up, the male continues to have a deeply hidden anxiety about the size of his penis or his potency, an anxiety that has no counterpart for the female, who "performs her part by merely *being*" (Horney, 1967, p. 145) and is not obliged to go on proving her womanhood. There is, therefore, no corresponding female dread of men. The male deals with his anxiety by erecting an ideal of efficiency, by seeking sexual conquests, and by debasing the love object.

Cultural Factors

In her essays on feminine psychology, Horney moved steadily away from Freud's belief that anatomy is destiny and toward a greater emphasis on cultural factors as a source of women's problems and of gender identity. She acknowledged that little girls envy the male plumbing but regarded this as psychologically insignificant. What women chiefly envy is male privilege, and what they need is greater opportunity to develop their human capacities. The patriarchal ideal of woman does not necessarily correspond to her inherent character, but the cultural power of that ideal often makes women behave in accordance with it.

In "The Problem of Feminine Masochism" (1935), Horney challenged the idea that "masochistic trends are inherent in, or akin to, the very essence of female nature" (Horney, 1967, p. 214). This is the position of psychoanalysis, which reflects the stereotypes of male culture, but Horney identified a number of social conditions that have made women more masochistic than men. Moreover, comparative studies show that these conditions have not been universal and that some societies have been more unfavorable to women's development than others.

The Masculinity Complex

Horney did not deny that women often envy men and are uncomfortable with their feminine role. Indeed, many of her essays deal with the "masculinity complex" (similar to Adler's "masculine protest"), which she defined as "the entire complex of feelings and fantasies that have for their content the woman's feeling of being discriminated against, her envy of the male, her wish to be a man and to discard the female role" (Horney, 1967, p. 74). Although she initially argued that women are bound to have a masculinity complex because of their need to escape the guilt and anxiety that result from their oedipal situation, Horney soon came to feel that the masculinity complex is not inevitable but is the product of a male dominated culture and of particular kinds of family dynamics. The fact that "a girl is exposed from birth onward to the suggestion -- inevitable, whether conveyed brutally or delicately -- of her inferiority" is an experience "that constantly stimulates her masculinity complex (Horney, 1967, p. 69).

In discussing family dynamics, Horney focused at first on the girl's relationship with male members of the family, but later she derived the masculinity complex and all the phenomena traditionally associated with penis envy -- such as feelings of inferiority, vindictiveness, and competitiveness toward men -- from the girl's relationship with females in the family, particularly the mother. In "Maternal Conflicts" (1933), she brought together the separate features of childhood to which she had attributed the masculinity complex in previous essays: "A girl may have reasons to acquire a dislike for her own female world very early, perhaps because her mother has intimidated her, or she has experienced a thoroughly disillusioning disappointment from the side of the father or brother; she may have had early sexual experiences that frightened her; or she may have found that her brother was greatly preferred to herself" (Horney, 1967, p. 179). All of these features were present in Karen Horney's childhood.

The Overvaluation of Love

"The Overvaluation of Love" (1934) is the culmination of Horney's attempt to analyze herself in terms of feminine psychology. The essay draws on the cases of seven women whose family histories, symptoms, and social backgrounds are similar to Horney's, and she may well have included herself in her clinical sample. Most of the essay is devoted to trying to explain why these women have an obsessive need for a male but are unable to form satisfactory relationships. Their obsession is traced to a childhood situation in which each "had come off second best in the competition for a man" (Horney, 1967, p. 193). It is the typical fate of the girl to be frustrated in her love for her father, but for these women the consequences are unusually severe because of the presence of a mother or sister who dominates the situation erotically.

The girl responds to her sense of defeat either by withdrawing from the competition for a male or developing a compulsive rivalry with other women in which she tries to demonstrate her erotic appeal. The conquest of men provides not only what Horney would later call a "vindictive triumph" but is also a way of coping with anxiety and self-hate. The insecure girl develops an anxiety about being abnormal that often manifests itself as a fear that something is wrong with her genitals or that she is ugly and cannot possibly be attractive to men. As a defense, she may pay an inordinate amount of attention to her appearance or may wish to be a male. The most important defense is proving that, despite her disadvantages, she *can* attract a man. To be without a man is a disgrace, but having one proves that she is "normal": "Hence the frantic pursuit" (Horney, 1967, pp. 197-98).

The situation of these women is sad because although their relationships with men are paramount, they are never satisfactory. They tend to lose interest in a man as soon as he is conquered because they have "a profound fear of the disappointments and humiliations that they expect to result from falling in love" (Horney, 1967, p. 205). Having been rejected by father or brother in childhood, they simultaneously need to prove their worth through erotic conquests and to make themselves invulnerable by avoiding deep emotional bonds. They tend to change partners frequently, since after securing a man they need to get out of the relationship before they get hurt. However attractive they are, they do not believe that a man can actually love them. Moreover, they have a "deep-seated desire for revenge" because of their original defeat: "the desire is to get the better of a man, to cast him aside, to reject him just as she herself once felt cast aside and rejected" (Horney, 1967, p. 206).

Gender Neutrality

Although Horney had devoted most of her professional life to writing about feminine psychology, she abandoned the topic in 1935 because she felt that the role of culture in shaping the female psyche makes it impossible to determine what is distinctively feminine. In a lecture entitled "Woman's Fear of Action" (1935), she argued that only when women have been freed from the conceptions of femininity fostered by male dominated cultures can we discover how they really differ from men psychologically. Our primary objective must not be to identify what is essentially feminine but to foster "the full development of the human personalities of all" (Paris, 1994, p. 238). After this, she began to develop a theory that she considered to be gender-neutral, one that applied equally to males and females.

Horney's New Paradigm

In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1937) and *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (1939), Horney subjected Freud's theories to a systematic critique and began to develop her own version of psychoanalysis. Its distinguishing features were a greater emphasis on culture, a conception of neurosis as a set of defenses devised to cope with basic anxiety, and a focus on present character structure rather than infantile origins.

The Role of Culture

Horney argued that because of his overemphasis on the biological sources of human behavior, Freud had incorrectly assumed the universality of the feelings, attitudes, and kinds of relationships that were common in his culture. Not recognizing the importance of social factors, he attributed neurotic egocentricity to a narcissistic libido, hostility to a destruction instinct, an obsession with money to an anal libido, and acquisitiveness to orality. But anthropology shows that cultures vary widely in their tendency to generate these characteristics, and the Oedipus complex as well, and Horney's own experience of cultural difference after she moved to the United States confirmed this point of view.

Horney rejected Freud's derivation of neurosis from the clash between culture and instinct. In Freud's view, we must have culture in order to survive, and we must repress or sublimate our instincts in order to have culture. Horney did not believe that collision between the individual and society is inevitable but rather that it occurs when a bad environment frustrates our emotional needs and inspires fear and hostility. Freud depicts human beings as inherently insatiable, destructive, and anti-social, but according to Horney these are not expressions of instinct but neurotic responses to adverse conditions.

The Structure of Neurosis

Horney did not reject the significance of childhood in emotional development, as is sometimes thought, but she emphasized pathogenic conditions in the family that make children feel unsafe, unloved, and unvalued rather than the frustration of libidinal desires. As a result of these conditions, children develop "basic anxiety," a feeling of being helpless in a potentially hostile world, which they try to reduce by adopting such strategies of defense as the pursuit of love, power, or detachment.

Horney felt that these defensive strategies are doomed to failure because they generate "vicious circles" in which the means employed to allay anxiety tend to increase it. For example, the frustration of the need for love makes that need insatiable, and the demandingness and jealousy that follow make it less likely than ever that the person will receive affection. People who have not been loved develop a feeling of being unlovable that leads them to discount any evidence to the contrary. Being deprived of affection has made them dependent on others, but they are afraid of that dependency because it makes them too vulnerable. Horney compared the situation created in this way to that "of a person who is starving for food yet does not dare to take any for fear that it might be poisoned" (Horney, 1937, p. 114).

Although Horney devoted much of *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1939) to the neurotic need for love, she gave a good deal of space to the quest for power, prestige, and possession that develops when a person feels hopeless about gaining affection. She also discussed detachment and some of the intrapsychic strategies of defense, such as guilt, neurotic suffering, and self-inflation. She was to examine these in much greater detail in later books.

Horney's paradigm for the structure of neurosis is one in which disturbances in human relationships generate a basic anxiety that leads to the development of strategies of defense that are not only self-defeating but are in conflict with each other, since people adopt not just one but several of them. This paradigm formed the basis of Horney's mature theory.

Structure versus Genesis

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Horney's new version of psychoanalysis was her shift in emphasis, both in theory and clinical practice, from the past to the present. She replaced Freud's focus on genesis with a structural approach, arguing that psychoanalysis should be less concerned with infantile origins than with the current constellation of defenses and inner conflicts. This feature of her theory sharply differentiated it from classical psychoanalysis, which seeks to explain the present by trying to recover the past.

In *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (1939), Horney distinguished between her own "evolutionistic" thinking and what she called Freud's "mechanistic-evolutionistic" thought. Evolutionistic thinking presupposes "that things which exist today have not existed in the same form from the very beginning, but have developed out of previous stages. These preceding stages may have little resemblance to the present forms, but the present forms would be unthinkable without the preceding ones." Mechanistic-evolutionistic thinking holds that "nothing really new is created in the process of development," that "what we see today is only the old in a changed form" (Horney, 1939, p. 42). For Horney, the profound influence of early experiences does not preclude continued development, whereas for Freud nothing much new happens after the age of five, and later reactions or experiences are to be considered as a repetition of earlier ones.

At the heart of Freud's conception of the relation between childhood experiences and the behavior of the adult is the doctrine of the timelessness of the unconscious. Fears and desires, or entire experiences, that are repressed in childhood remain uninfluenced by further experiences or growth. This gives rise to the concept of fixation, which may pertain to a person in the early environment, such as father or mother, or to a stage of libidinal development. Because of the

concept of fixation, it is possible to regard later attachments or other behaviors as repetitions of the past, which has remained encapsulated and unchanged in the unconscious.

Horney did not attempt to refute the doctrine of the timelessness of the unconscious, or the cluster of concepts related to it, but rather built her own theory on a different set of premises. The "non-mechanistic viewpoint is that in organic development there can never be a simple repetition or regression to former stages" (Horney, 1939, p. 44). The past is always contained in the present, but through a developmental process rather than through repetition. The way in which lives "really develop," said Horney, is that "each step condition[s] the next one." Thus "interpretations which connect the present difficulties immediately with influences in childhood are scientifically only half truths and practically useless" (Horney, 1935, pp. 404-405).

Horney's model is one in which early experiences profoundly affect us not by producing fixations that cause us to repeat earlier patterns but by conditioning the ways in which we respond to the world. These in turn are influenced by subsequent experiences and eventually evolve into our adult defensive strategies and character structures. Early experiences may have a greater impact than later ones because they determine the direction of development, but the character of the adult is the evolved product of *all* previous interactions between psychic structure and environment.

Another important difference between Horney and Freud is that whereas for Freud the determining experiences in childhood are relatively few in number and mostly of a sexual nature, for Horney the sum total of childhood experiences is responsible for neurotic development. Things go wrong because of all the things in the culture, in the relations with peers, and especially in the family that make the child feel unsafe, unloved, and unvalued and that give rise to basic anxiety. This anxiety leads to the development of defensive strategies that form a neurotic character structure, and it is this character structure from which later difficulties emanate. Horney sees sexual difficulties as the result rather than the cause of personality problems.

Horney's Mature Theory

According to Horney, people have a real self that requires favorable conditions to be actualized. When they are motivated by their defensive strategies instead of their genuine feelings, they become alienated from their real selves. Horney divided defensive strategies into two kinds: interpersonal, which we use in our dealings with other people, and intrapsychic, which we employ in our own minds. She focused mainly on interpersonal strategies in *Our Inner Conflicts* (1945) and on the intrapsychic in *Neurosis and Human Growth* (1950).

The Real Self

Horney came to see the central feature of neurosis as alienation from the real self because of oppressive forces in the environment. The object of therapy is to "restore the individual to himself, to help him regain his spontaneity and find his center of gravity in himself" (Horney, 1939, p. 11). The real self is not a fixed entity but a set of intrinsic potentialities -- including temperament, talents, capacities, and predispositions -- that are part of our genetic makeup and

need a favorable environment in which to develop. It is not a product of learning, since one cannot be taught to be oneself; but neither is it impervious to external influence, since it is actualized through interactions with an external world that can provide many paths of development.

People can actualize themselves in different ways under different conditions, but there are certain conditions in childhood that everyone requires for self-realization. These include "an atmosphere of warmth" that enables children to express their own thoughts and feelings, the good will of others to supply their various needs, and "healthy friction with the wishes and will" of those around them (Horney, 1950, p. 18). When their own neuroses prevent parents from loving the child or even thinking "of him as the particular individual he is," the child develops a feeling of basic anxiety that prevents him "from relating himself to others with the spontaneity of his real feelings" and forces him to develop defensive strategies (Horney, 1950, p. 18).

Interpersonal Strategies of Defense

According to Horney, people try to cope with their basic anxiety by adopting a compliant or self-effacing solution and moving *toward* people, by adopting an aggressive or expansive solution and moving *against* people, or by becoming detached or resigned and moving *away from* people. Healthy people move appropriately and flexibly in all three directions, but in neurotic development these moves become compulsive and indiscriminate. Each solution involves a constellation of behavior patterns and personality traits, a conception of justice, and a set of beliefs about human nature, human values, and the human condition. Each also involves a "deal" or bargain with fate in which obedience to the dictates of that solution is supposed to be rewarded.

The Compliant Solution

People in whom compliant trends are dominant try to overcome their basic anxiety by gaining affection and approval and controlling others through their dependency. Their values "lie in the direction of goodness, sympathy, love, generosity, unselfishness, humility; while egotism, ambition, callousness, unscrupulousness, wielding of power are abhorred" (Horney, 1945, p. 54). They embrace Christian values, but in a compulsive way, because they are necessary to their defense system. They must believe in turning the other cheek, and they must see the world as displaying a providential order in which virtue is rewarded. Their bargain is that if they are good, loving people who shun pride and do not seek their own gain or glory, they will be well treated by fate and other people. If their bargain is not honored, they may despair of divine justice, they may conclude that they are at fault, or they may have recourse to belief in a justice that transcends human understanding. They need to believe not only in the fairness of the world order but also in the goodness of human nature, and here, too, they are vulnerable to disappointment. Self-effacing people must repress their aggressive tendencies in order to make their bargain work, but they are frequently attracted to expansive people through whom they can participate vicariously in the mastery of life. They often develop a "morbid dependency" on their partner.

Expansive Solutions: Narcissistic, Perfectionistic,
and Arrogant-Vindictive

People in whom expansive tendencies are predominant have goals, traits, and values that are opposite to those of the self-effacing solution. What appeals to them most is not love, but mastery. They abhor helplessness, are ashamed of suffering, and need to achieve success, prestige, or recognition. In *Neurosis and Human Growth* (1950), Horney divided the expansive solutions into three distinct kinds -- narcissistic, perfectionistic, and arrogant-vindictive. There are thus five major solutions in all.

Narcissistic people seek to master life "by self-admiration and the exercise of charm" (Horney, 1950, p. 212). They were often favored and admired children, gifted beyond average, who grew up feeling the world to be a fostering parent and themselves to be favorites of fortune. They have an unquestioned belief in their abilities and feel that there is no one they cannot win. Their insecurity is manifested in the fact that they may speak incessantly of their exploits or wonderful qualities and need endless confirmation of their estimate of themselves in the form of admiration and devotion. Their bargain is that if they hold onto their dreams and their exaggerated claims for themselves, life is bound to give them what they want. If it does not, they may experience a psychological collapse, since they are ill-equipped to cope with reality.

Perfectionistic people have extremely high standards, moral and intellectual, on the basis of which they look down upon others. They take great pride in their rectitude and aim for a "flawless excellence" in the whole conduct of life. Because of the difficulty of living up to their standards, they tend to equate knowing about moral values with being a good person. While they deceive themselves in this way, they may insist that others live up to their standards of perfection and despise them for failing to do so, thus externalizing their self-condemnation. Perfectionists have a legalistic bargain in which being fair, just, and dutiful entitles them "to fair treatment by others and by life in general. This conviction of an infallible justice operating in life gives [them] a feeling of mastery" (Horney, 1950, p. 197). Through the height of their standards, they compel fate. Ill-fortune or errors of their own making threaten their bargain and may overwhelm them with feelings of helplessness or self-hate.

Arrogant-vindictive people are motivated chiefly by a need for vindictive triumphs. Whereas narcissists received early admiration and perfectionists grew up under the pressure of rigid standards, arrogant-vindictive people were harshly treated in childhood and have a need to retaliate for the injuries they have suffered. They feel "that the world is an arena where, in the Darwinian sense, only the fittest survive and the strong annihilate the weak" (Horney, 1945, p. 64). The only moral law inherent in the order of things is that might makes right. In their relations with others they are competitive, ruthless, and cynical. They want to be hard and tough and regard all manifestation of feeling as a sign of weakness. Their bargain is essentially with themselves. They do not count on the world to give them anything but are convinced that they can reach their ambitious goals if they remain true to their vision of life as a battle and do not allow themselves to be influenced by traditional morality or their softer feelings. If their expansive solution collapses, self-effacing trends may emerge.

Detachment

Predominantly detached people pursue neither love nor mastery but rather worship freedom, peace, and self-sufficiency. They disdain the pursuit of worldly success and have a profound aversion to effort. They have a strong need for superiority and usually look on their fellows with

condescension, but they realize their ambition in imagination rather than through actual accomplishments. They handle a threatening world by removing themselves from its power and shutting others out of their inner lives. In order to avoid being dependent on the environment, they try to subdue their inner cravings and to be content with little. They do not usually rail against life but resign themselves to things as they are and accept their fate with ironic humor or stoical dignity. Their bargain is that if they ask nothing of others, others will not bother them; that if they try for nothing, they will not fail; and that if they expect little of life, they will not be disappointed.

Intrapsychic Strategies of Defense

While interpersonal difficulties are creating the moves toward, against, and away from people, and the conflicts between them, concomitant intrapsychic problems are producing their own defensive strategies. Self-idealization generates what Horney calls the pride system, which includes neurotic pride, neurotic claims, tyrannical shoulds, and increased self-hate.

The Idealized Image and the Search for Glory

To compensate for feelings of weakness, worthlessness, and inadequacy, we create, with the aid of our imagination, an **idealized image** of ourselves that we endow with "unlimited powers and exalted faculties" (Horney, 1950, p. 22). The process of self-idealization must be understood in relation to the interpersonal strategies, since the idealized image is based on our predominant defense and the attributes it exalts. The idealized image of self-effacing people "is a composite of 'lovable' qualities, such as unselfishness, goodness, generosity, humility, saintliness, nobility, sympathy." It also glorifies "helplessness, suffering, and martyrdom" and deep feelings for art, nature, and other human beings (Horney, 1950, p. 222). Arrogant-vindictive people see themselves as invincible masters of all situations. They are smarter, tougher, more realistic than other people and therefore can get the better of them. They take pride in their vigilance, foresight, and planning and feel that nothing can hurt them. The narcissistic person is "the anointed, the man of destiny, the prophet, the great giver, the benefactor of mankind" (Horney, 1950, p. 194). Narcissists see themselves as having unlimited energies and as being capable of great achievements, effortlessly attained. Perfectionists see themselves as models of rectitude whose performance is invariably excellent. They have perfect judgment and are just and dutiful in their human relationships. The idealized image of detached or resigned people "is a composite of self-sufficiency, independence, self-contained serenity, freedom from desires and passions," and stoic indifference to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune (Horney, 1950, p. 277). They aspire to be free from restraint and impervious to pressure. In each solution, the idealized image may be modeled in whole or in part on a religious or cultural ideal or an example from history or personal experience.

The idealized image does not ultimately make us feel better about ourselves but rather leads to increased self-hate and additional inner conflict. Although the qualities with which we endow ourselves are dictated by our predominant interpersonal strategy, the subordinate solutions are also represented; and since each solution glorifies a different set of traits, the idealized image has contradictory aspects, all of which we must try to actualize. Moreover, since we can feel worthwhile only if we *are* our idealized image, everything that falls short is deemed worthless, and there develops a **despised image** that becomes the focus of self-contempt. A great many

people shuttle, said Horney, between "a feeling of arrogant omnipotence and of being the scum of the earth" (Horney, 1950, p. 188)

With the formation of the idealized image, we embark on a **search for glory**, the object of which is to actualize our idealized self. What is considered to be glorious will vary with each solution. The search for glory constitutes a private religion the rules of which are determined by our particular neurosis, but we may also participate in the glory systems that are a prominent feature of every culture. These include organized religions, various forms of group identification, wars and military service, and competitions, honors, and hierarchical arrangements of all kinds.

The Pride System

The creation of the idealized image produces not only the search for glory but also neurotic pride, neurotic claims, tyrannical shoulds, and self-hate, all of which will vary with by our predominant solution.

Neurotic pride substitutes a pride in the attributes of the idealized self for realistic self-confidence and self-esteem. Threats to pride produce anxiety and hostility; its collapse results in self-contempt and despair. On the basis of our pride, we make **neurotic claims** on the world in which we demand to be treated in accordance with our grandiose conception of ourselves. The claims are "pervaded by expectations of magic" (Horney, 1950, p. 62). They intensify our vulnerability, for their frustration deflates our pride and confronts us with the sense of powerlessness and inadequacy from which we are fleeing.

The idealized image generates not only pride and claims but also what Horney calls **the tyranny of the should**. The function of the shoulds is to compel us to live up to our grandiose conception of ourselves. The shoulds are determined largely by the character traits and values associated with our predominant solution, but since our subordinate trends are also represented in the idealized image, we are often caught in a "crossfire of conflicting shoulds." For example, the self-effacing person wants to be good, noble, loving, forgiving, generous; but he has an aggressive side that tells him to "go all out for his advantage" and to "hit back at anybody who offends him. Accordingly he despises himself at bottom for any trace of 'cowardice,' or ineffectualness and compliance. He is thus under a constant crossfire. He is damned if he does do something, and he is damned if he does not" (Horney, 1950, p. 221). This is a good description of Hamlet (see Paris, 1991a). "It is the threat of a punitive self-hate that lurks behind [the shoulds]," observed Horney, that "truly makes them a regime of terror" (Horney, 1950, p. 85).

The shoulds are the basis of our **bargain with fate**. No matter what the solution, our bargain is that our claims will be honored if we live up to our shoulds. We seek magically to control external reality by obeying our inner dictates. We do not see our claims as unreasonable, of course, but only as what we have a right to expect, given our grandiose conception of ourselves, and we will feel that life is unfair if our expectations are frustrated. Our **sense of justice** is determined by our predominant solution and the bargain associated with it.

Self-hate is the end product of the intrapsychic strategies of defense, each of which tends to magnify our feelings of inadequacy and failure. Self-hate is essentially the rage the idealized self feels toward the self we actually are for not being what it "should" be. Horney sees self-hate as

"perhaps the greatest tragedy of the human mind. Man in reaching out for the Infinite and Absolute also starts destroying himself. When he makes a pact with the devil, who promises him glory, he has to go to hell--to the hell within himself" (Horney, 1950, p. 154).

Dynamics

Horneyan theory has a dynamic quality: solutions combine, conflict, become stronger or weaker, need to be defended, generate vicious circles, and are replaced by others when they collapse. Conflicts between the defenses cause oscillations, inconsistencies, and self-hate. Within the pride system, there is a seesawing between the idealized and despised selves and a crossfire of conflicting shoulds.

The Basic Conflict

In each of the interpersonal defenses, one of the elements involved in basic anxiety is overemphasized: helplessness in the compliant solution, hostility in the aggressive solution, and isolation in the detached solution. Since under pathogenic conditions all of these feelings are likely to occur, individuals will come to make all three of the defensive moves, giving rise to what Horney calls the "basic conflict."

To gain some sense of wholeness, they will emphasize one move more than the others and will become predominantly self-effacing, expansive, or detached. Which move they emphasize will depend on the particular combination of temperamental and environmental factors at work in their situation. The other trends will continue to exist but will operate unconsciously and manifest themselves in disguised and devious ways. The basic conflict will not have been resolved but will simply have gone underground. When the submerged trends are for some reason brought closer to the surface, individuals will experience severe inner turmoil and may be unable to move in any direction at all. Under the impetus of some powerful influence or the dramatic failure of their predominant solution, they may embrace one of their repressed defensive strategies. They will experience this as conversion or education, but it will merely be the substitution of one neurotic solution for another.

The Relation between the Interpersonal and Intrapsychic Defenses

In *Neurosis and Human Growth* (1950), Horney warned against "a one-sided focus on either intrapsychic or interpersonal factors," contending that the dynamics of neurosis can be understood "only as a process in which interpersonal conflicts lead to a peculiar intrapsychic configuration, and this in turn depends on and modifies the old patterns of human relations" (p. 237). Although she sometimes overemphasized the intrapsychic herself, her theory as a whole maintained the balance she prescribed.

In reviewing the evolution of her theory at the end of *Neurosis and Human Growth* (1950), Horney observed that at first she saw neurosis as essentially a disturbance in human relationships. This disturbance creates basic anxiety against which we defend ourselves by employing the interpersonal strategies of defense. In her earlier books she had been aware of intrapsychic factors but had not recognized their extent and importance. She came to realize, however, that the formation of the idealized image marks a turning point in development, as our

energies shift from developing our real potentialities to actualizing our grandiose conception of ourselves. The idealized image generates the pride system, which becomes a kind of Frankenstein's monster that hates and seeks to destroy its creator. Neurosis is a disturbance not only in our relationships with others but also in our relationship with ourselves.

The disturbance in the relationship with ourselves makes it nearly impossible for us to form better relationships with others, and even if we could form such relationships, they would not undo the original damage. The pride system is the logical outgrowth of early development and the beginning of a new one. Once in existence it has a dynamic of its own that is to a large degree independent of external events. Since the pride system affects how we interact with others, it poisons all our relationships and makes it extremely difficult for them to be a source of healing or growth. To deal successfully with the pride system, analysts must recognize its manifestations in the transference and understand its structure and function.

The Central Inner Conflict

In the course of successful therapy, an intrapsychic conflict develops between the pride system and the emerging real self, which now becomes a target of self-hate. Horney calls this the central inner conflict. Living from the real self involves accepting a world of uncertainty, process, and limitation. It means giving up the search for glory and settling for a less exalted existence. The proud self therefore senses the real self as a threat to its very existence and turns upon it with scorn.

Although the central inner conflict occurs at a rather late stage in psychological growth, it is extremely difficult to resolve. People who have focused their lives on dreams of glory may never be able fully to free themselves from the habit of self-idealization. If they have made progress in therapy, they may seize on their improvement as "the last chance to actualize [their] idealized self in the shining glory of perfect health" (Horney, 1950, p. 358). They may look down on others for being neurotic, drive themselves to behave in what they consider to be healthy ways, and rage at themselves when they realize that they will always have problems and imperfections. Horney's hope is that patients will "feel sympathetic" toward themselves and experience themselves "as being neither particularly wonderful nor despicable but as the struggling and often harassed" human beings they are (Horney, 1950, p. 359).

The Process of Psychotherapy

Horney said that her desire to reevaluate psychoanalytic theory had its origin in "a dissatisfaction with therapeutic results" (Horney, 1939, p. 7). In *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (1939) she redefined transference, countertransference, and the goals of therapy, and in *Self-Analysis* (1942) she developed an account of the analytic process in accordance with her new paradigm. She refined her ideas about therapy in subsequent writings and lectures (1950, 1987, 1991, 1999), but her focus on the present rather than the past, structure rather than genesis, remained the same.

According to Freud, analysis fosters regressive reactions, leading the patient to transfer onto the analyst feelings that derive from childhood. Horney's view of transference was that patients behave toward analysts in accordance with their character structure. The analyst can therefore

use the transference to understand the patient's defenses and inner conflicts. Like transference, countertransference is a manifestation not of infantile reactions but of character structure--in this case that of the analyst. Analysts must understand their own defenses lest they be blind to or indulgent of similar defenses in their patients.

Horney focused on recognizing patients' defenses and discovering their functions and consequences. The purpose of therapy is not to help people gain mastery over their instincts but to lessen their anxiety to such an extent that they can dispense with their neurotic solutions. The ultimate goal of therapy is "to restore the individual to himself, to help him regain his spontaneity and find his center of gravity in himself" (Horney, 1939, p. 11).

From reading her books, we might gain an impression of Horney as a very cerebral therapist who relied heavily on rigorous analysis of her patients in terms of an elaborate taxonomy of defenses. A different picture emerges from the lectures she gave in her courses on analytic technique (1987, 1999). Although she continued to employ her theoretical framework, she taught that intellectual insight is only one aspect of understanding, and not the most significant. Indeed, she feared that theory might obstruct an awareness of the patient's individuality, that "a detached, purely intellectual attitude" would lead not "to understanding but to a mechanical classification of the patient's personality according to our preexisting ideas" (Horney, 1999, p. 199). Theory should not be used to pigeon-hole the patient, nor should the patient be used to confirm the preconceived ideas of the analyst.

Horney taught that therapists should attend to the patient not only with reason and knowledge, but also with intuition and emotion. Understanding is "a process of moving toward another person's position while still maintaining our own," and therapists do this very largely through their emotions, which enable them to feel their way into the patient's situation (1999, p. 199). Horney characterized the therapeutic attitude as one of "undivided" or "wholehearted" attention in which therapists let all their "faculties operate while nearly forgetting about" themselves (1999, p. 188). They must not relinquish themselves, however, for if they lose their "own stand altogether, [they] will not have understanding but blind surrender" (1999, p. 199). If they can lay themselves open without losing themselves, they "can listen wholeheartedly while simultaneously becoming aware of [their] own reactions to the patient and his problems" (1999, p. 201). Horney urged therapists not to overestimate their own mental health, to have a proper humility. They should constantly analyze themselves, paying attention to their feelings and trying to determine how reliable they are as guides to understanding the patient.

This brings us to Horney's model of the therapist-patient relationship, which she saw as mutual, cooperative, and democratic. Her model is not one in which therapists and patients analyze each other but rather one in which therapists continually analyze themselves while helping their patients toward self-understanding and growth. Their self-analysis benefits their patients as well as themselves, since it helps mitigate countertransference problems and deepens their emotional understanding. For Horney, the therapist is not to be a remote authority figure but a real person with strengths and weaknesses, just like the patient. In her lecture on "The Analyst's Personal Equation," she warned that "the fear that neurotic remnants may be exposed will make some analysts unduly cautious, thereby depriving the patient of the opportunity to experience his analyst as a human being with both shortcomings and assets" (1999, p. 193).

Horney frequently emphasized that analysis is a cooperative undertaking. Therapists can help their patients formulate and clarify the data, but the patients must supply it by revealing themselves. Perhaps the most important ways in which they can do this is through free association and the sharing of their dreams--things on which Horney placed more emphasis in her lectures than she did in her books. Self-revelation is difficult and must be facilitated by the therapist's having a genuine respect for their patients, a sincere desire for their well-being, and a wholehearted interest in everything they think and feel. This will create a sense of trust that will make it easier for patients to tell everything that comes to them without selecting.

Horney rejected the then-prevailing authoritarian model of the therapist-patient relationship and proposed a democratic one instead. Therapists do not occupy a morally or psychologically superior position and should be humble about their ability to understand the patient. It will help them to attain a democratic spirit if they remember that, however experienced they are, they are "dealing with a particular patient and [their] knowledge of this patient is limited" (1999, p. 208). They should regard all interpretations as "more or less tentative" and should "be truthful about the degree of certainty" they feel (1999, p. 206). Their truthfulness has two advantages: their "groping will stimulate the patient to be active, to wonder, to search," and it will have more meaning for the patient when they feel confident (1999, pp. 206-7).

For Horney, the object of therapy is to help patients relinquish their defenses, accept themselves as they are, and replace their search for glory with a striving for self-realization. Insight is useful in leading patients to see that their defenses are self-defeating and cannot possibly work, but they must experience as well as understand the destructiveness of their solutions if they are to have a strong enough motivation to change.

During the disillusioning phase of therapy, patients need support in dealing with discouragement, anxiety, and the realization of painful truths about themselves. The therapist assists them in overcoming fear or hopelessness, giving them a sense that their problems can be resolved. Patients will feel profoundly threatened when, "bereft of glory," they realize they are "not as saintly, as loving, as powerful, as independent as [they] had believed" (Horney, 1942, p. 145). At this point, they need someone who does not lose faith in them, even though their own faith is gone. In the course of analysis, patients must confront not only their loss of glory but also their unsavory characteristics, which are the product of their neurosis. They tend to react with unconstructive self-hate, rather than with the self-acceptance that will enable them to grow. The analyst perceives that they are "striving and struggling human being[s]" and "still likes and respects" them as a result (1942, p. 145). This encouragement counteracts patients' self-hate and helps them to like and respect themselves.

As patients become less defensive in the course of therapy, their constructive forces grow stronger, and the central inner conflict emerges. The art of the therapist lies not only in helping patients to perceive, experience, and work through their neurotic solutions, but also in helping them to mobilize their constructive forces and supporting them in their struggle to find and actualize their real selves. Therapists must understand that there is a constant battle in patients between their desire to change and their fear of letting go of the strategies that have enabled them to survive in what they feel to be a dangerous, frustrating, unsympathetic world. They are motivated to change by both a desire to relieve their suffering and the constructive forces that are

still alive within them, but they can relinquish their defenses only when they feel safe enough to do so. The therapist's role is to assuage their anxiety, to reinforce their healthy drives, and to encourage them to continue in their struggle to change. As the central inner conflict rages, patients will oscillate between health and neurosis, but therapists must not become bewildered by these swings. If they have "a clear vision based on [their] own constructiveness" and are "unambiguous all[ies] of the endangered self, [they] will be able to support [their] patient[s] at this most trying time" (1999, p. 256).

The conflict between healthy and neurotic forces may never be finally resolved, but there may be a decisive shift in the balance of power. Therapy can be terminated when the balance has shifted decisively to the side of the strivings for growth and patients are ready to deal with their problems themselves through continuing self-analysis.

Horney's belief in inherent constructive forces made her much more optimistic than Freud about the possibilities of psychotherapy. According to her, Freud did "not have any clear vision of constructive forces in man" and "had to deny their authentic character" (Horney, 1950, p. 378). For him, creativity and love were sublimated forms of libidinal drives, and a striving for self-fulfillment could only be regarded as "an expression of narcissistic libido" (1950, p. 378). For Horney, the goal of therapy was not to transform "hysterical misery into everyday unhappiness" (Breuer and Freud, 1936, p. 232) but to help people achieve the joy of self-realization.

Non-Clinical Applications of Horney

Karen Horney's theories have proven to be of value not only clinically but as an explanatory system that can be used in other disciplines. In recent years, they have been increasingly employed in the study of literature, biography, culture, and gender. They are also applicable to religion (Zabriskie, 1976; Wood, 1980; Rubins, 1980; Huffman 1982; Paris, 1986) and philosophy (Tigner, 1985; Paris, 1986; Mullin, 1988).

Literary Study

Bernard Paris has argued that Horney's theories are especially appropriate for the analysis of literary characters. One of the chief objections to the psychoanalytic study of character has been its reliance on infantile experience to account for the behavior of the adult, since such experience is rarely, if ever, presented in literature. But Horney's theories focus on the kinds of adult defenses and inner conflicts about which literature often provides a great deal of information. In addition to being used in character study, Horney's theories have been employed in the analysis of thematic inconsistencies, tensions between theme and characterization, the relation between authors and their works, and the psychology of reader response (see Paris 1974, 1978, 1986, 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c). They have helped to illuminate works and authors not only from most periods of British and American literature, but also from ancient Greece and Rome, and from France, Russia, Germany, Spain, Norway, and Sweden in a variety of centuries. They have been employed in the study of Chinese, Japanese, and Indian literature as well.

Psychobiography

Horney's emphasis on the present structure of the psyche has also proved to be valuable in psychobiography. Like the literary critic approaching a character or an author, the biographer usually has much information about youth and adulthood but little or none about very early experience. Biographical studies of Robert Frost (Thompson 1966, 1970, 1976), Charles Evans Hughes (Glad 1966), the Kennedys (Clinch 1973), Stalin (Tucker, 1973, 1985, 1990), Woodrow Wilson (Tucker 1977), Jimmy Carter (Glad 1980; see also 1973), Felix Frankfurter (Hirsch 1981), and Lyndon Johnson (Huffman 1989) have fruitfully employed Horneyan analysis.

The biography of Frost exemplifies how Horney can be used. Named official biographer twenty-four years before Frost died, Lawrance Thompson became aware of the poet's many cruelties, self-contradictions, and inner conflicts. After completing a draft of his first volume, he read *Neurosis and Human Growth* and found in it the analytic concepts he needed to make sense of his bewildering subject. Had Horney's book mentioned Frost on every page, Thompson wrote in his notebook, "it couldn't have come closer to giving a psychological framework to what I've been trying to say" (Sheehy 1986, 398). He revised what he had written to reflect his new understanding of Frost as a man who developed a search for glory in response to early humiliations and who longed to triumph over and retaliate against those who had hurt him. Frost's contradictory accounts of his life were a product of both his inner conflicts and his need to confirm his idealized image by mythologizing himself. Frost sometimes used his poetry to "escape from his confusions into idealized postures," while at other times it served "as a means of striking back at, or of punishing" those he considered his enemies (Thompson, 1966, xix).

Cultural Study

Several writers have used Horney in the analysis of culture. David M. Potter (1954) was particularly struck by her analysis of the character traits, inner conflicts, and vicious circles created by the competitiveness of American culture. We trade security for opportunity and then feel anxious and insecure. Paul Wachtel (1989, 1991) also argues that there is something compulsive, irrational, and self-defeating in the way Americans pursue an ever-increasing wealth. We promote competition rather than mutual support and behave aggressively in order to avoid being perceived as weak. James Huffman (1982) emphasizes the sense of threat and feelings of inferiority that have influenced the American character from the beginning of our history, resulting in a compensatory self-idealization and a search for national glory. We make exaggerated claims for ourselves and are outraged when they are not honored by other nations. Like Potter and Wachtel, Huffman sees the American character as predominantly aggressive. We like our leaders to be belligerent, and we glorify people who fight their way to the top. Bernard Paris (1986) has discussed Victorian culture from a Horneyan perspective and has correlated conflicting cultural codes found in Elizabeth culture (as reflected in Shakespeare's plays) with Horney's strategies of defense (1991a).

Gender Study

Horney has been rediscovered in recent years by feminists, many of whose positions she anticipated. Although most attention has been given to her early essays, her mature theory also has important implications for understanding gender identity and masculine and feminine psychology. Impressive work has been done along these lines by Alexandra Symonds, a

Horneyan analyst, and Marcia Westkott, a social psychologist. Horney's mature theory has also been used to address gender issues in popular books by Helen De Rosis and Victoria Pellegrino (1976) and Claudette Dowling (1981).

Symond's essays (1974, 1976, 1978, 1991) are based largely on her clinical experience with women who were suffering from their feminine role, or who were trying to escape that role but finding it difficult, or who seemed to have escaped but were having trouble dealing with the consequences. In every case the starting point was a culture that conditioned girls to be self-effacing and dependent, while boys were encouraged to be autonomous and aggressive. While focusing on the plight of girls, Symonds recognized that boys develop difficulties of their own as a result of cultural stereotyping.

In *The Feminist Legacy of Karen Horney* (1986), Marcia Westkott explored the implications of Horney's mature theory for feminine psychology, with chapters on the sexualization and devaluation of women and the dependency, anger, and detachment they feel as a consequence. In addition, she developed a Horneyan critique of a major strand of feminist theory. Jean Baker Miller, Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan, and the Stone Center group associate an array of personality traits specifically with women. These include a need for affiliation, a nurturing disposition, a sense of responsibility for other people, and a relational sense of identity. Westkott observed that although these traits are regarded in a positive way, they emerged from "a historical setting in which women are less highly valued than men" (Westkott, 1986, p. 2). She proposed that these traits are defensive reactions to subordination, devaluation, and powerlessness and that, however desirable they may seem from a social point of view, they are inimical to women's self-actualization. Westkott thus demythified the celebration of female relationality, arguing that it has provided "a contemporary theoretical justification for traditionally idealized femininity" (Westkott, 1989, p. 245). She contended, with Horney, that being deprived is not ennobling but damaging and that the self-effacing qualities many women develop in order to cope with devaluation are destructive.

Evaluation

Karen Horney is important for her contributions to feminine psychology, which were forgotten for many years but have been highly influential since their republication in *Feminine Psychology* in 1967. They are especially notable for their exploration of female development from a woman's point of view and for their emphasis on the cultural construction of gender. Unlike her essays on feminine psychology, Horney's first two books had a great impact in their day, and their case for the importance of culture and for a structural model of neurosis continues to have an influence. The growing emphasis on present-oriented therapies owes something to Horney's teachings. Her third book, *Self-Analysis* (1942), inspired the Institute for Self Analysis in London and is still the most thorough discussion of the possibilities and techniques of successful self-exploration. It should be noted that Horney felt that self-analysis has the best chance of success when it is employed in conjunction with therapy or as a way of continuing to work on oneself after termination.

While each stage of Horney's thought is important, her mature theory represents her most significant contribution. Most of Horney's early ideas have been revised or enriched--by Horney

herself or by others--or have been absorbed or discovered anew by later writers. This is not the case with her mature theory. *Our Inner Conflicts* (1945) and *Neurosis and Human Growth* (1950) provide explanations of human behavior in terms of currently existing constellations of defenses and inner conflicts that can be found nowhere else. Horney does not account for the whole of human psychology, since like every theorist she describes only part of the picture, but her mature theory is highly congruent with frequently occurring patterns of behavior. Although Horney objected to the instinctivistic nature of Freudian theory, her own theory has a biological basis, since the movements against, away from, and toward other people are human elaborations of the basic defenses of the animal kingdom--fight, flight, and submission. All the strategies are encoded in almost every culture; but each culture has its characteristic attitudes toward the different strategies, its own formulations of and variations upon them, and its own structure of inner conflicts. Horney is often thought of as having described the neurotic personality of her time, but, as its interdisciplinary uses show, her mature theory has wide applicability.

Conclusion

Most psychoanalytic theory has followed Freud in focusing on early origins as a means of explanation and therapy. Well in advance of many recent critics of psychoanalysis, Karen Horney felt that this practice results in circular reasoning, in the conversion of analogies into causes, and in a variety of other epistemological problems. She also felt it to be therapeutically ineffective. Horney doubted that early childhood could ever be accurately recovered, since we are bound to reconstruct it from the perspective of our present needs, beliefs, and defenses. We have a natural desire to explain things in terms of their origins, but Horney felt that there are as many myths of origin as there are psychoanalytic theories. It is more profitable, she argued, "to focus on the forces which actually drive and inhibit a person; there is a reasonable chance of understanding these, even without much knowledge of childhood" (Horney, 1939, p. 146). Horney tried to explain behavior in terms of its function within the current constellation of defenses and to account for contradictory attitudes, actions, and beliefs by seeing them as part of a structure of inner conflicts.

Karen Horney is perhaps the first humanistic psychoanalyst. Her theories are entirely compatible with those of Abraham Maslow, who was influenced by her. Both theories are based on the idea of a "real self" that it is the object of life to actualize. Horney focused on what happens when we become alienated from our real selves as a result of a pathogenic environment, while Maslow focused on what we require for healthy growth and the characteristics of self-actualizing people. Horney describes the defensive strategies we employ when our healthy basic needs for safety, love and belonging, and esteem have been turned into insatiable neurotic needs as a result of having been thwarted. The theories of Horney and Maslow are complementary and taken together provide a more comprehensive picture of human behavior than either provides by itself.

Annotated Bibliography

(Note: Most of Horney's books, unlike her articles, were written for the layperson. All of Horney's books are in print and available in paperbound editions.)

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---. (1942). *Self-analysis*. New York: Norton. Describes the possibilities, techniques, and difficulties of both dyadic and self-analysis. Contains Horney's most fully developed case history, that of Clare, which is highly autobiographical.

---. (1945). *Our inner conflicts*. New York: Norton. Focuses on the interpersonal strategies of compliance (moving toward), aggression (moving against), and detachment (moving away from) and the conflicts between these strategies (the basic conflict). A good place to start reading Horney.

---. (1950). *Neurosis and human growth*. New York: Norton. Focuses on the intrapsychic strategies of self-idealization, the search for glory, neurotic pride, neurotic claims, and tyrannical shoulds, all of which simultaneously defend against and increase self-hate. Integrates the interpersonal strategies into a complete system, but in an occasionally confusing manner. Horney's most complex and important book. Written for fellow analysts but lucid and accessible to laypersons.

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