

Recent books that draw on Horney

[The following listing is not exhaustive. It consists of items which have come to my attention and does not represent a complete bibliographic search. Visitors to the website are invited to submit items for future inclusion by [e-mailing me](mailto:AKS@khsociety.org). AKS]

Celia Hunt (2013): *Transformative Learning through Creative Life Writing*. Routledge: London and New York.

« What happens when we write about ourselves using poetic and fictional techniques? This is the question at the heart of Celia Hunt's new book, in which she explores the effects of creative life writing on adults taking the MA in Creative Writing and Personal Development at the University of Sussex, a unique and highly successful programme of study which many have described as 'life changing'. Drawing together ideas from psychodynamic psychotherapy, literary and learning theory, and work in the cognitive and neurosciences of the self and consciousness, Hunt argues that creative life writing undertaken in a supportive learning environment alongside opportunities for reflection has the power to transform the way people think and learn. It does this by opening them up to a more embodied self-experience, which increases their awareness of the source of their thinking in bodily feeling and enables them to develop a more reflexive approach to learning.

Celia identifies the work of the MA as a form of transformative learning, placing it in the context of recent developments in this influential field of learning theory. She also identifies it as a form of therapeutic education arguing, contrary to those who say that this approach leads to a diminished sense of self, that it can help people to develop a stronger sense of agency, whether for writing or learning or relations with others. Topics covered include:

- Creative writing as a tool for personal and professional development
- The transformative benefits and challenges of creative writing as a therapeutic activity
- The relationships between literary structures and the processes of thinking and feeling
- Collaborative learning and the role of the group
- The role of cognitive-emotional learning in adult education

This book will be of interest to teachers in adult, further and higher education wishing to use creative life writing as a tool for learning, as well as to health care professionals seeking arts-based techniques for use in their practice. It will also appeal to academics interested in the relationship between education and psychotherapy, and in the theory and practice of transformative learning, and to writers seeking a deeper understanding of the creative process. »

(information provided on the author's personal website, <http://www.celiahunt.com/>)

Andrew Tershakovec (2007): *The Mind: The Power that Changed the Planet*. AuthorHouse: Bloomington, IN.

« A review of recent findings in key cognitive sciences shows that the human mind's power is unique since it is an information processing device that can program itself. The unconscious within us isn't just a

mass of destructive instincts, as we used to believe. To the contrary, it is the real engine of our minds, being the unconscious parallel processing system that learns about the world around us, and uses this knowledge to suitably program its conscious linear counterpart, just as our linear computers are programmed. The intricacies of the interaction between the two systems are summed up and evaluated in this book, so it can supply new insights into the roots of human emotional power, its suppleness and also weaknesses. But if our minds are such incredible machines, shouldn't knowledge of their operations equip us not only for advances in science, but also for reaching superior knowledge of ourselves, and the means for self-improvement? »

(book description provided on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

« Though dense and complex, this book presents a thorough, much-needed update to the theory of Karen Horney (“Horn-eye,” not “horny,” 1885–1952). The centerpiece of Tershakovec's book is its model of the functions of the brain's left and right hemispheres as corresponding to two different types of information processing known through computer science: the left brain functions by serial, linear processing (S[L]P), which is closed to input from the environment, and the right hemisphere functions by parallel distributed processing (PDP), is associated with the "unconscious" and handles feelings and emotions, and is open to input from the environment. However, every paragraph in every chapter contains valuable, important insights on the way the brain-mind functions, in sickness and in health, and although it is not a simplistic self-help guide, the book also contains two somewhat detailed case studies demonstrating one way of tapping into "emotional capsules" that can help to re-orient people who suffer from anxiety neuroses and steer them back onto the path of self-realization. The final chapter on psycho-pharmacology is perhaps the most complex but also contains powerful analogies and discussions of why it is important, using the knowledge now available to us, to avail ourselves of a more correct model of how the mind works. » - AKS

(posted as a customer review on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

Jack Danielian and Patricia Gianotti (2012): *Listening with Purpose: Entry Points into Shame and Narcissistic Vulnerability*. Jason Aronson: Lanham, MD.

« This manual has been written for a wide range of dynamic practitioners involved in treating patients with narcissistically-infused issues. The treatment model and case material presented in *Listening with Purpose* cover the spectrum of narcissistic vulnerability and may be applied to the relatively intact patient as well as to the relatively impaired patient. Throughout, it refers to issues of narcissistic vulnerability, from a perspective that assumes narcissistic mechanisms are implicated in all levels of personality functioning and in all people. They exist both in therapists and clients differing only in the level of prominence and degree of disturbance in the personality.

Cutting across several schools of thought, this treatment manual places shame and its derivatives at the very center of narcissistic vulnerabilities, vulnerabilities which create character splits and dissociative phenomena in their wake.

One can wonder if therapists have avoided looking at shame because of its contagious qualities. Human experience has demonstrated that shame is a ubiquitous emotion, yet when individuals encounter shame it places them in a seemingly paradoxical position which looks much like a dissociated limbo state with no way out. We experience it and yet don't experience it, we see it and don't see it, we feel it and don't feel it.

Therapists and mental health professionals cannot adequately treat unexamined shame from within its core unless he or she finds a compatible language for the theory that informs the interventions. In particular, the theory cannot replicate pre-existing splits embedded within a treatment paradigm and cannot be weighted with theoretical underpinnings that are distancing, objectifying, or removed.

The authors have proposed instead an innovative paradigm-shifting model that is very explicit in recommending an experience-near, moment-to-moment immersion in the conflicted and often disoriented life of patients. Unlike existing volumes in the field, *Listening with Purpose: Entry Points into Shame and Narcissistic Vulnerability* is by design replete with copious down-to-earth examples to help guide one's systemic shift in treatment focus, treatment emphasis, and treatment posture. The shift involves healing on many levels and opens up for re-examination and re-assessment heretofore difficult-to-treat cases of trauma, dissociation, character disturbances, and addictive disorders. »

(book description provided on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

Jennifer Leigh Selig (2012): *Integration: The Psychology and Mythology of Martin Luther King, Jr., and His (Unfinished) Therapy With the Soul of America*. Mandorla Books.

« Jesse Jackson once said of Martin Luther King, Jr., “Thinking about him is like thinking about the prism, the sun shining through a glass from as many angles as you look. You know there is another set of rays, and as many angles as you think about Dr. King, there is yet another set of angles with which to analyze him.” Author and depth psychologist Jennifer Leigh Selig approaches King from the angle of a cultural therapist, a radical conceit that extends therapy beyond the bounded container of the consulting room and into the cultural milieu, and beyond the narrow purview of the licensed few and into the hands of the committed many. During the Civil Rights Movement, Selig illustrates how King put America on the couch, talked with her about her issues, challenged her to see her psychological dis-ease, and marched with her along the path of healing, toward her own integration. And just as common wisdom says that therapists can only take clients as far toward wholeness as they have traveled themselves, it is illuminating to look at King's psychological health for hints about why he was able to succeed, and where he might have failed, to heal his “client,” the soul of America. Drawing upon the mythic roles that possessed King—the deliverer, the prophet, and the martyr-savior—and the mythic goal that obsessed him—the creation of the beloved community—this book is a fascinating and ground-breaking exploration of the psyche and mythos of one man and his country struggling toward integration. »

(book description provided on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

In this book, Selig notes that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was familiar with or had at least heard of Horney, and referred to *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1937) as a “one of the bestsellers of his day” (p. 121). Selig refers many times in *Integration* to Horney's work, its possible influence on King, and its utility in understanding King's mission. - AKS

Bernard J. Paris (2012): *A General Drama of Pain: Character and Fate in Hardy's Major Novels*. Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, NJ. (see author's personal website). Available in Kindle format from Amazon.com

« This motivational analysis of the protagonists in Thomas Hardy's three most widely read novels—*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and *Jude the Obscure*—highlights an often-overlooked

aspect of his art. Bernard J. Paris shows Hardy's genius in creating imagined human beings. He demonstrates that while Hardy tends to blame external conditions for his characters' painful fates, their downfalls are due to a very complex combination of cosmic, social, and psychological factors. Hardy's characters are usually discussed primarily in thematic terms. The characters are so richly portrayed, Paris argues, that they can be better understood independent of Hardy's interpretations, in motivational terms and he utilizes the psychologist Karen Horney's theories to recover Hardy's intuitions. The characters are full of inner conflicts that make them difficult to fathom, but the approach Paris employs explains their contradictions and illuminates their troubled relationships—shedding light on these expertly crafted imagined human beings.

This psychological approach to Hardy's characters enables us to understand his characters and gain insight into the implied authors of the works. In addition, the approach shows Hardy's authorial personality. We can see that Hardy treats some defensive strategies more sympathetically than others. Given his view of life as “a general drama of pain,” resignation, like that of Hardy's character Elizabeth-Jane, is the strategy he prefers. »

Bernard J. Paris (2010): *Heaven and Its Discontents: Milton's Characters in Paradise Lost*. Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, NJ. (see author's personal website)

« Many critics agree with C. S. Lewis that “Satan is the best drawn of Milton's characters.” Satan is certainly a wonderful creation, but Adam and Eve are also complex and well-drawn, and God may be the most complicated character of all. *Paradise Lost* is above all God's story; it is his discontent, first with Lucifer and then with human beings, that drives the action from the beginning until his anger subsides at the world's end.

God and Satan have similarities not only in their pursuit of revenge, but also in their craving for power and glory. The ambitious Satan wants more than he already has, but what accounts for the voracity of God's appetite? Does the fact that each threatens the status of the other help to explain the intensity of their hatred and rage? Is their vindictiveness a response to being threatened, an effort to repair the injury they feel they've sustained? This seems to be the case for Satan, but must not God also have felt deeply hurt to have such a powerful need for vengeance? If so, why is the Almighty so vulnerable? And why is he so hard on Adam and Eve and the rest of humankind? These are the kinds of questions Bernard Paris tries to answer in this book.

Paris's purpose is not to focus on Milton's illustrative intentions but to try to understand God, Satan, Adam, and Eve as psychologically motivated characters who are torn by inner conflicts. Most critics treat Milton's characters as coded messages from the author, but their mimetic features interfere with the process of decoding. Instead of looking through the characters to the author, Paris looks at Milton's characters as objects of interest in themselves, as creations inside a creation who escape their thematic roles and are embodiments of his psychological intuitions. This book heightens our appreciation of an ignored aspect of Milton's art and offers new insights into the critical controversies that have surrounded *Paradise Lost*. »

(book descriptions provided on Amazon.com)

Transaction Publishers has also reissued reprints of Paris's first two books applying a Horneyan approach to literary criticism: *A Psychological Approach to Fiction* (1974/2010), with a new introduction by the author; and *Character and Conflict in Jane Austen's Novels* (1978/2013).