



THEORIES OF PERSONALITY - I

KAREN HORNEY -Neo-Freudian Theory of Personality

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Psychoanalytical Social Theory

Karen Horney



Psychoanalytical Social Theory

- *Social and cultural conditions, especially childhood experiences, are largely responsible for shaping personality.*
- People who do not have their needs for love and affection satisfied during childhood develop **basic hostility** toward their parents and, as a consequence, suffer from **basic anxiety**.
- People combat **basic anxiety** by adopting one of three fundamental **styles of relating to others**: (1) moving **toward** people, (2) moving **against** people, or (3) moving **away** from people.
- **Neurotics** are compelled to rigidly rely on only one.

Psychoanalytical Social Theory

- Compulsive behavior generates a basic *intrapsychic conflict* that may take the form of either an **idealized self-image** or **self-hatred**.
- **Idealized self-image** is expressed as (1) neurotic search for glory, (2) neurotic claims, or (3) neurotic pride.
- **Self-hatred** is expressed as either self-contempt or alienation from self.
- Bernard Paris (1994) wrote that *“Horney’s insights were derived from her efforts to relieve her own pain, as well as that of her patients. If her suffering had been less intense, her insights would have been less profound”*

BIOGRAPHY



Karen Danielsen Horney

- Born in **Eilbek**, a small town near **Hamburg, Germany**, on **September 15, 1885**
- Youngest child of a 50-year-old father and his second wife.
- Only daughter of **Berndt (Wackels) Danielsen**, a sea captain, and **Clothilda van Ronzelen Danielsen**, a woman nearly 18 years younger than her husband.
- The old sea captain had been married earlier and had four other children, most of whom were adults by the time Horney was born.
- Had older siblings favored by her parents and felt unloved and unwanted.

Karen Danielsen Horney


- Karen felt great hostility toward her stern, devoutly religious father and regarded him as a religious hypocrite.
- She idolized her mother, who both supported and protected her against the stern old sea captain.
- In 1906, she entered the **University of Freiburg**, becoming one of the first women in Germany to study **medicine**. There she met **Oskar Horney**, a political science student.
- After their marriage in 1909, the couple settled in **Berlin**, where Oskar, now with a PhD, worked for a coal company and Karen, not yet with an MD, specialized in psychiatry.
- She gave birth to **three daughters** in 5 years; she received her **MD degree** in 1915 after 5 years of psychoanalysis; and, in her quest for the right man, she had several love affairs

Karen Danielsen Horney

- In 1926, Karen and Oskar separated but did not officially divorce until 1938.
- In 1932, Horney left Germany for a position as **associate director** of the newly established **Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute**.
- During the 2 years she spent in Chicago, she met **Margaret Mead, John Dollard**, and many of the same scholars who had influenced **Harry Stack Sullivan**.
- She renewed acquaintances with **Erich Fromm** and his wife, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, whom she had known in Berlin.
- During the next 10 years, Horney and Fromm were close friends, greatly influencing one another and eventually becoming lovers

Karen Danielsen Horney

- After 2 years in Chicago, Horney moved to New York, where she taught at the **New School for Social Research**.
- ***New Ways in Psychoanalysis*** (1939) - abandoning the instinct theory and placing more emphasis on ego and social influences.
- In 1952, Horney established the **Karen Horney Clinic**.
- In 1950, Horney published her most important work, ***Neurosis and Human Growth***.
- Horney died of cancer on **December 4, 1952**. She was 65 years old.



Culture, especially early childhood experiences, plays a leading role in shaping human personality, either neurotic or healthy.

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOANALYTICAL SOCIAL THEORY



Horney and Freud Compared

HORNEY

- **Optimistic** one and is centered on **cultural forces** that are amenable to **change**.
- *"Man is ruled not by the pleasure principle alone but by two guiding principles: **safety** and **satisfaction**."*
- **Neuroses** are not the result of instincts but rather of the person's *"attempt to find paths through a wilderness (society) full of unknown dangers."*

FREUD

- **Pessimistic** concept of humanity based on **innate instincts** and the **stagnation** of personality.

The Impact of Culture

- People of this society are imbued with the cultural teachings of **kinship** and **humility**. These teachings, however, run contrary to another prevailing attitude, namely, **aggressiveness** and the **drive to win** or **be superior**.
- Society's demands for success and achievement are nearly endless, so that even when people achieve their **material ambitions**, additional goals are continually being placed before them.
- People are free, that they can accomplish anything through **hard work** and **perseverance**. In reality, however, the freedom of most people is greatly restricted by **genetics**, **social position**, and the **competitiveness of others**.

The Importance of Childhood Experiences

- **Childhood** is the age from which the vast majority of problems arise.
- A variety of **traumatic events**, such as **sexual abuse**, **beatings**, **open rejection**, or **pervasive neglect**, may leave their impressions on a child's future development.
- A **difficult childhood** is primarily responsible for **neurotic needs**.
- The **totality of early relationships** molds personality development.



BASIC HOSTILITY AND BASIC ANXIETY

Basic Hostility and Basic Anxiety

- Each person begins life with the potential for healthy development, but like other living organisms, people need favorable conditions for growth.
- Children need to experience both **genuine love** and **healthy discipline**.
- Such conditions provide them with feelings of *safety* and *satisfaction* and permit them to grow in accordance with their real self.

- If parents do not satisfy the child's needs for safety and satisfaction, the child develops feelings of **basic hostility** toward the parents.
- However, children seldom overtly express this hostility as rage; instead, they **repress their hostility** toward their parents and **have no awareness** of it.
- Repressed hostility then leads to profound feelings of **insecurity** and a vague sense of **apprehension**.
- This condition is called **basic anxiety**, which Horney (1950) defined as "*a feeling of being isolated and helpless in a world conceived as potentially hostile*"

- Four general ways that people protect themselves against this feeling of being alone in a potentially hostile world:

1. **Affection** - a strategy that does not always lead to authentic love. In their search for affection, some people may try to purchase love with self-effacing compliance, material goods, or sexual favors.
2. **Submissiveness** - submit themselves either to people or to institutions such as an organization or a religion.
3. **Power, Prestige and Possession**
 - a. **Power** - is a defense against the real or imagined hostility of others and takes the form of a tendency to dominate others.
 - b. **Prestige** is a protection against humiliation and is expressed as a tendency to humiliate others;
 - c. **Possession** acts as a buffer against destitution and poverty and manifests itself as a tendency to deprive others.
4. **Withdrawal** - developing an independence from others or by becoming emotionally detached from them; feel that they cannot be hurt by other people.

Compulsive Drives

- Salient characteristic of all **neurotic drives**.
- Whereas **normal individuals** are able to use a variety of defensive maneuvers in a somewhat useful way, **neurotics** compulsively repeat the same strategy in an essentially unproductive manner.

Neurotic Needs

- For each item except number 8, a “True” response parallels one of Horney’s neurotic needs. For number 8, a “False” answer is consistent with the neurotic need for self-centeredness.
- Remember that endorsing most or even all of these statements in the “neurotic” direction is **no indication of emotional instability**, but these items may give you a better understanding of what Horney meant by neurotic needs.

1. *The neurotic need for affection and approval.*

- Attempt indiscriminately to please others
- Try to live up to the expectations of others,
- Tend to dread self-assertion,
- Quite uncomfortable with the hostility of others as well as the hostile feelings within themselves.

2. *The neurotic need for a powerful partner*

- Lacking self-confidence,
- Try to attach themselves to a powerful partner.
- Overvaluation of love and a dread of being alone or deserted.
- Horney's own life story reveals a strong need to relate to a great man, and she had a series of such relationships during her adult life.

3. *The neurotic need to restrict one's life within narrow borders.*

- Strive to remain inconspicuous,
- To take second place, and
- To be content with very little.
- They downgrade their own abilities and dread making demands on others.

4. *The neurotic need for power*

- Power and affection are perhaps the two greatest neurotic needs.
- The need for power is usually combined with the needs for prestige and possession and manifests itself as the need to control others and to avoid feelings of weakness or stupidity.

5. *The neurotic need to exploit others*

- Frequently evaluate others on the basis of how they can be used or exploited, but at the same time, they fear being exploited by others.

6. The neurotic need for social recognition or prestige

- Some people combat basic anxiety by trying to be first, to be important, or to attract attention to themselves.

7. *The neurotic need for personal admiration*

- A need to be admired for what they are rather than for what they possess.
- Their inflated self-esteem must be continually fed by the admiration and approval of others.

8. *The neurotic need for ambition and personal achievement*

- Have a strong drive to be the best—the best salesperson, the best bowler, the best lover.
- They must defeat other people in order to confirm their superiority.

9. The neurotic need for self-sufficiency and independence

- Have a strong need to move away from people, thereby proving that they can get along without others.
- The playboy who cannot be tied down by any woman exemplifies this neurotic need

10. The neurotic need for perfection and unassailability

- By striving relentlessly for perfection, neurotics receive "proof" of their self-esteem and personal superiority.
- They dread making mistakes and having personal flaws, and they desperately attempt to hide their weaknesses from others.

Neurotic Trends

- In 1945, she identified the three basic attitudes, or **neurotic trends**, as (1) *moving toward people*, (2) *moving against people*, and (3) *moving away from people*.

Moving toward people

- It refers to a neurotic need to protect oneself against feelings of **helplessness**.
- Compliant people employ either or both of the first two neurotic needs; that is, they desperately strive for affection and approval of others, or they seek a powerful partner who will take responsibility for their lives.
- “Morbid dependency”
- They are willing to subordinate themselves to others, to see others as more intelligent or attractive, and to rate themselves according to what others think of them.

Moving against people

- Aggressive people take for granted that everyone is *hostile*.
- Move against others by appearing tough or ruthless.
- 5 neurotic needs: the need to be powerful, to exploit others, to receive recognition and prestige, to be admired, and to achieve.

Moving away from people

- This strategy is an expression of needs for privacy, independence, and self-sufficiency.
- Become neurotic when people try to satisfy them by compulsively putting emotional distance between themselves and other people.
- They dread competition, fearing a blow to their illusory feelings of superiority. Instead, they prefer that their hidden greatness be recognized without any effort on their part

1. **Idealized self-image** is an attempt to solve conflicts by painting a godlike picture of oneself.
2. **Self-hatred** is an interrelated yet equally irrational and powerful tendency to despise one's real self.

INTRAPSYCHIC CONFLICTS

Idealized Self-Image

- Neurotics glorify and worship themselves in different ways:
 - **Compliant** people see themselves as good and saintly;
 - **Aggressive** people build an idealized image of themselves as strong, heroic, and omnipotent; and
 - **Detached** neurotics paint their self-portraits as wise, self-sufficient, and independent.
- Horney (1950) recognized **three aspects** of the idealized image: (1) the neurotic **search for glory**, (2) neurotic **claims**, and (3) neurotic **pride**.

The Neurotic Search for Glory

- Horney (1950) referred to this comprehensive drive toward actualizing the ideal self as the **neurotic search for glory**.
- In addition to *self-idealization*, the neurotic search for glory includes three other elements:
 - The *need for perfection* refers to the drive to mold the whole personality into the idealized self. (*tyranny of the should*)
 - **Neurotic ambition** refers to the compulsive drive toward superiority.
 - *Drive to vindictive triumph* - "its chief aim is to put others to shame or defeat them through one's very success; or to attain the power. . . to inflict suffering on them—mostly of a humiliating kind"

Neurotic Claims

- Believing that something is wrong with the outside world, they proclaim that they are special and therefore entitled to be treated in accordance with their idealized view of themselves.

Neurotic Pride

- A false pride based not on a realistic view of the true self but on a spurious image of the idealized self.
- Based on an idealized image of self and is usually loudly proclaimed in order to protect and support a glorified view of one's self.

Self-Hatred

- Six major ways in which people express self-hatred:
 1. **Relentless demands on the self**, which are exemplified by the tyranny of the should.
 2. **Merciless accusation** - constantly criticize themselves
 3. **Self-contempt** - belittling, disparaging, doubting, discrediting, and ridiculing oneself
 4. **Self-frustration** - frequently bound by taboos against enjoyment (e.g., "I don't deserve a new car;" "I must not wear nice clothes because many people around the world are in rags.")
 5. **Self-torment** - main intention is to inflict harm or suffering on themselves. (e.g., masochistic, exaggerating the pain, cutting themselves, starting a fight that they are sure to lose, or inviting physical abuse)
 6. **Self-destructive actions and impulses** - carried out in action or enacted only in the imagination (e.g., overeating, abusing alcohol/drugs, working too hard, driving recklessly, & suicide)



FEMININE PSYCHOLOGY

Feminine Psychology

- Psychic differences between men and women are not the result of **anatomy** but rather of **cultural** and **social** expectations.
- **Basic anxiety** is at the core of men's need to overpower women and women's wish to humiliate men.
- Oedipus complex – neurotic need for love and aggression ; main goal is security not sexual intercourse
- Many women possess a ***masculine protest***; that is, they have a pathological belief that **men are superior to women**; *“a wish for all those qualities or privileges which in our culture are regarded as masculine”*



PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapy

- Help patients gradually grow in the direction of **self-realization**.
- Give up their **idealized self-image**, abandon their neurotic search for glory, and change self-hatred to an acceptance of the **real self**.
- Self-understanding accompanied by emotional experience
- Dream interpretation and free association



CONCEPT OF HUMANITY

Concept of Humanity

- The prime difference between a healthy person and a neurotic individual is the **degree of compulsivity** with which each moves toward, against, or away from people.
- *Deterministic* (compulsivity) but higher on *free choice* (control over intrapsychic conflicts)
- Somewhat more *optimistic* than pessimistic (self-realization)
- *Causality vs. teleology* – middle position (self-realization vs. childhood experiences); ***“The past in some way or other is always contained in the present”*** (Horney, 1939, p. 153).
- *Conscious vs. unconscious* – middle position; limited awareness of their motives
- Emphasis on *social influences*
- Highlighted *similarities* – little emphasis on individual differences within each of the types of neurotics: the helpless, hostile, and detached.

Key Terms and Concepts

- Horney insisted that ***social and cultural influences*** were more important than biological ones.
- Children who lack warmth and affection fail to meet their ***needs for safety and satisfaction***.
- These feelings of isolation and helplessness trigger ***basic anxiety***, or feelings of isolation and helplessness in a potentially hostile world.
- The inability of people to use different tactics in their relationships with others generates ***basic conflict***: that is, the incompatible tendency to move toward, against, and away from people.
- Horney called the tendencies to move toward, against, or away from people the three ***neurotic trends***.
- Healthy people solve their basic conflict by using all three neurotic trends, whereas neurotics compulsively adopt only one of these trends.

Key Terms and Concepts

- The three neurotic trends (moving toward, against, or away from people) are a combination of 10 neurotic trends that Horney had earlier identified.
- Both healthy and neurotic people experience ***intrapsychic conflicts*** that have become part of their belief system. The two major intrapsychic conflicts are the idealized self-image and self-hatred.
- The ***idealized self-image*** results in neurotics' attempts to build a god-like picture of themselves.
- ***Self-hatred*** is the tendency for neurotics to hate and despise their real self.
- Any psychological ***differences between men and women*** are due to cultural and social expectations and not to biology.
- The goal of Horneyian ***psychotherapy*** is to bring about growth toward actualization of the real self.



THANK YOU