American Handbook of Psychiatry

The School of Karen Horney

American Neo-Freudian Schools

Isidore Portnoy

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Freud and Horney

For more than 15 years Karen Horney worked with, taught, and contributed to the traditional theories and techniques of Freudian psychoanalysis in which she had received her psychoanalytic education. Her first doubts about Freud's theories arose in response to his views on feminine psychology. Her own experience and the influence of Erich Fromm and others led to a comprehensive evaluation of Freud's concepts. In her view his basic and imperishable contributions, constituting the "groundwork of psychoanalytic theory and method," were his concepts of unconscious forces, psychic determinism, the role of inner conflict in a dynamic theory of personality, the meaningfulness of dreams, the role of anxiety in neurosis, and the crucial importance of childhood in human development. In the realm of therapy she valued most his emphasis on the necessity of bringing unconscious forces into consciousness in order to bring about basic change;

the importance of recognizing and dealing with the patient's resistance; the recognition that, in spite of resistance, unconscious forces continue to operate and find expression in inadvertent symbolic behavior, dreams, free associations, and patterns of relating to the analyst. Although Horney differed with Freud on many aspects of these concepts, she remained convinced that essentially they constituted the "common base" uniting all schools of psychoanalysis. Horney rejected Freud's instinctivistic orientation, including the concepts of the libido and the death instinct; the repetition compulsion; the concepts of innate destructiveness and dualities; his belief that the scientific attitude excludes moral valuation; and, most of all, his pessimistic philosophy in which . . man is doomed to dissatisfaction whichever way he turns. He cannot live out satisfactorily his primitive instinctual drives without wrecking himself and civilization. He cannot be happy alone or with others. He has but the alternative of suffering himself or making others suffer" (p. 377).

Culture and Neurosis

Horney viewed man as a social being who can only develop his humanity in a cultural milieu. She saw neurosis as a particular form of human development "generated not only by incidental individual experiences, but also by the specific cultural conditions under which we live" (p. 8). She noted the fallacy of each culture in assuming its own attitudes and values to be the

standard of normality for all times and places. She recognized the infinite variety of ways in which cultures differ—in their definitions of health and illness, in the fears they generate and the defenses they provide against those fears, in their attitudes toward all aspects of human relating and striving.

Although there are gross inconsistencies in this regard, the increasing openness of our society, the emphasis on the uniqueness and worth of the individual, and the stress placed on self-expression and self-fulfillment are important positive values furthering self-realization. Among the neurotogenic aspects of our society she focused on three sets of factors. The first includes those conditions that foster neurotic development by creating feelings of helplessness, insecurity, potential hostile tension, and emotional isolation. She emphasized particularly the role of competitiveness, which begins in the economic field and brings "the germs of destructive rivalry, disparagement, suspicion, and begrudging envy into every human relationship" (p. 173). Economic exploitation, inequality of rights and opportunities, and the overemphasis on success breed feelings of insecurity, impair initiative and self-confidence. A second set of factors relates to contradictions in our culture that are the anlage for the development of neurotic conflict. Thus our culture emphasizes the importance of success and winning in competition, while it places equal emphasis on brotherly love and humility. Needs and expectations are unceasingly stimulated, while many individuals are frustrated in the fulfillment of these needs. Freedom is greatly stressed in the

face of the great number of existing restrictions. The third set of factors relates to those achievements and qualities of character that our culture rewards and that come to constitute elements in the neurotic individual's idealized image.

We are all the children of our culture. We benefit and suffer to various degrees from the growth-furthering and growth-obstructing aspects of our culture. The difference between the healthy and the neurotic individual is always one of degree. The difference between healthy and neurotic forces is, however, qualitative and basic. The neurotic individual is one in whom neurotic forces predominate and interfere seriously with his self-fulfillment, particularly in his relating to himself and others. In Horney's view he is one who has experienced injurious cultural influences "in an accentuated form, mostly through the medium of childhood experiences. We might call him a stepchild of our culture" (p. 290).

The Real Self and Self-Realization

As Horney evolved her own psychoanalytic concepts, her optimistic and humanistic philosophy came to occupy a central position. Her optimism was not predictive but an expression of her belief "in the inner dignity and freedom of man and in the constructiveness of the evolutionary forces inherent in man." She viewed the real self as the dynamic core of the human

personality, “the central inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique in each, which is the deep source of (healthy) growth” (p. 17), the self “we refer to when we say that we want to find ourselves” (p. 158). She saw the real self as the source of our capacities for experiencing and expressing our alive and spontaneous feelings; for evolving our own values and making choices based on them; for taking responsibility for our own actions and the consequences of them. It is the source of genuine integration, a natural process in which all aspects of the individual function harmoniously and without serious inner conflict, giving the individual a solid sense of his realness, his wholeness, his identity. The constructive forces of the real self unfold and develop in the process of healthy growing that Horney called self-realization. This process does not essentially aim at the development of special abilities, but it involves, “in a central place,” the development of good human relationships with oneself and with others. It is not a static goal, but a direction and a process.

In relation to others self-realization encompasses spontaneous moving toward others in giving and receiving affection; healthy altruism, discriminate trust, cooperation, empathy, and sympathy; the joy of meaningful involvement with others in play, in work, in sex, in the sharing of mutual interests and ideas; the democratic ideals of mutuality and respect for the individuality and rights of others. Healthy moving against others includes the ability and the freedom to oppose, to accept and enjoy healthy friction, to

exercise rational authority, to meet challenges and threats to genuine convictions and interests. Healthy moving away from others includes natural striving toward autonomy, freedom, independence; the ability to stand alone, to accept one's separateness; to enjoy "the meaningful solitude" that is essential to the process of living creatively.

In relation to oneself self-realization includes the striving to find, to own, to develop one's own identity; genuine self-interest; living in accord with values derived from what Horney called "a morality of evolution" (p. 13), in terms of which we consider moral that which enhances our healthy being and growing, and we consider immoral that which obstructs such growing. It would include an individual's developing "for his well functioning, . . . both the vision of possibilities, the perspective of infinitude, *and* the realization of limitations, of necessities, of the concrete" (p. 35).

In the area of work self-realization means the ability to commit one's attention and energies wholeheartedly to tasks one has undertaken either out of desire or genuine necessity. It includes the capacity for enjoying congenial and creative work and the varied pleasures of working alone and with others; the development of special talents; the wish to tap the deep wells of creativeness that exist in all, as evidenced in dreaming.

Finally the process of self-realization moves the individual into the

realm of involvement in and concern with broader issues relating to the community and the world at large. Here man accepts his place in the world and takes responsibility for his role in creating his culture as well as being created by it.

The Neurotic Character Development

Basic Anxiety and the Search for Safety

In Horney's concept every neurosis is a character neurosis, a developmental process that begins in childhood, as an expression of the child's efforts to cope with a human environment that he experiences as inimical to him, and that evolves into increasingly disturbed relationships to others and to himself. The process of healthy growing in a young child can only take place if he feels loved and accepted as the person he actually is; if his individuality is respected and he is given the encouragement and guidance he needs to express and develop his own truly unique being. "If he can thus grow *with* others, in love and in friction, he will also grow in accordance with his real self" (p. 18), on the basis of an inner core of security and self-confidence. Instead, the significant persons in his environment often relate to him predominantly in terms of their own compulsive, egocentric neurotic needs, are indifferent or hostile to his legitimate needs and wishes, offer "love" that is smothering and guilt inducing, "guidance" that is coercive and

exploitative. Particularly damaging to the child are the parents' neurotic conflicts expressed in inconsistent treatment, alternating between indulgence, admiration, and idealization of the child, on the one hand, and unrealistic expectations, hostility, subtle or overt undermining and disparagement, on the other hand. It is always the impact of the whole human environment, and especially the balance of constructive and destructive influences in that environment, that is decisive. Where these influences are mainly injurious and threatening to the child, he develops feelings of uncertainty, hostility, and precariousness, a crucial triad of feelings of helplessness, isolation, and of being surrounded by a potentially hostile world. As these feelings pervade the child's whole experience and perception of the world around him, they come to constitute what Horney called the basic anxiety—the nutritive soil in which the neurotic structure develops. Horney distinguished the basic anxiety from the *Angst der Kreatur,* which is an expression in philosophic terms of man's awareness of his actual helplessness toward such inevitable processes as aging and death. While both involve an awareness of greater powers, only in basic anxiety are those powers experienced as hostile. The practical importance of this distinction lies in the fact that, since basic anxiety is not an inevitable aspect of the human condition, its significant reduction is one of the major goals of psychoanalytic therapy.

Basic anxiety compels the child to make efforts to allay his feelings of

precariousness by inhibiting his true feelings and adopting strategic patterns of relating in a search for safety. At first these *ad hoc* strategies have some flexibility, the child being able to move back and forth between clinging, opposing, and withdrawing. Depending on the intensity of the basic anxiety, however, these strategies become increasingly rigid, indiscriminate, compulsive character trends, each fostering the growth of its own needs, qualities, sensitivities, inhibitions, and values. The natural movement toward others becomes a compulsive pattern of compliance. The natural movement against others becomes a compulsive pattern of aggression. The natural movement away from others becomes a compulsive pattern of detachment. An invariable aspect of developing compulsiveness is that these drives, like all neurotic drives, are in all their essentials unconscious.

The particular neurotic pattern that the child adopts depends on his temperament and the contingencies of his human environment. *The compliant child* is one whose early years were spent *"under the shadow* of somebody" (p. 222), in a family in which affection could be obtained from an adored or self-sacrificing mother, a benignly despotic father, a preferred or domineering sibling, but only at the price of submission and subordination of himself. This child "accepts" the helplessness in his basic anxiety and seeks safety by gaining the love, approval, and protection of the powerful persons in his environment. He develops increasing needs for physical closeness and intimacy, feels anxious and excluded when he is alone or when hostility arises

in him or toward him. Hence he inhibits in himself all that could arouse hostility in others, including any critical, ambitious, or assertive tendencies. Sex may constitute an indispensable proof that he is needed and loved. He cultivates in himself qualities of lovableness and sensitiveness to the wishes of others, becomes appeasing, ingratiating, compulsively appreciative and considerate. He tends to take the blame readily and to judge himself by the opinions of others.

The aggressive child is one whose human environment was characterized by gross neglect, contemptuous, hypocritical, or brutal treatment, subtle or overt. Initially he may have attempted to gain security through affection and closeness, but when these efforts fail he feels increasingly rejected and humiliated, "accepts" the hostility of the world around him, turns his back on the whole area of affection, and strives for safety through opposing, excelling, dominating, and getting recognition. He cultivates in himself qualities of shrewdness, toughness, and resourcefulness, and he worships strength and will power. He abhors softness, fearfulness, and needing others, which he experiences as weakness, although he also needs others to provide the recognition and submission without which he feels anxious and lost. Sex may be important to him as a means of controlling and conquering.

The detached child is one whose human environment was characterized

by “cramping influences” (p. 275) that were either so subtle or so powerful that rebellion was not possible. The family atmosphere was one of tightness, with implicit or explicit demands on the child that he fit in at all costs. He was allowed little room for individuality and privacy. Such a child will often first go through periods of compliance and aggression, but eventually he “accepts” the emotional isolation in his basic anxiety and attempts to achieve safety and keep his inner life intact by emotionally withdrawing from others. His primary aims are to be independent, never to need anyone, to feel as little as possible for or against others. His fear of bondage is so powerful that he has to squelch feelings and wishes that might move him toward others. He can find outlets for his need to love in the realm of nature, art, and animals, as well as in intellectual pursuits where he can maintain his imperturbability and serenity. Sex may be a bridge to others, but he will cross it only if he can leave his feelings behind. If he feels that his secret inner world is being invaded, he reacts with anxiety and retreats to the ivory tower in which he can feel safe, unique, superior.

Basic Conflict and the Search for Inner Unity

What is crucial about the compulsive drives for safety is that, whatever the presenting defensive orientation, the other two continue to operate, less visibly but just as compulsively. The result is that the neurotic individual is driven by three diametrically opposed, irreconcilable patterns of relating to

others of which he is essentially unaware and needs to remain unaware. This is the basic conflict, the dynamic core of the neurotic character structure. Neither alternative in the basic conflict represents what the individual genuinely wishes. Nor can he renounce either of the alternatives because of their defensive function. The poignancy of all neurotic conflicts derives from the natural need for inner unity, the threat to such unity due to the incompatibility of the opposing forces, the underlying anxiety, and the increasing weakness in the individual's integrating powers resulting from the degree of alienation from the real self that has already taken place.

An individual threatened by basic conflict must devote his energies to defenses that will provide him with a sense of being unified. These neurotic solutions, actually pseudosolutions, aim not at resolution of conflict but at getting rid of awareness of conflict. One solution is to make one of the basic moves— compliance, aggression, or detachment— predominant and to repress the others. Another solution is to attempt to keep conflict out of operation by moving away from the two more active forces, compliance and aggression, and reinforcing detachment. The individual may also attempt to experience one or other aspect of his inner conflict as occurring outside himself. By this radical process of externalization he no longer experiences the conflict as being within himself. It now appears in his consciousness as being a conflict between himself and his environment. In addition to these solutions and the solution of the idealized image, he resorts also to "auxiliary

approaches to artificial harmony" (p. 131) to bolster his defensive structure. These include blind spots, compartmentalization, rationalization, excessive self-control, arbitrary rightness, elusiveness, and cynicism.

It is axiomatic in Horney's thinking that all neurotic positions are maintained out of stringent inner necessity, come to have great subjective value for the individual, and have consequences that are seriously obstructive to healthy being and growing. The major consequences of unresolved conflict and of the whole neurotic development up to this point are a beginning alienation from self, a shift of his center of gravity to the outside, increasing vulnerability and shaky equilibrium, a great propensity for developing anxiety, and a feeling of hopelessness "with its deepest root in the despair of ever being wholehearted and undivided" (p. 183). "He no longer knows where he stands or 'who' he is" (p. 21). Lacking a feeling of self-confidence and a sense of his own identity is a particularly serious disability as the individual finds himself in the stormy period of adolescence. What he needs is a solution that will not only help him avoid the experience of conflict but will also provide a "substitute" for self-confidence and a sense of identity. At this point he turns for help to the uniquely human capacity of imagination and in so doing initiates a shift of the neurotic development to the intrapsychic, to the area of his relationship to himself.

Self-Idealization and Self-Actualization

The individual creates in his imagination an idealized image, a fantasy of all that he unconsciously believes he is, could be, or ought to be, a flawless image of godlike perfection. The focus may be on saintliness, the absolute of goodness; on omnipotence, the absolute of power and invulnerability; or on omniscience, the absolute of knowledge. It consists of elements in part fictitious, in part actual qualities greatly exaggerated—weaknesses that have been distorted to appear glorious, inconsistencies that have been made to appear harmonious. The idealized image is a shining illusion, the first step in a process of self-idealization that has the most far-reaching significance for the person's life. In the next step he attempts to identify with the image as an idealized self. This idealized self comes to have for the neurotic individual more reality than his actual self. His center of gravity shifts back to himself, to his idealized self, not his real self.

Imagination does not suffice, and the individual now is driven to express, to prove his idealized self in his actual living. Together self-idealization and self-actualization constitute a *search for glory.* Self-actualization includes activity that derives from neurotic ambition, spurring the individual to achieve power and prestige; vindictiveness, driving the individual toward revenge for humiliations suffered and toward a feeling of triumph over others; and neurotic perfectionism.

Neurotic Claims

Self-actualization inevitably involves the development in the individual of the feeling that he is *entitled* to have his neurotic needs fulfilled. In these irrational claims he unconsciously expects and demands that the world treat him as if he factually were his idealized self. Some of these claims, in neurotic as well as in psychotic individuals, are frankly grandiose. Others are in themselves reasonable as wishes and understandable as needs. It is the feeling of entitlement that makes them irrational. The individual justifies them consciously on various grounds—such cultural grounds as being a parent or a child; on grounds of actual or imagined special merit; on grounds of love, helplessness, suffering, "justice"—each supporting his magical expectations. Claims play an important role in the self-actualizing process, and any frustration of claims produces acute reactions of rage, righteous indignation, self-pity, and abused feelings. Less acute but more serious reactions to unfulfilled claims are a deep sense of envy, a feeling of being singled out by others and by life for deprivation, while others are invariably seen as more fortunate. In making claims on others and shifting responsibility to them, however, the individual in fact weakens his incentive and ability to assert and make efforts for his own legitimate rights.

The Tyranny of the Should

The final means by which the individual attempts to actualize his idealized self, the one most decisive for his future development, consists of

strenuous attempts to mold himself into a state of perfection. These attempts lead to the development of an inner dictatorship in which the individual is driven to fulfill, absolutely and immediately, all that, in terms of his idealized values, he should be, should feel, should think, should do. Disregarding feasibility, his general human and specific individual limitations, the efforts required, the arithmetic of reality, the individual "accepts" the premise that nothing should be impossible for him.

The particular "shoulds" depend on the specific direction of the neurotic development, but in all neurotic individuals the range of the inner dictates is seen to be far more vast than cultural dictates or the dictates of rigid political or religious systems. The focus is on flaws that must be erased and problems that must be removed through will power. Actually the individual's concern is increasingly with the *appearance* of perfection, not its actuality. This inevitably leads to the development of numerous pretenses constituting a facade of the qualities he idealizes. Where the shoulds are concerned with moral perfection, the result is actually to produce an immoral counterfeit of genuine moral concern. The individual is often caught in a particularly painful dilemma when his shoulds conflict—for example, when he feels he should fulfill all that others expect of him at the same time as he demands that he should be totally independent. Because of the enormously coercive character of the inner dictates, it is always necessary to externalize them, either actively (making his perfectionistic demands on others) or passively (experiencing

others making the demands on him). In this way he avoids becoming conscious of the real nature and full impact of these dictates. In doing so, however, he has introduced another factor that further impairs his already disturbed human relationships by making him hypercritical of others or hypersensitive to their criticism. Since the demand is often made that superiority should be achieved effortlessly, he has great difficulty making the efforts that would in fact help him achieve more. The most serious consequence of the shoulds is the impairment of the individual's spontaneity. He is not free to feel his true feelings, but must unconsciously persuade himself that he feels what his shoulds dictate. In this way the inner dictates constitute the single greatest force producing alienation from the self.

Neurotic Pride

To the degree that the neurotic individual succeeds in his self-idealizing and self-actualizing, satisfying what Maimonides called the "thirst for glory," he experiences neurotic pride. Where healthy self-esteem derives from what the individual factually is and does, neurotic pride is essentially false pride, since it is invested not only in imagined or exaggerated assets and achievements, but also in aspects of the neurotic character structure about which he has no choice and that are, indeed, destructive to him and to others. "The development of pride is the logical outcome, the climax, and consolidation initiated with the search for glory" (p. 109). There is ample

evidence in his fantasies and dreams and in all aspects of his living of the great subjective value that neurotic pride has for the individual. Its great failing, however, is its extreme vulnerability. It can easily be hurt by others, producing intense feelings of humiliation when they do not fulfill his claims; or it can be hurt by himself, producing intense feelings of guilt or shame when he does not fulfill his shoulds. The catastrophic effect of hurt pride may be experienced in intense anxiety, depression, rage, psychosomatic and acute psychotic episodes. Instead of these, what may show on the surface are evidences of narcotizing measures, for example, alcohol, drugs, compulsive eating, sexual promiscuity, and so forth. To avoid hurt pride becomes a major concern, and the individual is driven to avoid people, situations, thoughts, feelings, and activities that might result in hurt pride. He must also institute measures for restoring his pride when it has been injured. Revenge is the most effective and ubiquitous of these measures. By triumphing vindictively over others, turning the tables on them, hitting back harder, he not only gets revenge but also vindicates his pride. He may restore his pride by withdrawing his interest from activities or persons, including himself, who have hurt his pride. His “decision” not to try rather than to risk failure may produce great restrictions in his life. He may restore pride by means of humor, denial, blaming others, reinforcing his claims on them, and refusing to take responsibility for defects in himself, attributing them to his neurosis or his “unconscious,” as if these were not aspects of himself.

Self-Hate

When the individual is confronted by his failure to fulfill inner dictates, he experiences self-hate. From the perspective of the idealized self to which his center of gravity has shifted, he is bound to hate and despise his actual self. To this hatred is added the vindictive rage of the proud self that impotently needs the actual person for attaining glory and, therefore, feels betrayed by him. No matter how strenuous his attempts to keep shortcomings from awareness, in his depths the neurotic individual does perceive them, and the intensity of his self-loathing is often dramatically expressed in dreams. Because of his increasing alienation from himself, he has little feeling of kinship or sympathy for himself with which to cope with the onslaught. Furthermore, the severity of his self-condemnation is itself invested with pride and thus serves to maintain self-glorification. Opposed as are neurotic pride and self-hate, the fact that both in different ways serve the interest of the search for glory led Horney to group them together as the major aspects of *the pride system.*

Self-hate may be expressed as relentless unconscious demands on oneself whose hostile threatening quality greatly increases the severity of the shoulds; merciless self-accusations in which the verdict of guilty arises from the failure to achieve godlike perfection, so that the neurotic individual spends so much of his life in a courtroom in futile self-defense; self-contempt,

directed mainly against any striving for improvement or achievement. Self-contempt includes active drives to undermine self- confidence by belittling, disparaging, doubting, discrediting, and ridiculing oneself. It often appears as an unconscious sabotaging drive in the course of analysis. Self-hate may take the form of self-frustration in which the active intent is to frustrate any hopes, any strivings for pleasure. The feeling is that he does not deserve and has no right to anything better. Nowhere is the neurotic dilemma more poignant than in this picture of an individual whose claims express his feeling entitled to everything, while his self-hate denies him the right to anything. Self-hate may take the form of self-tormenting in a spirit of vindictive glee. This may be actively externalized in sadistic behavior to others or passively externalized in masochistic behavior. He is both the torturer and the tortured, his sadism and masochism being but two sides of one coin. Finally self- hate may be expressed in self-destructiveness, in which the unconscious intent is to bring about the person's physical, psychic, or spiritual destruction.

In this crescendo of terror the shift is increasingly toward active drives against the despised self. The real nature of self-hate is now clear. In his compulsive self-disparaging comparisons with others, for example, the neurotic individual does not loathe himself because he is inferior to others. The truth is that he feels inferior to others *because he hates himself.* Horney viewed this state of inner terror as man being at war with himself. For his own survival he needs to defend himself by externalization, by increasing his

claims on others, by soaring in his imagination to greater heights of self-glorification in neurotic and psychotic distortion of his own reality, and by investing still more energy in the fulfillment of his shoulds. Horney viewed this great human tragedy as analogous to the devil's pact, expressed in religion, mythology, and the literature of many ages and many peoples (Goethe's *Faust,* Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* Balzac's *The Magic Skin).* In each a human being in distress reaches for the absolute and godlike and in return gives up his soul and ends in hell. The hell in the devils' pact is the agony of self-hate. The loss of soul is the quieter and deeper despair of alienation from self. The search for glory has led the individual to become a hated stranger to himself (p. 375).

Alienation from the Self

Every step in the neurotic development moves the individual away from the total actuality of himself and the deeper reality of his real self. The compulsiveness of his drives for safety and his solutions to basic conflict produce the first step in the alienating process. Externalization cuts the individual off from major aspects of his being. Every element in the search for glory leads him further from himself. The need to avoid hurt pride and to restore pride make him withdraw interest from himself. Above all, the shoulds foster his alienation in rigidly imposing on him a whole set of counterfeit feelings while making spontaneity taboo. Self-hate introduces

active moves against the self into the alienating process. It should be noted that each step in the neurotic development not only increases alienation but also could not have been taken without alienation already being present.

Two forms of alienation were described by Horney. The first is alienation from the actual self. Symptomatically this may be expressed in feelings of unreality and depersonalization, hysterical phenomena, and the like. More chronic and serious is the "paucity of inner experiences" present to different degrees in all neuroses. In severe degrees the person lives as if in a fog, cut off from the turbulent inner life that is not accessible to his consciousness but may appear in his dreams. Feelings of emptiness, nothingness, and boredom may be experienced directly or may be evidenced in the person's efforts to fill the emotional void with activity, food, and sex. The person may respond with anxiety and dread to this feeling of emptiness and nothingness (a quite different phenomenon from what some existentialists have seen as being part of the human condition), but he also dreads feelings of aliveness, since numbing has acquired the important function of keeping him from awareness of conflict, of unfulfilled shoulds, and of self-hate.

At the core of the alienating process is the second type of alienation, alienation from the real self. The effects of this process are seen in the impairment of spontaneous feelings, the lesser availability of energies for self-

realization, the weakening of natural directive and integrating powers, the impairment of the capacity for choice and for taking responsibility for oneself. Of all the consequences of the neurotic development, alienation from the real self was viewed by Horney as the most serious.

Intrapsychic Conflicts and Solutions

The pride system gives rise to two major intrapsychic conflicts. The first of these, central inner conflict, is the most comprehensive of all since it involves all of the forces of the pride system opposed to all of the constructive forces of the real self. However, since self- realization has been obstructed to a great degree, the opposing forces are not sufficiently equal in strength to bring this conflict into the open. This occurs during therapy and will be discussed under that heading.

The second major conflict is within the pride system itself, between all the forces driving the individual toward self-glorification and all the forces driving him toward self-extinction. It arises from the individual's efforts to identify *in toto* with both the idealized and the despised self. The individual relieves his inner tension by active alienating moves away from himself; by externalization of his inner experiences, which can become severe enough to produce a consistent pattern of externalized living; by psychic fragmentation; by belief in the supremacy of the mind, a type of fragmentation in which the

mind, like a magic ruler for whom everything is possible, becomes an unrelated onlooker of oneself; and by automatic control that comes into play when the individual feels the neurotic structure to be on the verge of disintegration. Since the attempt to solve intrapsychic conflict through these measures does not provide sufficient pseudointegration, the individual resorts to the more radical and comprehensive solution of "streamlining" (p. 190) or withdrawing from the inner battle. Horney viewed these solutions as a possible basis for a psychoanalytic typology, but preferred to consider them directions of development.

The first of these solutions is the *expansive solution* (p. 191), in which the individual identifies with his proud self and attempts to keep from awareness the existence of his despised self. Three subdivisions of this solution were described by Horney. The first is narcissism, in which the individual unconsciously feels identified with his idealized image. To the extent that others fulfill his claims and expectations, he can for a time maintain an unquestioned belief in his own superiority and uniqueness. The second subdivision is perfectionism, in which the individual identifies with his superior standards, his shoulds. He must rely heavily on remaining unaware of unfulfilled shoulds. The third subdivision is arrogant vindictiveness, in which the individual identifies with his pride, arrogates to himself all powers and "rights," and denies them to others. Vindictiveness is the crucial motivating force in the sadistic trends that characterize this

picture. It protects him against the hostility of others and, through externalization, defends him from his particularly harsh self- hate. His self-hate is directed toward his spontaneous as well as neurotic moves toward others and the self-effacing trends that he must keep from awareness. Vindictiveness is his main way of restoring hurt pride and is itself glorified by him. He uses it to intimidate others into fulfilling his claims. The excitement and thrill that he experiences in his pursuit of a vindictive triumph may make this the dominant passion of his life. In the interpersonal phase of the neurotic development, aggression was his main solution to basic conflict. His idealized image focuses on omnipotence, invulnerability, and inviolability. He is predominantly active in his externalizing. His reactions to frustrated claims are chiefly rage and militant rightness. The dominant principle in the expansive solution is the individual's drive for mastery of himself and of the world about him through will power and intellect.

The second major solution is *self-effacement* (p. 214). Here the individual identifies with his despised self and attempts to blot out all aspects of his real self and of his idealized self. His solution to basic conflict was compliance. His idealized image focuses on goodness, kindness, unselfishness, and lovableness. He externalizes passively both his shoulds and his self-hate and is, therefore, extremely dependent on others for reassurance. Helplessness and suffering come to have indispensable functions for him. They serve as the basis for his claims, and they are the means by which he

secretly expresses vindictiveness and attempts to control others. Suffering is unconsciously glorified, and he feels proud of his unique martyrdom. His helplessness and passivity make him as weak in defending himself against inner attack as against outer attack. He not only "accepts" his guilt but also wallows in it and resists efforts to lessen it, since it may be his only remaining defense against self-destruction. Belittling himself and idealizing others, he can live for others, and his striving for their love is the dominant motif in his life. He often finds his supreme fulfillment in erotic love. Loving affirms for him the qualities of his idealized self; being loved means to him redemption and purification, a reprieve from the verdict of guilt. In this morbid dependency (p. 239) he is able to lose himself in ecstatic feelings, to surrender, to merge with the arrogant and vindictive partner whom he usually chooses and whose ruthlessness he secretly envies. Only such a partner can break his pride through degradation and enable him to surrender totally. In this union he secretly reunites with the pride that he has had to disown in himself and that he can now live out vicariously through his partner. In his sexual life this solution may produce a severe degree of sexual masochism.

The third solution to intrapsychic conflict is *neurotic resignation* (p. 259). Here the individual attempts to solve his conflict by giving up his search for glory as well as his striving for self-realization. He attempts to become a nonparticipant, a detached onlooker in his own life, to achieve peace by

severely restricting his needs and wishes. Whatever self-effacing and expansive trends remain in the picture are divested of their active elements, the drives for love and mastery. This individual solved his basic conflict through detachment. In his idealized image he glorifies self-sufficiency, independence, serenity. He externalizes passively and chafes under the restrictions and coercions that he experiences as coming from others. The dominant appeal in this solution is *freedom from* active striving, involvement, and commitment. He resists planning toward goals, and his resistance against effort and change seriously obstructs him in analysis. Neurotic resignation may be evident in a pattern of persistent resignation, in which increasing inertia involves thinking and feeling as well as acting; rebellious resignation, in which there is some liberation of energies; and shallow living, in which the severely alienated and resigned person moves to the periphery of life, loses his sense of essentials, and fills his life with ceaseless distractions, automaton behavior, and drifting. Even at this advanced point in the deteriorating process, the forces and feelings of the real self remain alive, but they are heard in dreams as distant voices and seen as pale shadows.

Conclusion

While Horney was concerned with the way in which the neurotic character development originated, she was more interested in clarifying the processes that perpetuated this development. In her view vicious circles

provide the inner dynamism that furthers and perpetuates neurosis. Thus compulsive defenses against anxiety and solutions to conflict produce alienation and weakening of natural integration, requiring increasing reliance on the pseudointegration provided by neurotic solutions. The shoulds produce alienation and weakening of the directive power of the real self, requiring greater reliance on the shoulds for direction. The more severe the alienation, the more the need to cling to the sense of identity provided by the idealized self, the more severely alienated the individual then becomes. The more pride, the greater the self- hate, the more stringent is the need to reinforce and cling to the glorified self. The more he shifts responsibility to others in defending against self-hate, the weaker and more remote his real self becomes, the more vulnerable he is to the onslaught of self-hate. A final and particularly important vicious circle relates to the effect of the search for glory on the neurotic individual's human relationships. Pride makes him egocentric, makes him view others in terms of his externalizations and relate to others on the basis of his claims. Because of these distortions, the increased vulnerability, and the great proliferation of unconscious fears, the pride system essentially reinforces the basic anxiety that initiated the neurotic development.

Horney felt that "neuroses represent a peculiar kind of struggle for life under difficult conditions" (p. 11). These conditions were seen to be at first external and interpersonal, and later intrapsychic, each eventually reinforcing

the other. In her dynamic formulations both healthy and neurotic character structures are seen as processes in which forces operating in the here and now support and oppose each other in complex and changing patterns of interaction. What Horney said about morbid dependency applies equally to the whole neurotic structure. “We cannot hope to understand it as long as we are unreconciled to the complexities of human psychology and insist upon a simple formula to explain it all” (p. 258). In Horney’s holistic approach no aspect of the neurotic structure can be truly understood except in relation to all other aspects, to the whole person, and to the world around him. This viewpoint characterizes not only her work but also the work of other members of her group.

The Therapeutic Process

Improving the effectiveness and possibilities of psychoanalytic therapy was always a central concern for Horney. Her first paper was on therapy, and one of her major contributions was her study of the possibilities and limitations of self-analysis. In her lectures on technique, she emphasized basic therapeutic principles and avoided specific rules, believing that each analyst would naturally evolve his own patterns of being with and working with his patients. She was characteristically flexible about the use of the couch, the frequency of sessions, and so forth.

In the Horneyan approach the goal of analysis is to bring about a basic change in the direction and quality of a person's life, a shift of energies from self-actualization to self- realization. *"The road of analytic therapy is the road to reorientation through self-knowledge"* (p. 341). Therapy is viewed as a complex cooperative process of working toward increasing awareness, taking place in the matrix of a unique, evolving human relationship. Both insight and relationship are viewed as essential to helping the patient outgrow his neurosis. The patient comes to treatment motivated usually by the wish to relieve suffering (mostly the suffering caused by unresolved conflict, hurt pride, and the frustration of neurotic needs) and by the unconscious expectation that the analyst will, through the magic of love, reason, or will, rid him of the painful consequences of his neurotic drives while reinforcing the drives themselves. Behind this may lie a deeper concern about his being blocked in many areas of his life, which may serve as a constructive incentive for analysis.

The patient's most important task in the analytic work is to express all of his experiences—feelings, thoughts, sensations, memories, fantasies—as freely and honestly as possible as they arise in the session. The capacity for such free association is always limited at first, but evolves as the analysis progresses. All that the patient experiences is an expression of his present character and is potentially important for developing insight. Of special interest are his *dreams,* which Horney viewed as creative expressions of the

individual's attempts to face his inner conflicts and solutions in a search for inner unity. In dreams externals submerge, and he is closer to the truth of himself, which he expresses in poetic, symbolic form. This truth includes rejected and hidden aspects that he needs to deny in consciousness. It may involve his feelings about the analytic relationship that he cannot otherwise acknowledge. Perhaps most important of all, it is in dreams that the alive forces of the real self may still be visible in spite of severe psychopathology. *Childhood memories* play an important part in the analytic process. The patient may use them obstructively, attempting to establish simple cause-and-effect connections between childhood and the present. This effort constitutes a massive detour to avoid facing and taking responsibility for owning and changing what he is now. On the positive side childhood memories help him to understand the course of his development and to develop a feeling of connectedness with himself. This may be an area in which he can touch the alive core of himself, experiencing a poignancy and depth of feeling that he may for a long time be unable to experience in the symbols of the present. Getting a clearer view of the way in which his problems began can lessen his judgmental self-accusations and move him to self-acceptance and compassion. The patient's *patterns of relating to the analyst* eventually constitute the most important area for developing insight. The analytic relationship is not viewed as a repetition of the past. It reflects all that the patient is in the present, both healthy and neurotic. It is the most "here and

now" experience during the analytic session, and whatever pertains to it, therefore, has the greatest impact, both for furthering or hindering the progress of the analysis.

The analyst understandably has the greater responsibility in the analytic work. Measuring the relative strength of obstructive and constructive forces in the patient, he makes the decision as to whether analysis is advisable and feasible for the particular patient. He must recognize from the start that, while his professional knowledge and psychological acumen often enable him to know a good deal *about* the patient rather quickly, he cannot really know this particular person without himself struggling toward deeper, more meaningful understanding. Having himself experienced the analytic process and having moved substantially toward self-realization enable him to use his whole being as his primary tool in his work. His first function is to create for the patient an atmosphere of non-judgmental acceptance. His aim is to be open to the patient, to all that the patient brings in verbally and nonverbally, and to what the patient omits. He observes, listens to, senses, thinks about, and feels not only what is going on in the patient but also what is going on in himself, including his own free associations, healthy responses, and neurotic reactions. The analyst's activity is measured not as much by what he does or says as by the degree and quality of his being with the patient and himself in the sessions. It is this, together with his professional skills, that enables him to recognize themes emerging in the patient's associations. His

nonverbal and verbal responses to the patient may take the form of exploratory questions that encourage and stimulate more associations, questions and observations concerning the patient's emotional responses, tentative uncovering and revealing interpretations, comments that express recognition of constructive efforts and offer encouragement and support, and, in the later stages of analysis, philosophic help. It is particularly in this area that the analyst conducts the analysis, acts as a guide who is more familiar with the terrain, can see what is more available for opening up and penetrating, what the patient can tolerate, and what can best move the analysis forward.

Another major function of the analyst is to work with the patient toward removing blockages. Horney preferred this term to resistance because it is more neutral and allows inclusion of the retarding effects of the analyst's participation. The same forces that obstruct the patient's development also serve as retarding forces in the analysis. While therapy aims at undermining neurotic positions, each position is essential to the stability and survival of the whole structure, and anxiety, manifest or covert, is the characteristic reaction when any aspect of the structure is threatened. The analyst respects the patient's defenses and understands their positive value, since the patient must defend what has become the basis for his existence until he has some new ground to stand on. His defenses operate against his experiencing many of his feelings, against his developing awareness (particularly of the

compulsiveness and irrationality of his neurotic solutions), and against his changing. His defense of the status quo involves most urgently his need to ward off awareness of inner conflict and of self-hate, the latter also involving the need to deny the real nature of his pretenses and illusions. Blockages often appear in sessions in the form of the patient's ignoring, minimizing, discarding, pseudo-accepting, or attacking interpretations, intellectualizing, shifting to episodes in which he was the victim in the past, defensive self-recriminations, attacking the analyst and analysis, and so forth. Equally important in obstructing the progress of the analysis are the inevitable unconscious efforts the patient makes to fulfill his neurotic needs in the analytic relationship. To varying degrees he is bound to see the analyst in the light of his own pride and self-hate and of the distortions arising from his externalizing. The patient inevitably feels his defenses threatened, his pride hurt, his claims frustrated. He may also be perceiving and responding to actual mistreatment, to what the analyst's neurotic needs bring into the relationship and the work. The balance of healthy and neurotic motivation in the analyst is a decisive factor in the progress of the analysis. His periodic efforts to evaluate change in the patient and in himself help him to become aware of major blockages.

Finally the analyst has the important function of giving the patient human help. This does not mean that he interferes with the patient's developing autonomy by playing the role of adviser or surrogate parent. What

it means is that the analyst gives the patient needed emotional support by his feeling with and for the patient, his striving to understand him, his recognition of the patient's possibilities for healthy growth, and his wish for the patient to become freer for living a creative and joyous life.

The Disillusioning Process

Horney called the first phase of the analytic work a disillusioning process since it deals mainly with the undermining of the neurotic individual's two powerful illusions—one maintaining that he is his superhuman idealized self, the other maintaining that he is his subhuman despised self. For Horney "working through" did not mean tracing a present problem to its infantile roots. In her orientation it means gaining ever deeper and broader consciousness of neurotic trends in all their aspects and dimensions. The patient begins with awareness of a symptom. As the analysis moves forward he is able to see some aspect of his neurotic character, at first briefly and vaguely. Returning again and again to the problem, his first "insight" is intellectual, partial, general. As defenses against feeling and awareness are worked on he begins to see and feel his needs operating in specific situations and in more and more areas of his life—in the past and present, in relation to others, to himself, and to the analyst, in the organic and sexual aspects of his being, in dreams, and in fantasies. He comes to feel the compulsive, irrational, insatiable quality of his drives, the grip they have on

him, the functions they serve, the connections between them and his whole being, and the obstructive effects, particularly of the pride system, on his whole life. The last constitutes an appeal to his self-interest and can strengthen in him the incentive to work toward relinquishing pride. He begins to question the reality of his illusions and pretenses. Do claims really bring him what he wants or needs? Does deadening his feelings really make him less vulnerable? This process of reality testing goes hand in hand with a process of value testing in which he weighs more honestly the worth of what he gains from his neurotic drives. What, for example, has he gained by vindictively going to pieces and was it worth the price? Thus the logical outcome of the disillusioning process is a reorientation of values.

In addition to what he gains from his individual insights, deep and genuine self-knowledge leads to increasing self-acceptance. Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness diminish as the individual gains strength and hope from struggling to become more aware of himself, more connected with himself, more able to face himself squarely instead of denying and evading. As he is able to exercise some capacity for free and rational choice he *experiences* the difference between being an active force in his own life and being driven; between living affirmatively and being always on the defensive. It is liberating and exciting to feel the difference, for example, between the natural wish for sexual fulfillment and the addictive use of sex in the service of neurotic needs and solutions. As his alienation lessens and he becomes less proud and self-

hating, he feels less vulnerable, less isolated, less hostile. He recognizes that his being trapped is not inevitable. Taking back externalizations enables him to see others in less distorted ways. This includes the analyst whom he can begin to see as an ally and friend in his further struggle. Through all this there is the incalculable value of sharing his inner being with another person who believes that "nothing human is alien" to him or his patient. In these ways the analytic work has helped to mobilize incentives for further growth.

Mobilizing the Constructive Forces of the Real Self

"The therapeutic value of the disillusioning process lies in the possibility that with the weakening of the obstructive forces, the constructive forces of the real self have a chance to grow" (p. 348). The analyst has recognized the patient's constructive forces from the start. Wherever possible he has attempted to identify expressions of spontaneity and aliveness, of the patient's deep longing to return to himself, of his wondering about the reality and truth of himself, all of these appearing often in childhood memories and in dreams. Early in analysis direct interpretations concerning these forces may arouse self-hate. With the pride system weakened, however, the analyst can more directly encourage the patient to see how little he has consulted his own wishes, determined his own directions in life, taken responsibility for himself.

Resolution of Conflict

With the lessening of alienation and the mobilizing of constructive forces, the integrating powers of the real self become stronger and the patient is capable of coming to grips with his inner conflicts. He moves from occasional glimpsing of inconsistencies, contradictions, and patterns of ambivalence, to becoming aware of the deep rifts within him, to daring to stay with his conflicts as they appear in more areas of his being. Facing and staying with conflict is a painful but strengthening and liberating experience. It leads finally to an increasing relinquishing of the major neurotic solutions. What comes into focus now is the most comprehensive conflict of all—the central inner conflict—between the constructive forces moving the individual toward self-realization and the weakened but still powerful drives toward self-actualization. It is now the analyst's major task to keep this conflict in the foreground, to identify it with the patient, to provide the support needed in this turbulent period. The patient's constructive moves are followed by negative therapeutic reactions, repercussions in which there is an upsurge of self-hate, of anxiety, of neurotic defenses, and of narcotizing measures. It is essential that the analyst communicate to the patient his understanding that these are painful but encouraging evidences of growth. As the turmoil subsides the patient can enjoy the experience of becoming a real person. He is ready to become his own analyst and has acquired the incentives and tools for working toward his further evolution, a task that Horney called our "prime

moral obligation" and "in a very real sense, (our) prime moral privilege" (p. 15).

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