

Karen horney's development of basic anxiety



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Introduction

Karen Horney was a psychoanalyst from Germany who, in the later years of life, came to the United States to pursue a career. Horney developed one of the best known theories of neurosis. Horney believed that basic anxiety, which is the fear of being alone and helpless coming from problems that began with said person's parents, is caused from interpersonal relationships ("Karen Danielsen Horney," 2018). Horney and Sigmund Freud shared many of the same basic principles, although, Horney suggested that certain disorders can often be impacted by the environment in which the behavior occurs ("Karen Horney," 2016).

Early Life

Karen Horney was born on September 16, 1885 in Hamburg, Germany. Horney's father was named Berndt Danielsen; Berndt was a sea captain. Berndt married Clotilde, a young attractive, sophisticated woman. The couple had two children. Horney envied Berndt and Clotilde's first born because the first born was a male and this was a time when females were inferior to males. Schultz and Schultz mentioned in *Karen Horney: Neurotic Needs and Trends*, that Horney was jealous of Berndt Jr., Berndt and Clotilde's first born son, because of the fact that Berndt Jr. could stand and pee next to a tree and Horney could not (2015). Horney also believed that Horney's older brother was both attractive and charming. Berndt, Horney's father, was an extremely religious man who based beliefs of the inferiority of women from an interpretation of the Bible. Horney grew up unsteady with

Berndt. Horney did feel loved by Berndt and Clotilde, but not the amount Horney hoped for. When Horney reached the age of eight, the realization that Horney was not receiving the type of love needed or wanted as a child, the decision was made to act out and become rebellious. In Horney's adult years, Horney discovered how hostile Horney was as a child, which helped the development of basic anxiety (Schultz & Schultz, 2015).

Education

Horney believed that as a result of the past twelve years being described as unpretty, Horney could at least still be intelligent. Horney's love for school blossomed, which allowed for Horney to decide to become a physician. Berndt was not pleased by Horney's decision. Berndt did not want to pay for premedical school, until Horney, Clotilde, and one of Berndt's sons urged for the payment. At this time, women were demanding for more rights and educational advances. Horney was one of the first women to be allowed to attend an advanced high school. This was also a time when medical schools were just beginning to allow women into the programs. In the year of 1906, Horney began medical school in Germany. In a short time later, Horney met Oscar Horneye, and a relationship began to develop. In the year of 1909, the two married and a short year later, had a child on the way (Friedman & Schustack, 2010).

Women Seen as Inferior

Karen Horney was a strong women's right advocate for her time. Early in Horney's career, disagreement with Freud's views regarding women began. Freud's idea of penis envy emerged in a time where women were perceived

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as the second-class. Penis envy, which is the desire for male-dominated advantages, appealed to women in no way at all. Horney then developed what is known as womb envy in response to Freud's penis envy. Womb envy is the envy men feel towards women because men are not capable of bearing children. Horney does believe that women feel inferior to men (Schultz & Schultz, 2015). Friedman and Schustack mentioned in *Neo-Analytic and Ego Aspects of Personality: Identity* that Horney's mother married Berndt only so that Clotilde would not have to be single (2010). This was a time where women felt the need to be taken of by a man, in addition to the idea that being single after a certain age was frowned upon. The text, *Karen Horney: Neurotic Needs and Trends*, mentioned how society has gone by the yin and yang elements. Yin meaning positive and strong, yang meaning dark and weak. Society has seen females as the yang and males as the yin (Schultz & Schultz, 2015). Horney believed that women who grew up in a masculine atmosphere were typically more likely to be strong and more brave than women who grew up in feminine atmospheres due to the delicate type of life (Schultz & Schultz, 2015).

Shared Views with Freud

Although Horney and Freud did not agree on much, something that the two did agree upon were free association and dream analysis. Free association to Horney, was different from Freud's views of the unconscious mind. Horney focused on attitudes of patients towards other people. Horney believed that every attitude the patient revealed only led to a deeper attitude or feeling. Horney also believed that a patient's dream was the best way to understand the true self. Horney felt that the feeling and emotions the patient

experienced while sleeping was how the patient really felt (Schultz & Schultz, 2015).

Basic Anxiety

Horney also developed the theory of basic anxiety. Basic anxiety arises within children when problems with parents begin to occur. Problems include lack of affection, support, involvement, or stability. In the article written by Shokri, Bahar, and Noor, these literary scholars took a character from the novel called "On Beauty" written by Zadie Smith. The character, Levi, is a child who lives in extremely unfavorable conditions. Levi's character is based completely off Horney's theory of basic anxiety. Levi's father-son relationship, as well as, missing the nurturing aspect of early childhood caused Levi to become an incredibly detached person (Shokri, Bahar, Noor, 2018). Horney also developed three styles of adapting. Passive style is adopted by said persons who believe to get along better when being cooperative. Aggressive style is adopted by said persons who believe fighting is the answer. Withdrawn style is adopted by said persons who believe not to engage emotionally at all is best (Friedman & Schustack, 2010). Horney believed that during early childhood, the child has a need to feel security from the parents. By this, safety needs play an immense role on how the child will end up treating other individuals once grown old enough to have children.

Defense Mechanism of Basic Anxiety

Horney believed that the four different ways of coping against basic anxiety were securing affection and love, being submissive, attaining power, and

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withdrawing. Securing affection is described as doing things for other individuals and gaining fondness whether gaining such affection comes to bribery, threatening, or doing what said person's wants. Being submissive is described as hiding true feelings of criticism or offense. People believe that when power is attained no one can do harm to powerful people. Withdrawing is known for a person becoming less reliant on other individuals and slowly independent (Schultz & Schultz, 2015).

Principles

Horney stated that there are ten neurotic needs to avoid basic anxiety: affection and approval, a dominant partner, narrowly restricting one's life, power, exploiting other individuals, social recognition and prestige, personal achievement, personal admiration, self-sufficiency and independence, and perfection and unassailability (Schultz & Schultz, 2015). Each need falls into one of the three neurotic coping strategies: moving towards people, moving against people, and moving away from people. Moving towards people is a coping strategy where people want to gain love and affection. Moving away from people is a coping strategy where people are independent, strive for perfection, and whose life is limited. Moving against people is a coping strategy where people expect power, exploitation, recognition, approval, and fulfillment (Schultz & Schultz, 2015).

Horney also believed in the "idealized image," which is the personality the individual created based on the coping strategy best described by behavior. Compliant or manipulative personalities are based on movement toward other individuals. Aggressive or weak personalities are based on movement

against other individuals. Detached personalities are based on movement away from other individuals. Tyranny of the Shoulds are the kind of people who believe being perfect is the only way to live if that same person's life is undesirable (Schultz & Schultz, 2015). Basically, this group of people divide personalities into two selves: an ideal self and a real self. When a person does not live up to the ideal self, the inner critic comes out. Externalization is a neurotic defense technique that shifts the attention from that person to a different person. The person no longer thinks about feelings or thoughts unless such feelings and thoughts are another person's (Friedman & Schustack, 2010).

Current

Karen Horney's theories have benefited society in many ways. Horney has undergone a great deal of criticism for not having a fully developed theory compared to theorists such as Freud. Horney's theory has also taken much criticism due to the theory being such an influence for American middle-class culture (Schultz & Schultz, 2015). Thanks to Horney's theory, society now has mental health facilities that offer support to individuals and training for professionals, such as the Karen Horney Clinic and the Karen Horney Psychoanalytic Institute, both in New York City (Paul, 2010). Horney's ten neurotic needs has helped many families reach new heights by giving knowledge to help children avoid basic anxiety.

Conclusion

Karen Horney's theory of neurosis has become regarded as one of the best-known theories. Basic anxiety has resulted in many children not being

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capable of developing meaningful relationships. Horney established ten neurotic needs to help bring awareness that there are factors that can help explain behavior in a way that children are not impacted by basic anxiety. Understanding those ideas can allow support and guidance to ensure that children are able to behave appropriately in a given environment.

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