Psychoanalytic Social Psychology

Chapter 5
Karen Horney (horn-eye)
- 1885 - 1952
- Financially secure family
- Stern and authoritarian father
  - Parents later separate
- Early experience with physician pushed her into medicine
- Independent: first to challenge Freud
  - Concluded her patients had social, financial problems—not sexual
Basic Anxiety

- Agreed with Freud that anxiety was natural in the human experience
  - However, disagreed that it was inevitable
  - Social forces $\rightarrow$ anxiety

- **Basic anxiety**: the insidiously increasing, all pervading, sense of being lonely and helpless within a hostile world
  - Environment dreaded as being hostile and unfair
Basic Evil

Within basic anxiety:

- **Basic evil**: negative environmental factors causing children to experience insecurity
  - Domination, isolation, overprotection, neglect
  - Children’s fears are *objectively* unrealistic, but very real for them *subjectively*
  - All children endure some basic evil
  - However, require a safe and secure environment to thrive
Neurotic Needs/Trends

- **Neurotic needs** are the result of formative experiences which create basic anxiety
  - 10 basic types of neurotic needs (p. 131)
  - These needs are too intense, anxiety-laden, or unrealistic to be approached directly
Primary Modes of Relating

- Respond to neurotic needs with **primary modes** of relating to others (coping strategies)
  - Moving toward (compliance, dependence)
  - Moving against (hostility, rebellion)
  - Moving away (detachment)

- In turn, these three types of behaviors lead to 3 **basic orientations** to life
  - Self-effacing solution (appeal to be loved)
  - Self-expansive solution (attempt at mastery)
  - Resignation solution (to be free of others)
Primary Modes of Relating (cont.)

- We successfully cope with basic anxiety and neurotic needs by balancing our use of the 3 basic orientations
  - Express modes at the appropriate times...
  - Neurotics express one mode at the expense of other aspects of their personality
    - Actively, unconsciously, repress other reactions
    - Ultimately, repression fails, and anxiety increases
    - Vicious circle (normal strivings → pathological)
The Idealized Self

- The **real self** represents who we are, what is true about us.
- The **idealized self** reflects who we think we should be.
- In the normal individual, these two concepts are essentially equal.
- In neurotics, these two concepts are greatly dissimilar.
The Idealized Self (cont).

- We can only develop those portions of the real self that coincide with the idealized self.
  - **Alienation**: In severe situations, the neurotic may abandon the real self for the idealized self.
  - **Tyranny of the shoulds (oughts)**: living life based on false, contrived, needs.
    - If I’m a good person, I shouldn’t be jealous.
    - I should be able to get an A in this class.
    - I shouldn’t feel this way.
Feminine Psychology

- **Womb Envy**
  - Complement to penis envy
  - Men and boys jealousy towards the female capacity to bear and nurse children (nurturance and life creation)
  - Supported in ethnographic evidence
  - Men respond indirectly (ritual, taboo, cleansing, witchcraft, deny women equal rights)
  - Contrary to women, men must express creativity externally
Feminine Psychology

- Thus, woman’s sense of inferiority is *acquired* not constitutional
  - Men write history, create the rules of society
- Women respond with a “flight from womanhood” (1920s)
  - Frigidity (cultural, not normal attitude)
  - Wishing they were men
Attachment Theory

- Springing from Horney’s interest in interpersonal attachments and parenting is Bowlby’s attachment theory
  - Tendency of people to bond in certain ways
  - Accounts for distress associated with separation or loss
- Strange situation
  - Secure (remain close to mother, working from a secure base of operations)
  - Avoidant (mix proximity to mother with avoidance)
  - Resistant (mix proximity to mother with passive/aggressive behavior)
Parenting Style

- Refers to normal variations in parenting
  - Personal warmth/support
  - Parental demands/behavioral control
    - Indulgent (responsive, non-traditional, lenient, avoid confrontation, and allow child self-regulation)
    - Authoritarian (high demands, low support, structured, demand obedience)
    - Authoritative (high demands and support, encourage assertive behavior, warm, and cooperative)
    - Uninvolved (little support and warmth—could be neglectful)