

KAREN HORNEY, M.D.

*Feminine
Psychology*

BOOKS BY KAREN HORNEY

The Neurotic Personality of our Time
New Ways in Psychoanalysis
Self-Analysis
Our Inner Conflicts
Neurosis and Human Growth
Feminine Psychology
EDITED BY KAREN HORNEY
Are You Considering Psychoanalysis?

BOOKS EDITED BY HAROLD KELMAN, M.D.

(COMPANION VOLUMES: CONTRIBUTIONS TO KAREN HORNEY'S HOLISTIC APPROACH)
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ings of the partner. We could, after all, forgive him for not being able to give us more than the limitations of his nature permit him; but we would also have to give up our other claims, which, expressed or implied, poison the atmosphere all too easily. We would have to give up the claims to different ways of seeking and finding satisfaction of other drives within ourselves, not only sexual ones, which the partner let lie fallow and unfilled. In other words, we must seriously review the absolute standard of monogamy by reexamining with an open mind its origin, its values, and its dangers.

THE DREAD OF WOMAN

*Observations on a Specific Difference in the Dread Felt by Men and by Women Respectively for the Opposite Sex**

IN HIS BALLAD OF *The Diver*, Schiller tells how a squire leaps into a dangerous whirlpool in order to win a woman—at first symbolized by a goblet. Horror-struck, he describes the perils of the deep by which he is doomed to be engulfed:

*Yet at length comes a lull o'er the mighty commotion,
As the whirlpool sucks into black smoothness the swell
Of the white-foaming breakers—and cleaves through the ocean
A path that seems winding in darkness to hell.
Round and round whirled the waves—deeper and deeper still
driven,
Like a gorge through the mountainous main thunder-riven!*

*Happy they whom the rose-hues of daylight rejoice,
The air and the sky that to mortals are given!
May the horror below never more find a voice—
Nor man stretch too far the wide mercy of Heaven!
Never more—never more may he lift from the sight
The veil which is woven with Terror and Night!*

*Below at the foot of the precipice drear,
Spread the glowing, and purple, and pathless Obscure!*

* "Die Angst vor der Frau über einen spezifischen Unterschied in der männlichen und weiblichen Angst vor dem anderen Geschlecht," *Intern. Zeitschr. f. Psychoanal.* XVIII (1932), pp. 5-18; *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* XIII (1932), pp. 348-60. Reprinted with the permission of *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*.

*A silence of Horror that slept on the ear,
That the eye more appalled might the Horror endure!
Salamander—snake—dragon—vast reptiles that dwell
In the deep, coil'd about the grim jaws of their hell.*

(TRANSLATION BY BULWER LYTTON)

The same idea is expressed, though far more pleasantly, in the Song of the Fisherboy in *Wilhelm Tell*:

*The clear smiling lake woo'd to bathe in its deep,
A boy on its green shore had laid him to sleep;
Then heard he a melody
Flowing and soft,
And sweet as when angels are singing aloft.
And as thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,
The waters are murmuring over his breast;
And a voice from the deep cries,
"With me thou must go, I charm the young shepherd,
I lure him below."*

(TRANSLATION BY THEODORE MARTIN)

Men have never tired of fashioning expressions for the violent force by which man feels himself drawn to the woman, and side by side with his longing, the dread that through her he might die and be undone. I will mention particularly the moving expression of this dread in Heine's poem of the legendary Lorelei, who sits high on the bank of the Rhine and ensnares the boatman with her beauty.

Here once more it is water (representing, like the other "elements," the primal element "woman") that swallows up the man who succumbs to a woman's enchantment. Ulysses had to bid his seamen bind him to the mast in order to escape the allurements and the danger of the sirens. The riddle of the Sphinx can be solved by few, and most of those who attempt it forfeit their lives. The royal palace in fairy tales is adorned with the heads of the suitors who have had the hardihood to try to solve the riddles of the king's beautiful daughter. The goddess Kali¹

1. See Daly's account in his article, "*Hindumythologie und Kastrationskomplex*," *Imago*, Bd. XIII (1927).

dances on the corpses of slain men. Samson, whom no man could conquer, is robbed of his strength by Delilah. Judith beheads Holofernes after giving herself to him. Salome carries the head of John the Baptist on a charger. Witches are burnt because male priests fear the work of the devil in them. Wedekind's "Earth Spirit" destroys every man who succumbs to her charm, not because she is particularly evil, but simply because it is her nature to do so. The series of such instances is infinite; always, everywhere, the man strives to rid himself of his dread of women by objectifying it. "It is not," he says, "that I dread her; it is that she herself is malignant, capable of any crime, a beast of prey, a vampire, a witch, insatiable in her desires. She is the very personification of what is sinister." May not this be one of the principal roots of the whole masculine impulse to creative work—the never-ending conflict between the man's longing for the woman and his dread of her?²

To primitive sensibilities the woman becomes doubly sinister in the presence of the bloody manifestations of her womanhood. Contact with her during menstruation is fatal:³ men lose their strength, the pastures wither away, the fisherman and the huntsman take nothing. Defloration involves the utmost danger to the man. As Freud shows in "The Taboo of Virginitv,"⁴ it is the husband in particular who dreads this act. In this work Freud, too, objectifies this anxiety, contenting himself with a reference to the castration-impulses that actually do occur in women. There are two reasons why this is not an adequate explanation of the phenomenon of the taboo itself. In the first place, women do not so universally react to defloration with castration-impulses recognizable as such; these impulses are probably confined to women with a strongly developed masculine attitude. And, secondly, even

2. Sachs explains the impulse to artistic creation as the search for companions in guilt. In this, I think, he is right, but he does not seem to me to go deeply enough into the question, since his explanation is one-sided and takes into account only part of the whole personality, namely, the superego. (Sachs, "Gemeinsame Tagträume," *Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag*.)

3. Cf. Daly, "Der Menstruationskomplex," *Imago*, Bd. XIV (1928); and Winterstein, "Die Pubertätsriten der Mädchen und ihre Spuren im Märchen," *Imago*, Bd. XIV (1928).

4. Freud, "The Taboo of Virginitv" (1918), *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV.

if defloration invariably aroused destructive impulses in the woman, we should still have to lay bare (as we should do in every individual analysis) the urgent impulses within the man himself which make him view the first—forcible—penetration of the vagina as so perilous an undertaking; so perilous, indeed, that it can be performed with impunity only by a man of might or by a stranger who chooses to risk his life or his manhood for a recompense.

Is it not really remarkable (we ask ourselves in amazement), when one considers the overwhelming mass of this transparent material, that so little recognition and attention are paid to the fact of men's secret dread of women? It is almost more remarkable that women themselves have so long been able to overlook it; I will discuss in detail elsewhere the reasons for their attitude in this connection (i.e., their own anxiety and the impairment of their self-respect). The man on his side has in the first place very obvious strategic reasons for keeping his dread quiet. But he also tries by every means to deny it even to himself. This is the purpose of the efforts to which we have alluded, to "objectify" it in artistic and scientific creative work. We may conjecture that even his glorification of women has its source not only in his cravings for love, but also in his desire to conceal his dread. A similar relief, however, is also sought and found in the disparagement of women that men often display ostentatiously in their attitudes. The attitude of love and adoration signifies: "There is no need for me to dread a being so wonderful, so beautiful, nay, so saintly." That of disparagement implies: "It would be too ridiculous to dread a creature who, if you take her all round, is such a poor thing."⁵ This last way of allaying his anxiety has a special advantage for the man: It helps to support his masculine self-respect. The latter seems to feel itself far more threatened at its very core by the admission of a dread of women than by the admission of dread of a man (the father). The reason why the self-feeling of men is so peculiarly sensitive just in relation to

5. I well remember how surprised I was myself the first time I heard the above ideas asserted—by a man—in the shape of a universal proposition. The speaker was Groddeck, who obviously felt that he was stating something quite self-evident when he remarked in conversation, "Of course men are afraid of women." In his writings Groddeck has repeatedly emphasized this fear.

women can only be understood by reference to their early development, to which I will return later.

In analysis this dread of women is revealed quite clearly. Male homosexuality has for its basis, in common indeed with all the other perversions, the desire to escape from the female genital, or to deny its very existence. Freud has shown that this is a fundamental trait in fetishism,⁶ in particular; he believes it to be based, however, not on anxiety, but on a feeling of abhorrence due to the absence of the penis in women. I think, however, that even from his account we are absolutely forced to the conclusion that there is anxiety at work as well. What we actually see is dread of the vagina, thinly disguised under the abhorrence. Only *anxiety* is a strong enough motive to hold back from his goal a man whose libido is assuredly urging him on to union with the woman. But Freud's account fails to explain this anxiety. A boy's castration anxiety in relation to his father is not an adequate reason for his dread of a being to whom this punishment has already happened. Besides the dread of the father, there must be a further dread, the object of which is the woman or the female genital. Now this dread of the vagina itself appears unmistakably not only in homosexuals and perverts, but also in the dreams of male analysts. All analysts are familiar with dreams of this sort and I need only give the merest outline of them: e.g., a motorcar is rushing along and suddenly falls into a pit and is dashed to pieces; a boat is sailing in a narrow channel and is suddenly sucked into a whirlpool; there is a cellar with uncanny, blood-stained plants and animals; one is climbing a chimney and is in danger of falling and being killed.

Dr. Baumeyer of Dresden⁷ allows me to cite a series of experiments that arose out of a chance observation and illustrate this dread of the vagina. The physician was playing ball with the children at a treatment center, and after a time showed them that the ball had a slit in it. She pulled the edges of the slit apart and put her finger in, so that it was held fast by the ball. Of 28 boys whom she asked to do the same, only 6 did it without

6. Freud, "Fetishism," *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, Vol IX (1928).

7. The experiments were conducted by Fräulein Dr. Hartung at a children's clinic in Dresden.

fear and 8 could not be induced to do it at all. Of 19 girls 9 put their fingers in without a trace of fear; the rest showed a slight uneasiness but none of them serious anxiety.

No doubt the dread of the vagina often conceals itself behind the dread of the father, which is also present; or in the language of the unconscious, behind the dread of the penis in the woman's vagina.⁸

There are two reasons for this. In the first place, as I have already said, masculine self-regard suffers less in this way, and secondly, the dread of the father is more tangible, less uncanny in quality. We might compare it to the difference between the fear of a real enemy and of a ghost. The prominence given to the anxiety relating to the castrating father is therefore tendentious, as Groddeck has shown, for example, in his analysis of the thumb-sucker in *Struwwelpeter*; it is a man who cuts off the thumb, but it is the mother who utters the threat, and the instrument with which it is carried out—the scissors—is a female symbol.

From all this I think it probable that the masculine dread of the woman (the mother) or of the female genital is more deep-seated, weighs more heavily, and is usually more energetically repressed than the dread of the man (father), and that the endeavor to find the penis in women represents first and foremost a convulsive attempt to deny the existence of the sinister female genital.

Is there any ontogenetic explanation of this anxiety? Or is it not rather (in human beings) an integral part of masculine existence and behavior? Is any light shed upon it by the state of lethargy—even the death—after mating, which occurs frequently in male animals?⁹ Are love and death more closely bound up with one another for the male than for the female, in whom sexual union potentially produces a new life? Does the man feel, side by side with his desire to conquer, a secret longing for extinction

8. Boehm, "Beiträge zur Psychologie der Homosexualität," *Intern. Zeitschr. f. Psychoanal.*, XI (1925); Melanie Klein, "Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict," *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, Vol. IX (1928); "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego," *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, Vol. XI (1930); "Infantile Anxiety-Situations reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse," *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, Vol. X (1929), p. 436.

9. Bergmann, *Muttergeist und Erkenntnisgeist*.

in the act of reunion with the woman (mother)? Is it perhaps this longing that underlies the "death-instinct"? And is it his will to live that reacts to it with anxiety?

When we endeavor to understand this anxiety in psychological and ontogenetic terms, we find ourselves rather at a loss if we take our stand on Freud's notion that what distinguishes infantile from adult sexuality is precisely that the vagina remains "undiscovered" for the child. According to that view, we cannot properly speak of a genital primacy; we must rather term it a primacy of the phallus. Hence it would be better to describe the period of infantile genital organization as the "phallic phase."¹⁰ The many recorded remarks of boys at that period of life leave no doubt of the correctness of the observations on which Freud's theory is based. But if we look more closely at the essential characteristics of this phase, we cannot help asking whether his description really sums up infantile genitality as such, in its specific manifestation, or applies only to a relatively later phase of it. Freud states that it is characteristic that the boy's interest is concentrated in a markedly narcissistic manner on his own penis: "The driving force which this male portion of his body will generate later at puberty expresses itself in childhood essentially as an impulsion to inquire into things—as sexual curiosity." A very important part is played by questions as to the existence and size of the phallus in other living beings.

But surely the essence of the phallic impulses proper, starting as they do from organ sensations, is a desire to *penetrate*. That these impulses do exist can hardly be doubted; they manifest themselves too plainly in children's games and in the analysis of little children. Again, it would be difficult to say what the boy's sexual wishes in relation to his mother really consisted in if not in these very impulses; or why the object of his masturbation anxiety should be the father as the castrator, were it not that masturbation was largely the autoerotic expression of heterosexual phallic impulses.

In the phallic phase the boy's psychic orientation is predominantly narcissistic; hence the period in which his genital impulses

10. Freud, "The Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido" (1923), *Collected Papers*, Vol. II.

are directed toward an object must be an earlier one. The possibility that they are not directed toward a female genital, of which he instinctively divines the existence, must certainly be considered. In dreams, both of earlier and later life, as well as in symptoms and particular modes of behavior, we find, it is true, representations of coitus that are oral, anal, or sadistic without specific localization. But we cannot take this as a proof of the primacy of corresponding impulses, for we are uncertain whether, or how far, these phenomena already express a displacement from the genital goal proper. At bottom, all that they amount to is to show that a given individual is influenced by specific oral, anal, or sadistic trends. Their evidential value is the less because these representations are always associated with certain affects directed against women, so that we cannot tell whether they may not be essentially the product or the expression of these affects. For instance, the tendency to debase women may express itself in anal representations of the female genital, while oral representations may express anxiety.

But besides all this, there are various reasons why it seems to me improbable that the existence of a specific female opening should remain "undiscovered." On the one hand, of course, a boy will automatically conclude that everyone else is made like himself; but on the other hand his phallic impulses surely bid him instinctively to search for the appropriate opening in the female body—an opening, moreover, that he himself lacks, for the one sex always seeks in the other that which is complementary to it or of a nature different from its own. If we seriously accept Freud's dictum that the sexual theories formed by children are modeled on their own sexual constitution, it must surely mean in the present connection that the boy, urged on by his impulses to penetrate, pictures in fantasy a complementary female organ. And this is just what we should infer from all the material I quoted at the outset in connection with the masculine dread of the female genital.

It is not at all probable that this anxiety dates only from puberty. At the beginning of that period the anxiety manifests itself quite clearly, if we look behind the often very exiguous façade of boyish pride that conceals it. At puberty a boy's task

is obviously not merely to free himself from his incestuous attachment to his mother, but more generally, to master his dread of the whole female sex. His success is as a rule only gradual; first of all he turns his back on girls altogether, and only when his masculinity is fully awakened does it drive him over the threshold of anxiety. But we know that as a rule the conflicts of puberty do but revive, *mutatis mutandis*, conflicts belonging to the early ripening of infantile sexuality and that the course they take is often essentially a faithful copy of a series of earlier experiences. Moreover, the grotesque character of the anxiety, as we meet with it in the symbolism of dreams and literary productions, points unmistakably to the period of early infantile fantasy.

At puberty a normal boy has already acquired a conscious knowledge of the vagina, but what he fears in women is something uncanny, unfamiliar, and mysterious. If the grown man continues to regard woman as the great mystery, in whom is a secret he cannot divine, this feeling of his can only relate ultimately to one thing in her: the mystery of motherhood. Everything else is merely the residue of his dread of this.

What is the origin of this anxiety? What are its characteristics? And what are the factors that cloud the boy's early relations with his mother?

In an article on female sexuality¹¹ Freud has pointed out the most obvious of these factors: It is the mother who first forbids instinctual activities, because it is she who tends the child in its babyhood. Secondly, the child evidently experiences sadistic impulses against its mother's body,¹² presumably connected with the rage evoked by her prohibitions, and according to the talion principle, this anger has left behind a residue of anxiety. Finally—and this is perhaps the principal point—the specific fate of the genital impulses itself constitutes another such factor. The anatomical differences between the sexes lead to a totally different situation in girls and in boys, and really to understand both their anxiety and the diversity of their anxiety we must take into account first of all *the children's real situation* in the period of their early sex-

11. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, Vol. XI (1930), p. 281.

12. Cf. the work of Melanie Klein, quoted above, to which I think insufficient attention has been paid.

uality. The girl's nature as biologically conditioned gives her the desire to receive, to take into herself;¹³ she feels or knows that her genital is too small for her father's penis and this makes her react to her own genital wishes with direct anxiety; she dreads that if her wishes were fulfilled, she herself or her genital would be destroyed.¹⁴

The boy, on the other hand, feels or instinctively judges that his penis is much too small for his mother's genital and reacts with the dread of his own inadequacy, of being rejected and derided. Thus his anxiety is located in quite a different quarter from the girl's; his original dread of women is not castration anxiety at all, but a reaction to the menace to his self-respect.¹⁵

In order that there may be no misunderstanding, let me emphasize that I believe these processes take place purely instinctively on the basis of organ sensations and the tensions of organic needs; in other words, I hold that these reactions would occur even if the girl had never seen her father's penis or the boy his mother's genital, and neither had any sort of intellectual knowledge of the existence of these genitalia.

Because of this reaction on the part of the boy, he is affected in another way and more severely by his frustration at the hands of his mother than is the girl by her experience with her father. A blow is struck at the libidinal impulses in either case. But the girl has a certain consolation in her frustration—she preserves her physical integrity. But the boy is hit in a second sensitive spot—his sense of genital inadequacy, which has presumably accompanied his libidinal desires from the beginning. If we assume that the most general reason for violent anger is the foiling of impulses that at the moment are of vital importance, it follows that the boy's frustration by his mother must arouse a twofold fury in him: first through the thrusting back of his libido upon itself, and secondly, through the wounding of his masculine self-regard. At the same time old resentment springing from pregenital frustrations is probably also made to flare up again. The result is that his

13. This is not to be equated with passivity.

14. In another paper I will discuss the girl's situation more fully.

15. I would refer here also to the points I raised in a paper entitled "Das Misstrauen zwischen den Geschlechtern," *Die psychoanalytische Bewegung* (1930).

phallic impulses to penetrate merge with his anger at frustration, and the impulses take on a sadistic tinge.

Here let me emphasize a point that is often insufficiently brought out in psychoanalytical literature—namely, that we have no reason to assume that these phallic impulses are naturally sadistic and that therefore it is inadmissible, in the absence of specific evidence in each case, to equate "male" with "sadistic," and on similar lines "female" with "masochistic." If the admixture of destructive impulses is really considerable, the mother's genital must, according to the talion principle, become an object of direct anxiety. Thus, if it is first made distasteful to him by its association with wounded self-regard, it will by a secondary process (by way of frustration anger) become an object of castration anxiety. And probably this is very generally reinforced when the boy observes traces of menstruation.

Very often this latter anxiety in its turn leaves a lasting mark on the man's attitude to women, as we learn from the examples already given at random from very different periods and races. But I do not think that it occurs regularly in all men in any considerable degree, and certainly it is not a *distinctive* characteristic of the man's relation to the other sex. Anxiety of this sort strongly resembles, *mutatis mutandis*, anxiety we meet with in women. When in analysis we find it occurring in any noteworthy intensity, the subject is invariably a man whose whole attitude toward women has a markedly neurotic twist.

On the other hand I think that the anxiety connected with his self-respect leaves more or less distinct traces in every man and gives his general attitude toward women a particular stamp that either does not exist in women's attitude to men, or if it does, is acquired secondarily. In other words, it is no integral part of their feminine nature.

We can only grasp the general significance of this male attitude if we study more closely the development of the boy's infantile anxiety, his efforts to overcome it, and the ways in which it manifests itself.

According to my experience, the dread of being rejected and derided is a typical ingredient in the analysis of every man, no matter what his mentality or the structure of his neurosis. The

analytic situation and the constant reserve of the woman analyst bring out this anxiety and sensitiveness more clearly than they appear in ordinary life, which gives men plenty of opportunity to escape from these feelings either by avoiding situations calculated to evoke them or by a process of overcompensation. The specific basis of this attitude is hard to detect, because in analysis it is generally concealed by a feminine orientation, for the most part unconscious.¹⁶

To judge by my own experience, this latter orientation is no less common, though (for reasons which I will give) less blatant, than the masculine attitude in women. I do not propose to discuss its various sources here; I will only say that I conjecture that the early wound to his self-regard is probably one of the factors liable to disgust the boy with his male role.

His typical reaction to that wound and to the dread of his mother that follows from it is obviously to withdraw his libido from her and to concentrate it on himself and his genital. From the economic point of view this process is doubly advantageous; it enables him to escape from the distressing or anxiety-fraught situation that has developed between himself and his mother, and it restores his masculine self-respect by reactively strengthening his phallic narcissism. The female genital no longer exists for him; the "undiscovered" vagina is a denied vagina. This stage of his development is fully identical with Freud's phallic phase.

Accordingly we must understand the inquiring attitude that dominates this phase and the specific nature of the boy's inquiries as expressing a retreat from the object followed by a narcissistically tinged anxiety.

His first reaction, then, is in the direction of a heightened phallic narcissism. The result is that to the wish to be a woman, which younger boys utter without embarrassment, he now reacts partly with renewed anxiety lest he should not be taken seriously and partly with castration anxiety. Once we realize that masculine castration anxiety is very largely the ego's response to the *wish to be a woman*, we cannot altogether share Freud's conviction that bisexuality manifests itself more clearly in the female than in the

16. Cf. Boehm, "The Femininity Complex in Men," *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, Vol. XI (1930).

male.¹⁷ We must leave it an open question.

A feature of the phallic phase that Freud emphasizes shows up with special clearness the narcissistic scar left by the little boy's relation with his mother: "He behaves as if he had a dim idea that this member might be and should be larger."¹⁸ We must amplify the observation by saying that this behavior begins, indeed, in the phallic phase, but does not cease with it; on the contrary, it is displayed naïvely throughout boyhood and persists later as a deeply hidden anxiety about the size of the subject's penis or his potency, or else as a less concealed pride about them.

Now one of the exigencies of the biological differences between the sexes is this: that the man is actually obliged to go on proving his manhood to the woman. There is no analogous necessity for her. Even if she is frigid, she can engage in sexual intercourse and conceive and bear a child. She performs her part by merely *being*, without any *doing*—a fact that has always filled men with admiration and resentment. The man on the other hand has to *do* something in order to fulfill himself. The ideal of "efficiency" is a typical masculine ideal.

This is probably the fundamental reason why, when we analyze women who dread their masculine tendencies, we always find that they unconsciously regard ambition and achievement as attributes of the male, in spite of the great enlargement of women's sphere of activity in real life.

In sexual life itself we see how the simple craving of love that drives men to women is very often overshadowed by their overwhelming inner compulsion to prove their manhood again and again to themselves and others. A man of this type in its more extreme form has therefore one interest only: to conquer. His aim is to have "possessed" many women, and the most beautiful and most sought-after women. We find a remarkable mixture of this narcissistic overcompensation and of surviving anxiety in those men who, while wanting to make conquests, are very indignant with a woman who takes their intentions too seriously, or who cherish a lifelong gratitude to her if she spares them any further

17. Freud, "Female Sexuality," *Inter. J. Psycho-Anal.*, Vol. XI (1930), p. 281.

18. Freud, "The Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido," *Collected Papers*, Vol. II.

proof of their manhood.

Another way of averting the soreness of the narcissistic scar is by adopting the attitude described by Freud as the propensity to debase the love object.¹⁹ If a man does not desire any woman who is his equal or even his superior—may it not be that he is protecting his threatened self-regard in accordance with that most useful principle of sour grapes? From the prostitute or the woman of easy virtue one need fear no rejection, and no demands in the sexual, ethical, or intellectual sphere. One can feel oneself the superior.²⁰

This brings us to a third way, the most important and the most ominous in its cultural consequences: that of diminishing the self-respect of the woman. I think that I have shown that men's disparagement of women is based upon a definite psychic trend toward disparaging them—a tendency rooted in the man's psychic reactions to certain given biological facts, as might be expected of a mental attitude so widespread and so obstinately maintained. The view that women are infantile and emotional creatures, and as such, incapable of responsibility and independence is the work of the masculine tendency to lower women's self-respect. When men justify such an attitude by pointing out that a very large number of women really do correspond to this description, we must consider whether this type of woman has not been cultivated by a systematic selection on the part of men. The important point is not that individual minds of greater or lesser caliber, from Aristotle to Moebius, have expended an astonishing amount of energy and intellectual capacity in proving the superiority of the masculine principle. What really counts is the fact that the ever-precious self-respect of the "average man" causes him over and over again to choose a feminine type that is infantile, nonmaternal, and hysterical, and by so doing to expose each new generation to the influence of such women.

19. Freud, "Contributions to the Psychology of Love," *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV.

20. This does not detract from the importance of the other forces that drive men to prostitutes, which have been described by Freud in his "Contributions to the Psychology of Love," *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV; and by Boehm in his "Beiträge zur Psychologie der Homosexualität," *Intern. Zeitschr. f. Psychoanal.*, Bd. VI (1920) and Bd. VIII (1922).

THE DENIAL OF THE VAGINA

*A Contribution to the Problem of the Genital Anxieties Specific to Women**

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCLUSIONS to which Freud's investigations of the specific character of feminine development have led him are as follows: first, that in little girls the early development of instinct takes the same course as in boys, both in respect of the erotogenic zones (in the two sexes only one genital organ, the penis, plays a part, the vagina remaining undiscovered) and also in respect of the first choice of object (for both the mother is the first love object). Secondly, that the great differences that nevertheless exist between the two sexes arise from the fact that this similarity of libidinal trend does not go with similar anatomical and biological foundations. From this premise it follows logically and inevitably that girls feel themselves inadequately equipped for this phallic orientation of their libido and cannot but envy boys their superior endowment in that respect. Over and above the conflicts with the mother, which the girl shares with the boy, she adds a crucial one of her own; she lays at her mother's door the blame for her lack of a penis. This conflict is crucial because it is just this reproach which is essential for her detachment from her mother and her turning to her father.

Hence Freud has chosen a happy phrase to designate the period of blossoming of childish sexuality, the period of infantile genital primacy in girls as well as boys, which he calls the *phallic phase*.

* "Die Verleugnung der Vagina. Ein Beitrag zur Frage der spezifisch weiblichen Genitalangst," *Intern. Zeitschr. f. Psychoanal.*, XIX (1933), pp. 372-84; *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 14 (1933), pp. 57-70. Reprinted with the permission of *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*.