

Clara Thompson

- Born 1893 Providence, Rhode Island
- Raised in Baptist home
- Graduated Brown University
- 1916, John Hopkins University Ph.D
- Engaged. Fiancée did not want her to work, “marriage or medical school”, dumps him
- Medical missionary
- Read about independent woman with whom she related, rejected religion. Two decades distance with mom follows.
- 1928-33 moved to Europe to learn about trauma psychology (rumors she herself had been traumatized as a child)
- 1934, to New York. Worked with Karen Horney
- Taught at Vassar College
- Worked with Erich Fromm
- Died 1958 New York City



Focused on the psychology of women

Thompson saw gender most fundamentally as a cultural creation: gender characteristics are established by the assignment of social cultural meanings to biological differences. She saw the most problematic phase for girls in adolescence, in the perception of differences in social constraints and power.

Thompson suggested that – because of economic disparities and the use of seductiveness as an understandable compensatory commodity – “woman's alleged narcissism and greater need to be loved may be entirely the result of economic necessity”.

She focuses on ways in which society frustrates or distorts basic biological drives of women.