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WOMEN in PSYCHOLOGY

You Should Know

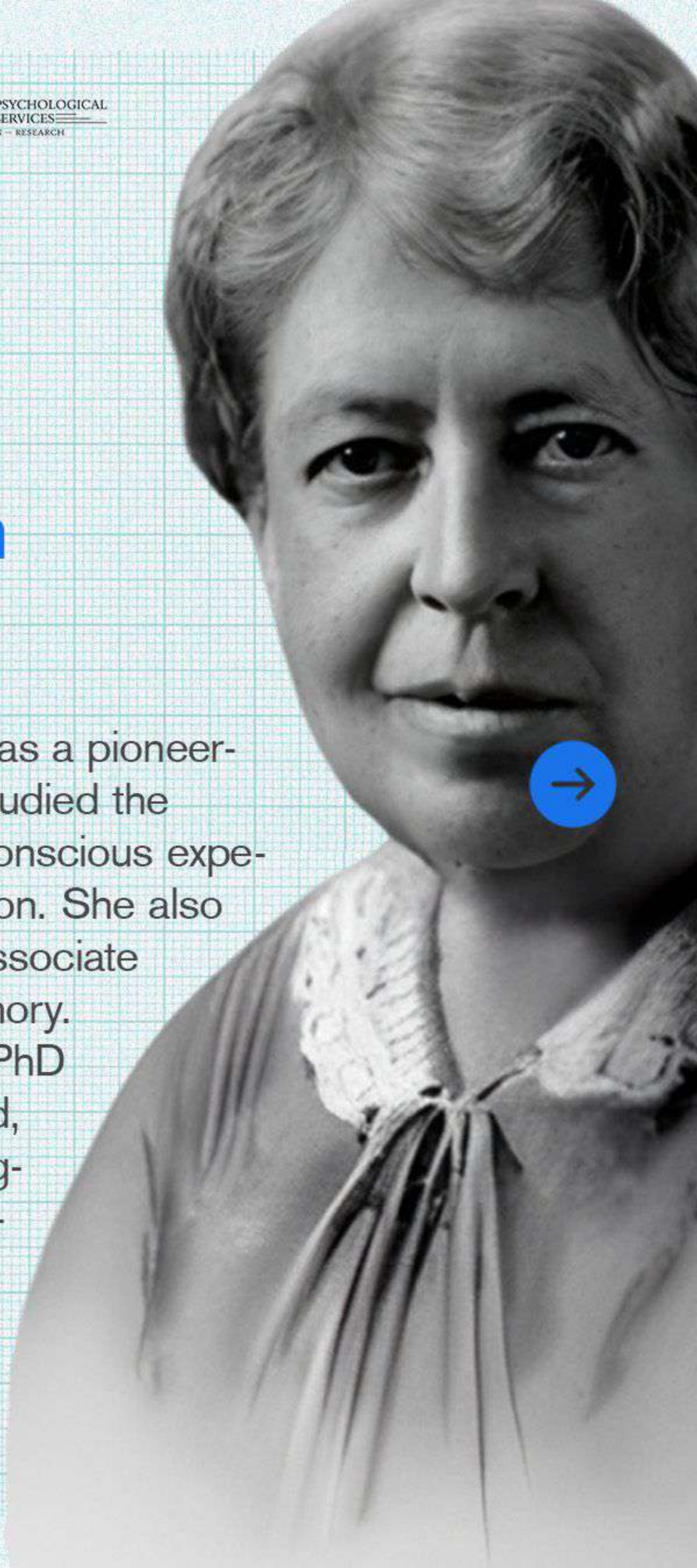


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Mary Whiton Calkins

Mary Whiton Calkins was a pioneering psychologist who studied the nature of the self and conscious experience using introspection. She also developed the paired-associate technique to study memory. Despite completing all PhD requirements at Harvard, she was denied the degree due to gender, making her contribution historically significant.

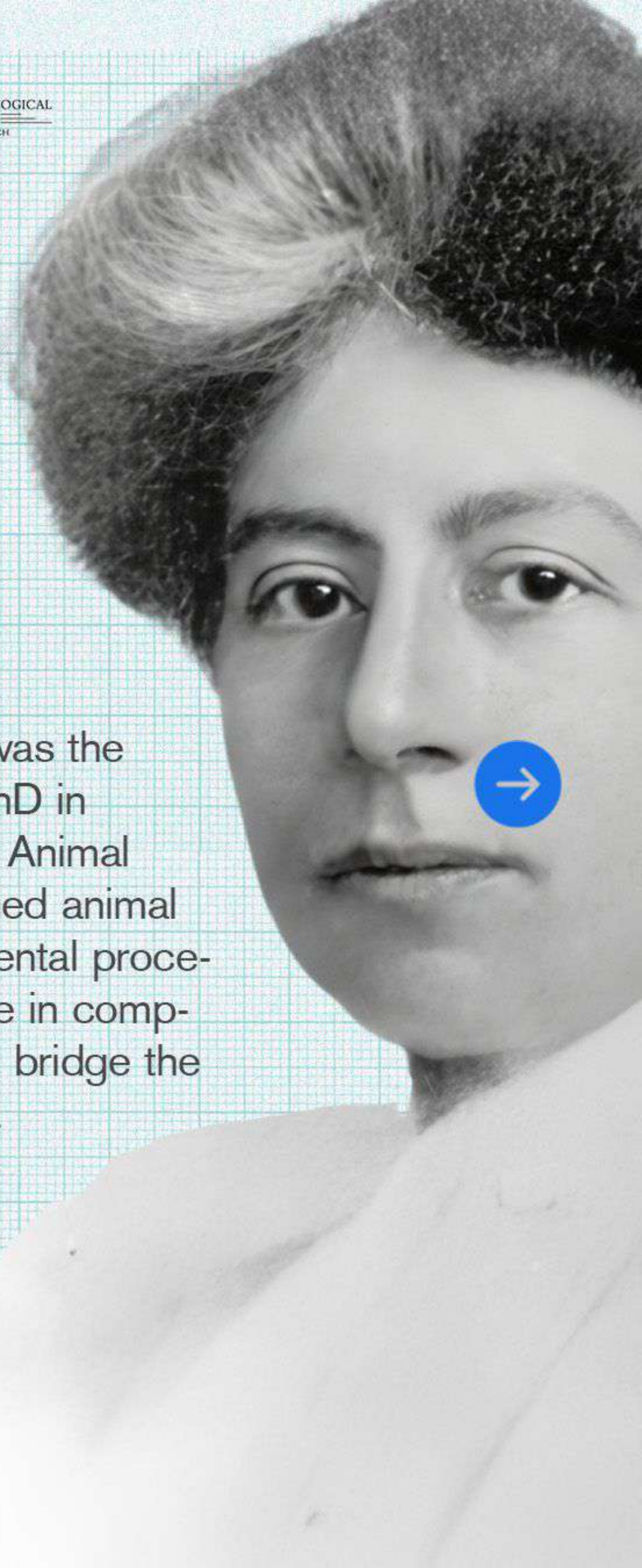


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Margaret Floy Washburn

Margaret Floy Washburn was the first woman to receive a PhD in psychology. Her book The Animal Mind systematically examined animal behavior and linked it to mental processes. She played a key role in comparative psychology, helping bridge the gap between behaviorist & mentalist approaches in early psychological research.

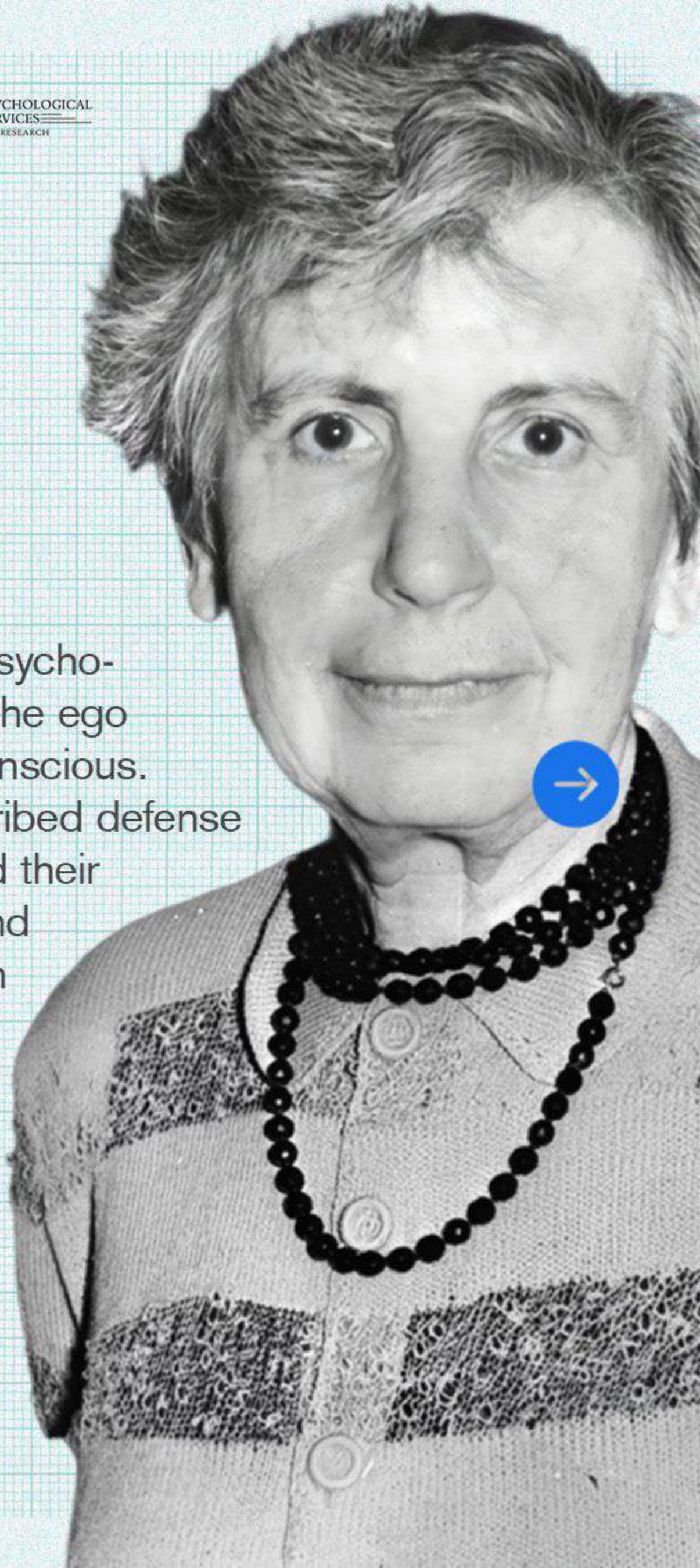


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Anna Freud

Anna Freud expanded psycho-analysis by focusing on the ego rather than just the unconscious. She systematically described defense mechanisms and studied their role in protecting the mind from anxiety. Her work in child psychoanalysis made her one of the most important figures in developmental & clinical psychology.



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Melanie Klein

Melanie Klein focused on early childhood emotional development and introduced object relations theory. She emphasized how early relationships shape personality. Klein also developed play therapy as a method to understand children's unconscious processes, making her work highly relevant in child psychology and clinical practice.

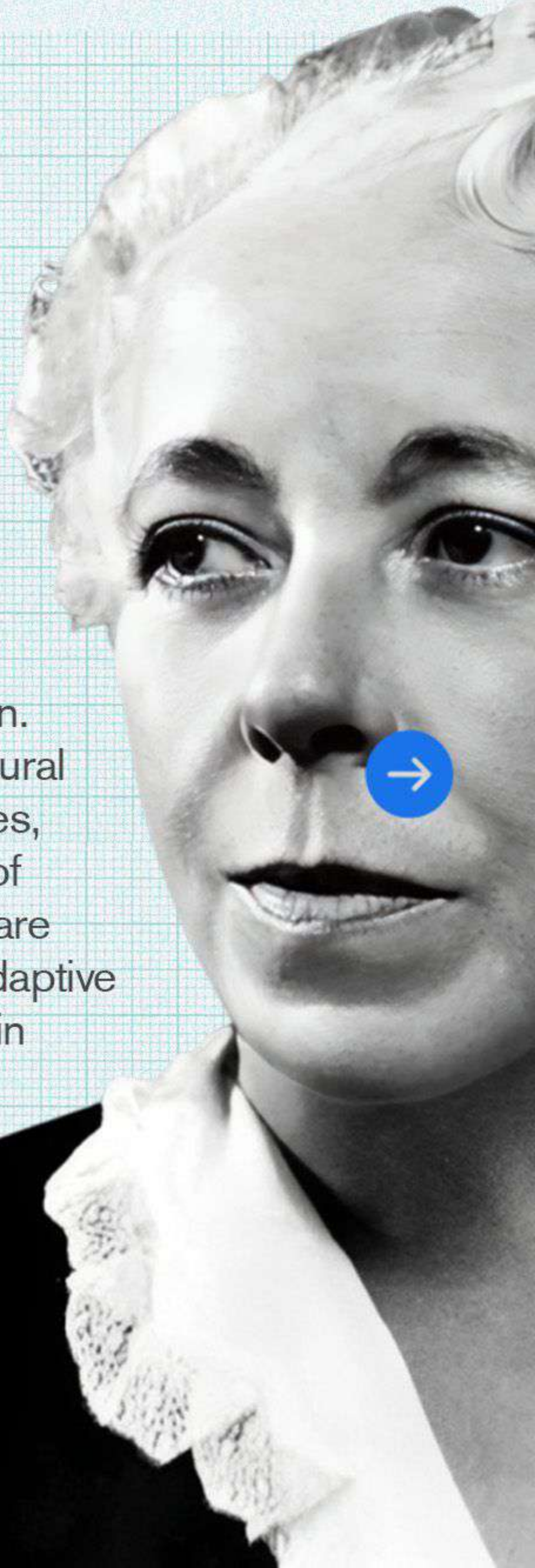


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Karen Horney

Karen Horney challenged Freud's views, especially regarding women. She proposed that social and cultural conditions, not just biological drives, shape personality. Her concepts of basic anxiety and neurotic needs are important for understanding maladaptive behavior, making her a key figure in neo-Freudian psychology.

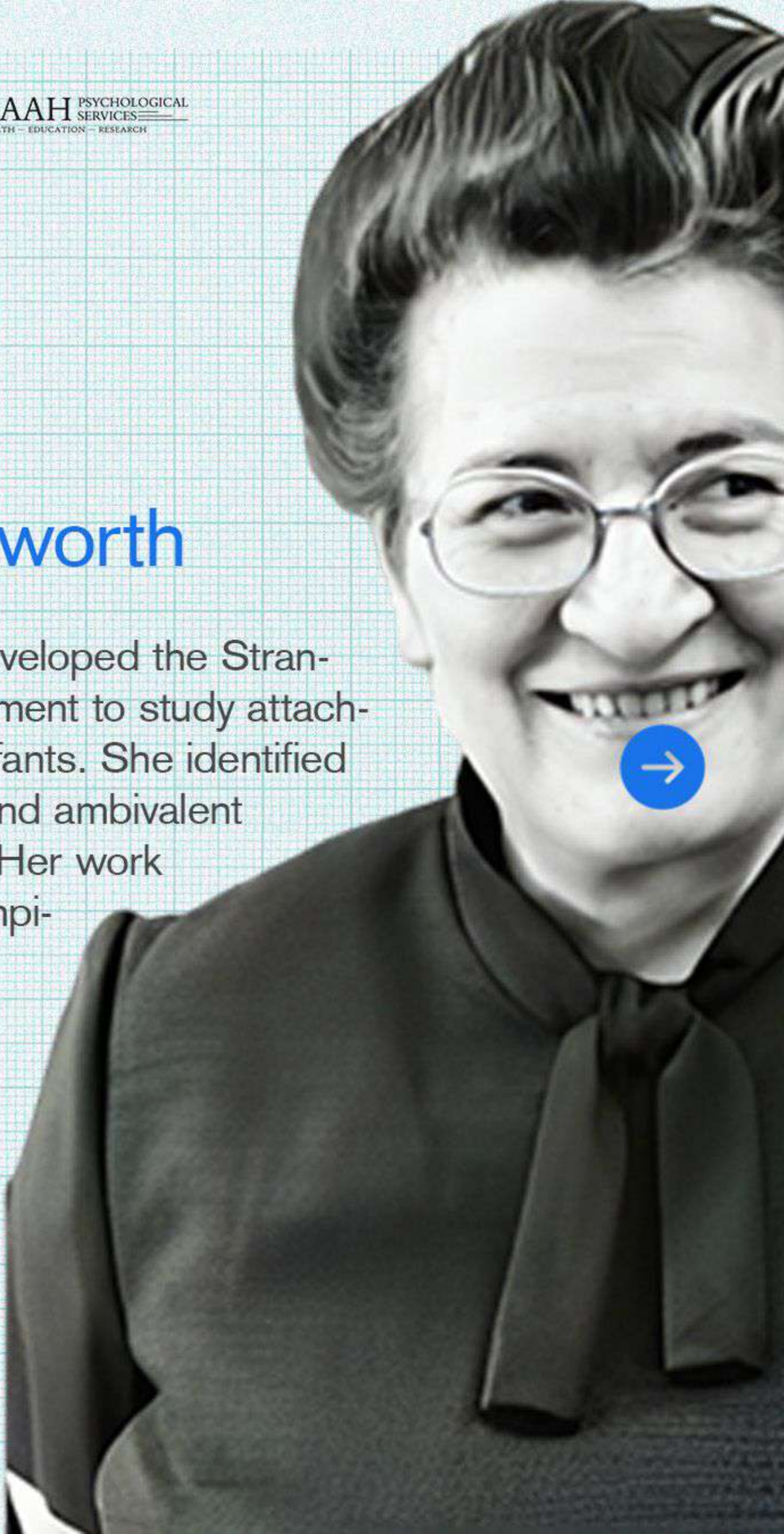


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Mary Ainsworth

Mary Ainsworth developed the Strange Situation experiment to study attachment patterns in infants. She identified secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment styles. Her work provided strong empirical support for attachment theory and is frequently asked in exams, especially in developmental psychology sections.



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Elizabeth Loftus

Elizabeth Loftus demonstrated that memory is not fixed but reconstructive. Her research showed how leading questions can distort recall and create false memories. Her work is highly relevant in forensic psychology and often appears in exams in the context of eyewitness reliability and memory distortion.



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