Erikson described old age as a time for either feelings of integrity and satisfaction with life or feelings of despair and contempt for others.

and those who wish they could do it all differently will express their despair through disgust and contempt for others. Although few things in life are sadder than an older person filled with despair, few things are more satisfying than an elderly person filled with a sense of integrity.

Karen Horney

Unlike many neo-Freudians, Karen Horney (pronounced Horn-Eye) was not a student of Freud's. Instead, Horney studied Freud's work indirectly and later taught psychoanalysis at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute and the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. And, like many psychoanalysts, she began to question some of the basic tenets of Freudian theory. In particular, Horney found she could not accept some of Freud's views concerning women. Freud maintained that men and women were born with different personalities. Horney argued that cultural and social forces are far more responsible than biology for some of the apparent differences between the genders.

Eventually, Horney became so disenchanted with the Freudian position that she and the members of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute agreed she should leave the institute. She resigned in 1941 and founded her own American Institute for Psychoanalysis. Horney explored cultural and social influences on personality development throughout her career. The prominent role she gave to these influences can be seen in two of her contributions to the psychoanalytic approach: her views on neurosis and what she called *feminine psychology*.

ASSESSING YOUR OWN PERSONALITY

A Sense of Personal Identity

Indicate how often each statement applies to you, using the following point scale: 1 = Never applies to me, 2 = Only occasionally or seldom applies to me, 3 = Fairly often applies to me, 4 = Very often applies to me.

_____ 1. I wonder what sort of person I really am.
_____ 2. People seem to change their opinion of me.
_____ 3. I feel certain about what I should do with my life.
_____ 4. I feel uncertain as to whether something is morally right or wrong.
_____ 5. Most people seem to agree about what sort of person I am.
_____ 6. I feel my way of life suits me.
_____ 7. My worth is recognized by others.
_____ 8. I feel freer to be my real self when I am away from those who know me very well.
_____ 9. I feel that what I am doing in life is not really worthwhile.
_____ 10. I feel I fit in well in the community in which I live.
_____ 11. I feel proud to be the sort of person I am.
_____ 12. People seem to see me very differently from the way I see myself.
_____ 13. I feel left out.
_____ 14. People seem to disapprove of me.
_____ 15. I change my ideas about what I want from life.
_____ 16. I am unsure as to how people feel about me.
_____ 17. My feelings about myself change.
_____ 18. I feel I am putting on an act or doing something for effect.
_____ 19. I feel proud to be a member of the society in which I live.

To obtain your score, first reverse the values you assigned to items 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. That is, for these items only, 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, 4 = 1. The values for the remaining items stay the same. Then add the values for all 19 items. Ochse and Plug (1986) found average scores for this scale of around 57 when they administered it to South African citizens between the ages of 15 and 60. The standard deviation for this score was around 7, indicating that the majority of people obtain scores that fall within 7 points of the average score. Scores considerably higher than this average range indicate a particularly well-developed sense of identity, whereas significantly lower scores suggest the test taker is still progressing.

Scale: Identity versus Identity Diffusion Scale
Source: Ochse and Plug (1986).

Neurosis

We all know people who fit Horney's description of neurotic. Let me give three examples of people I have met. One is a woman who at first appears friendly and warm. She's always involved in social activities and is quick to pass along a compliment.

But people soon find that her attention turns into demands. She can't stand to be alone, can't accept the idea that her friends or romantic partners would be interested in doing anything without her. Although her relationships never work out for long, she inevitably "falls in love" almost as soon as she meets the next man. The second example is a man who was disliked by almost everyone he went to college with. He seemed to hold everyone he encountered with contempt, and few people escaped his sarcastic, sometimes biting, comments. Today he is a ruthless—albeit successful—businessman. The third example is a woman who works in a small office tabulating figures. She rarely socializes with the other employees, who have stopped asking her to join them for lunch or after-work drinks. She has few friends and spends most of her evenings by herself.

According to Horney, what these three people have in common is that each is desperately fighting off feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Like all neurotic people in Horney's analysis, each is trapped in a self-defeating interpersonal style. That is, the way they interact with others prevents them from developing the social contact they unconsciously crave.

What is it in the backgrounds of these people that brought them to the sad situations they find themselves in today? Freud explained neurosis in terms of fixated energy and unconscious battles between various aspects of the personality. But Horney pointed to disturbed interpersonal relationships during childhood. In particular, she believed children too often grow up in homes that foster feelings of anxiety. The ways parents can generate these feelings are almost endless:

> direct or indirect domination, indifference, erratic behavior, lack of respect for the child's individual needs, lack of real guidance, disparaging attitudes, too much admiration or the absence of it, lack of reliable warmth, having to take sides in parental disagreements, too much or too little responsibility, overprotection, isolation from other children, injustice, discrimination, unkept promises, hostile atmosphere, and … [a] sense of lurking hypocrisy in the environment. (1945/1966, p. 41)

In short, parenting is not easy. Although raising children is one of the most important tasks we face, there is practically no training for the job and few restrictions on who can raise children and how they should be raised. And so we end up with children who lack a sense of personal worth, who are afraid and unsure of how to deal with their parents, who fear unjust punishment for reasons they can't understand, who feel insecure and inadequate, and who desperately want but fail to receive the warmth and support they need. These children are confused, afraid, and anxious.

How do they deal with this anxiety? According to Horney, children growing up in anxiety-generating situations develop strategies for dealing with threatening people. On the positive side, these strategies usually succeed in alleviating anxiety in the short run. On the downside, these individuals may come to rely on these strategies even when dealing with people outside the family. As adults, their childhood fear of interacting with other people continues. In essence, they have learned that social relationships are a source of anxiety, and their destructive interpersonal style is a type of defense mechanism intended to ward off feelings of anxiety.

Karen Horney 1885–1952

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Karen Danielsen was born in Hamburg, Germany, the daughter of a sea captain and his young, second wife. From her earliest years, she faced the injustices and rejection that came from being a rebellious woman in a man's world. Her father was a strict authoritarian who used Bible verse to promote his views on the superiority of men. Karen's older brother, Berndt, was awarded opportunities, including college and an eventual law degree, that her father believed unnecessary for a female. Karen responded to these inequities by vowing in elementary school to always be first in her class, and at age 12 decided she would one day go to medical school.

Karen's mother persuaded her father to allow Karen to go to college, where she met and married Oskar Horney in 1909. In 1915, she received her medical degree from the University of Berlin, one of the few female students in one of the few schools to accept women. She underwent psychoanalysis as part of her psychoanalytic training but found it insufficient for dealing with her lifelong bouts with depression. At one point, her husband was reported to have rescued her from a suicide attempt (Rubins, 1978). Despite her depression, her doubts about psychoanalysis, and a number of personal problems—including the premature death of her brother, a strained marriage and eventual divorce—her career prospered. She worked at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute and later immigrated to America, where she joined the New York Psychoanalytic Institute in 1934.

However, it was not in Horney's character to check her growing dissatisfaction with several aspects of Freud's theory. This open questioning created great strain with the other members of the institute, who in 1941 voted to disqualify her as an instructor. According to most reports, Horney received the vote in a dramatically silent room. She responded by leaving the meeting in a dignified and proud manner, without uttering a word. Horney went on to establish her own highly successful American Institute for Psychoanalysis. By the time of her death, in 1952, it was clear that she had made great progress in her battle against the male-dominated and paternalistic psychoanalytic school of thought.

Horney identified three interaction styles neurotics adopt in their efforts to avoid anxiety-provoking experiences. She called these styles *moving toward people, moving against people*, and *moving away from people*. As you read about these styles, you'll no doubt see a little of yourself in each. That is healthy. Horney explained we all use each of the three strategies on occasion to combat anxiety. In contrast, neurotic individuals rely on just one of these styles for virtually all their social interactions.

Moving Toward People

Some children deal with anxiety by emphasizing their helplessness. They become dependent on others, compulsively seeking affection and acceptance from their parents and caregivers. The sympathy they receive provides temporary relief from their anxiety, but the children run the risk of relying on this strategy in later relationships. As adults, they have an intense need to be loved and accepted. They often believe that if only they can find love, everything else will be all right. They may indiscriminately attach themselves

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to whomever is available, believing that any relationship is better than loneliness and feeling unwanted. If you've ever been involved with someone who meets this description, you probably can appreciate the futility of pursuing a long-term relationship. These people don't love, they cling. They don't share affection, they only demand it. Because of this neurotic style, each new relationship is almost certainly doomed.

Moving Against People

One way to handle anxiety is to cling to others, another is to fight. Some children find aggressiveness and hostility are the best way to deal with a poor home environment. They compensate for feelings of inadequacy and insecurity by pushing around other children. They are rewarded with a fleeting sense of power and respect from classmates, but no real friendships. This neurotic style takes on more sophisticated forms when these children become adults. They may take advantage of business partners or lash out at others with hurtful comments. In both child and adult, we find an ever-present need to exploit other people. Horney argued that this neurotic style is characterized by *externalization*, similar to Freud's concept of projection. That is, these individuals learned during childhood that people are basically hostile and only interested in themselves. They respond to this perception by doing unto others before others can do unto them. They enter into relationships only when there is something to be gained. Consequently, relationships with these people are necessarily shallow, unfulfilling, and ultimately painful.

Moving Away from People

Some children adopt a third strategy to deal with their anxiety. Instead of interacting with others in a dependent or hostile manner, the child may simply tune out the world. Who needs them? The desire for privacy and self-sufficiency can become intense. As adults, these neurotics seek out jobs requiring little interaction with others. As a rule, they avoid affection, love, and friendship. Because emotional attachment might lead to the kind of pain they remember from childhood, they develop a numbness to emotional experiences. The safest way to avoid anxiety is to avoid involvement. This is certainly the wrong person to fall in love with. Affection cannot be returned because it is not even experienced. Thus, for both participants, the relationship will be shallow and unrewarding.

Feminine Psychology

As a psychoanalyst in the 1930s, Horney found herself a woman in a man's world. Many of her initial doubts about Freudian theory began with some of Freud's disparaging views of women. Freud described *penis envy*—the desire every young girl has to be a boy. Horney (1967) countered this male-flattering position with the concept of *womb envy*—men's envy of women's ability to bear and nurse children. Horney did not mean that men are dissatisfied with themselves but rather that each gender has attributes that the other admires. However, she did suggest that men compensate for their inability to have children through achievement in other domains.

Horney also pointed out that Freud's observations and writings took place at a time when society often placed women in inferior positions. If a woman living in that era wished she were a man, it was probably because of the restrictions and

burdens placed on her by the culture, not because of inherent inferiorities. In a society where both men and women are free to become whatever they desire, there is little reason to think that girls would want to be boys, or vice versa. In many ways, we can see that Horney's thinking was well ahead of its time. Her death in 1952 did not allow her to see how feminists would later use many of her ideas to promote the cause of gender equality.

Application: Psychoanalytic Theory and Religion

"The religions of mankind must be classed among the mass delusions. No one, needless to say, who shares a delusion ever recognizes it as such."

Sigmund Freud

The psychoanalytic theorists did more than describe personality and develop treatments for psychological disorders. These writers also offered important new perspectives on humankind and answers to some enduring philosophical questions about the human condition. Inevitably, their concerns overlapped with some of those traditionally addressed by theologians: Are people inherently good or bad? Should we sacrifice personal pleasure for the common good? Is the source of happiness within each of us or found in powers greater than our own?

In a style that typified his career, Freud directly challenged conventional thinking on many religious issues. Two books, in particular, *The Future of an Illusion* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*, assaulted widely held religious beliefs. Although Freud understood that organized religion provided solace for the uneducated, he lamented its widespread acceptance by intelligent people. "The whole thing is so patently infantile, so foreign to reality," Freud wrote, "that to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life" (1930/1961, p. 21).

Why, then, do so many people believe? According to Freud, religious behavior represents a form of neurosis. It begins with the baby's feelings of helplessness and longing for a powerful protector, presumably the father. Freud called religion a type of collective wish fulfillment. To protect ourselves from a threatening and unpredictable world, we project our imagined savior from this predicament outward in the form of a God. Thus, to Freud, God is but an unconscious father figure generated in an infantile way to provide us with feelings of security.

Several neo-Freudian theorists also addressed religious questions in their writings; two, in particular, were Carl Jung and Erich Fromm. Jung, whose father was a minister in the Swiss Reformed Church, struggled with religious issues throughout much of his life, often wavering between favorable and unfavorable impressions of modern religion. He once referred to "the religious myth," yet at another point he described religious experience as "a great treasure" providing "a source of life, meaning, and beauty" (Bechtle, 1984). Toward the end of his career, Jung seemed to take a more favorable approach to organized religion. He acknowledged that religion often provides followers with a sense of purpose and feelings of security.

Jung often insisted that the question of God's existence was outside the realm of science and hence nothing he could provide answers about. His interest was with humankind's eternal need to find religion. Why does religion surface in all cultures? Why is some entity similar to the Judeo-Christian God found in each of these cultures? Jung's answer was that each of us inherits a God archetype in our collective unconscious. This primordial image causes Godlike images to surface in the dreams, folklore, artwork,