

# Lars and his psychosocial development in life

Science



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I will use Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Human Development and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory to explain the key issues experienced by Lars and his psychosocial development in life.

Lars is a socially awkward young man who dislikes any form of physical contact. He lives alone in his deceased parent's garage apartment. Lars' life starts to get interesting when a new employee (Margo) starts to express interest in him. One day, Lars told his brother Gus and sister-in-law, Karin that he met Bianca (a sex doll Lars ordered) and would like to invite her to their place for a meal. Lars treated Bianca like his girlfriend.

Gus and Karin were overwhelmed and wanted Lars to see Dagmar, a town doctor and a psychologist. They convinced Lars that Bianca has low blood pressure and to bring her in for weekly treatments, creating an opportunity for Dagmar to see Lars. Dagmar told Gus and Karin that in order for Lars to benefit, the community got to be involved and accept Bianca. This acceptance of their relationship allowed healing to occur for Lars (Elliott, 2002).

Based on Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Human Development, Stage 1 (Trust vs Mistrust), the lack of dependable family members during Lars' childhood resulted in Lars developing a sense of mistrust and insecurity. This resulted in him putting his feelings into Bianca, a sex doll, who is inanimate and not able to hurt him. Based on stage 2 of Erikson's theory (Autonomy vs Shame ; Doubt), children start to gain more personal control and independence.

Failure to do so creates a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt. Due to the pressure people around Lars find him a girlfriend, Lars' imagination created Bianca. He is in control of the development and outcome of their relationship. The society that Lars was in was supportive and assuring. Thus, it helped Lars to gain autonomy and will in surviving the real world (with Bianca) by himself.

There is also a scene where Lars brought Bianca to Cindy's birthday party and tried to connect with others through dancing, relating to Stage 3 of Erikson's Theory (Initiative and Guilt). Lars tried to explore his own character by trying to mingle on his own. Lars also became distressed when mentioned that Karin is nearing the end of her pregnancy. Dagmar reassured Lars that Karin's baby will be fine even as his experience is otherwise.

This is reflective of Stage 4 of Erikson's theory (Industry vs Inferiority), where Lars felt inferior in not having a mum like other children do. In Stage 5 (Identity vs Role Confusion), one starts self-discovery, especially in their sexual identity. Lars asked Gus about the concept of masculinity. This helped Lars when he became aware of his attraction towards Bianca. His attraction to Margo has now reached the point where he feels compelled to tell her that he could never cheat on Bianca.

Margo assures him that she is not asking him to cheat on Bianca. However, she states genuinely how much she wishes she could find a man with his characteristics for herself. In the final scene of the movie, Lars' healing is almost completed, when Bianca "dies". Before Lars kills off Bianca, he presses a kiss to her lips, something he would not do before.

This shows that the child's mind-set Lars once had, now psychologically matches that of his age. Lars has shown physical intimacy towards the doll. He not only overcome his fear of touch but using the doll the way it's originally intended to be. Lars further proves to be more in touch with an adult psychological being when he asks Margo to go for a walk, just the two of them, after the funeral. With the help of Bianca, Lars was able to grow and heal, and form relationships with other human beings. This is being seen in Erikson's theory sixth stage of intimacy vs isolation.

In Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Theory, there are five (Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem) levels in an environment affecting the child. Microsystem refers to the immediate environment we are in touch with after birth (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In Lars' case, there is a lack of interactions with immediate family members.

Thus, he depended on the safety of his relationship with Bianca to slowly become at ease with people, exhibiting the creativity characteristic in clients who are innately self-healing (Bohart ; Tallman, 1999). Moving deeper into the model, Mesosystem is closely linked with the Microsystem. Lars was able to escape his delusional thoughts through interactions with his surroundings (church members, Dagmar, Margo).

The indirect influence in his Exosystem (moving deeper) where his large neighborhood and family members play a part in helping him. With an entire community supporting Lars' construction of reality, the community becomes like a Kingsley Hall (Barnes ; Berke, 2002) where everyone normalizes the

experiences of one another. In treating Bianca as a real person, Lars is able to deal with issues that occur as the relationship develops.

This is being seen through the Macrosystem in his beliefs and values influencing Lars deeply and even "cured" his illness indirectly. The last stage of chronosystem comes in play includes how his neighborhood addressed the situation and the societal norms on mental health and having them being so positive, it influences Lars in his development growth. As time progresses, Lars is able to connect better with others.

In summary, Lars created a perfect partner for himself that makes connections with others and himself indirectly. It requires also others who are willing to enter his world. Without this, Lars would have been labeled psychotic and given drugs. When the unreal Bianca is treated by everyone as real, Lars is able to emerge as a real person. What to ponder would be if Lars does not have a supportive community will he be cured and to what extent his denial and delusion will be left.