

The analysis of the movie "Iars and the real girl"

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The movie *Lars and the Real Girl* revolves around the story of a withdrawn young man, Lars Lindstrom, in his journey of self-healing and growing up. Aloof from the outside world, Lars dwells in loneliness and struggles relating to others, to the extent of repeatedly turning down his sister-in-law's (Karin) attempts to include him as part of the family. Changes started to take place when Lars decided to purchase a lifelike sex doll and treats her as his girlfriend, Bianca. Although uneasy with the notion, his family and the close-knitted community go along with it. Through this relationship, he slowly come to terms with his detachment issues and reestablish intimacy in his life.

Lars's transition from comparative isolation to restored belief in intimate relationship captures an emblematic passage of his psychosocial development - defined by Erikson as crisis, where individuals encounter distinctive developmental task pertinent to stages that need to be resolved - more successful resolution brings about healthier development (Santrock, 2013). Erikson's psychosocial theory proposed that our early and later experiences shape ego identity and this is maintained by the feeling of competence attained through the negotiation of each psychosocial stages (Jones-Smith, 2016). Lars happens to be in the intimacy-versus-isolation stage, where he is confronted with the developmental task of establishing close relationships (Fleming, 2018). Yet owing to his early childhood experiences, he dissociates himself from others. The neglect and lack of emotional warmth from his depressed father soon after the maternal death of his mother leads Lars to develop a sense of mistrust. He was caught in the initial trust-versus-mistrust stage where he still clings to his baby blanket.

Although yearning for human connections, his insecurity abstained him from forming personal connections, which is worsen by his hypersensitivity to human touch.

Lars depicts very much of a child despite being a grown up. Other than having a job, he faces difficulty communicating and identifying his role. This coincides with the industry-versus-inferiority and identity-versus-role confusion stages of Erikson's psychosocial theory. Lars shows immature communication skills where a direct greeting would dumbstruck him - showing inferiority in his social skills. His conditional stability encounters a turning point when his new coworker, Margo, tries to initiate interaction with him; triggering his innate desire for intimate companionship. Lars started experiencing an identity versus role confusion. He struggles to match the typical portrayal of man because of his inability to exhibit manhood due to his fear for human interaction, especially woman. Beyer and Seiffge-Krenke (2010) validates Erikson's standpoint that identity development precedes intimacy. Bianca acts as a mean for Lars to reestablish his connections and further experiences the transition from childhood to adulthood. The existence of Bianca afford Lars the chance to learn to love in which he gradually resolves his crisis and develops a heathier sense of self.

The role of others in Lars's development can also be comprehended from the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. The theory focuses on the association between multiple environmental settings that affect individual development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Each of the five ecological subsystems are closely related to the context of a person's relationship

network that supports individual growth (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines microsystem as the immediate setting that the individual actively engaged in. Lars's family, workplace, and neighborhood constitute his microsystem. The detachment from his parents shaped Lars's withdrawn and socially awkward behaviors. However, his brother and sister-in-law reaches out to him to the extent that they go along with his delusion. Their support together with the help from his colleagues and neighbors guide Lars to confront and deal with his underlying insecurities. It is worth noticing that the processes that occur in different contexts (microsystem) can be interrelated – substantiating the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). For instance the relation of Lars's family experiences to church experience. Lars as a pious man insists on bringing Bianca to church.

The acceptance of Bianca by the church group brings him closer to the community where he becomes more comfortable with others. From a broader societal and cultural context of macrosystem, the whole town seems to put up with Lars's peculiar behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The insistence of Lars making Bianca part of his life may disrupts the community's norm and possibly caused him to be further reserved from human interaction but nonetheless the community takes part pretending and creates a social life for Bianca which remove her from Lars's life progressively. Perhaps Lars behavior can be viewed as part of his chronosystem development through life transitions (Santrock, 2013).

Karin's pregnancy might elicit an emotional response in Lars where he associated it with his mother's maternal death. His personification through Bianca helps him deal with the fear and be aware of his attachment issues in part of dealing it. The movie reminds me that who I am today is very much shaped by the context of my system of relationships particularly my family. Although I might not have the control over the early experiences in my life, but I always believe in the choices that we can make for ourselves. After all, growing up is not just a rite of passage, rather a conscious decision that requires one's courage to separate and individuate. Even though the past cannot be changed, yet the awareness and willingness to change will certainly compensate for our shortcomings.