

Describe and evaluate one psychological perspective on personality

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There are numerous Psychoanalysts within the academic world, each with their own theory, research and belief in various aspects of human behaviour, the causes and symptoms and in some cases the cure. This essay will be focusing upon Freud, Erikson and Kelly.

As with Freud, Erikson agrees that our personalities are made up of three basic elements, the Id, Ego and Superego. But unlike Freud, Erikson Believed that the Ego was not simply a subjective part of a person's personality that simply carried out an action or repressed an action suggested by the other two parts. To Erikson the Ego is the most important system of the three, as conscious decisions are made through the ego and that would have a positive or negative affect on our development and upon our own personalities.

A suggestion can be made by another, but ultimately it is the one making the conscious choice that incurs the consequences.

This Erickson suggests that our personality continually develops throughout various stages in our lives. This makes total sense to me, we all have various stages in our lives to go or in this case grow through. Be it family, friendship or simple social interaction at a less personal level. All this will have an ultimate impact upon ourselves, and how we deal and come through each stage will logically leave its imprint within us on a conscious and subconscious level.

As we grow, society dictates that through nursery, schooling and so on, we do indeed move through various stages because of our physical development. And of course a huge impact this will have upon us as we have no choice but to adapt mentally as well as physically to these changes.

Evaluation - Erikson describes these stages quite aptly through his psychosocial stage theory. Unlike Freud who believes that our personalities are fixed after our young teens by previous experiences, and fixations we form during those stages. Erikson understands that because our social interaction changes, so does our environment change and we have to deal with, and adapt. The choices we make via the ego will have a positive or negative affect on the outcome throughout each stage. And because of our reliance upon others throughout our lives, their reaction and treatment of us also has a negative and a positive impact.

Erikson believed that we not only move through these psychosocial stages, but we can revisit them, and by understanding various negatives we would associate with that stage. We can build upon these and apply building blocks that allow us to move on more positively from them. With knowledge and understanding about ourselves, and the impact that not only others have had, but still have upon our lives. It does seem from Erikson's prospective that though inherent traits still remain part of our personalities. By showing our ego what truly lies within our subconscious (Our Id) and why that is. Our ego is then able to make different choices based upon the new information learnt.

Though Erikson took Freud's theory a stage further, Freud himself would be in opposition to Erikson's psychosocial theory for many reasons. Freud certainly did not believe that our conscious selves had any importance within our development, Freud focused very much upon the Id and Superego, the more subconscious areas of our personalities. Also to Freud he very much was of the view that our personalities and behaviour traits were determined by a young age, and not much of that was focused on the social aspects of our lives. Erikson of course takes this area on board and views this as an important part of our learning and development. Where Freud's theory based itself very much on a psychosexual nature, Erikson's psychosocial theory bases itself very much to do with external stimuli that would build individuals personality. Also add to this the thoughts and theories of George Kelly, another academic I tend to lean towards and favour above others I have learnt so far. Kelly did not believe that an individual's personality and behaviour traits were fixed. He was very much of the opinion that each individual is constantly learning, finding out new ways to understand the world around them and there selves. Kelly understood that each and every one of us exists within our own realities. And he believed that by understanding other's views of an individual's reality, and what they perceive to be true. Each person certainly can change there traits, and in doing so change there behaviour etc.

My preference is certainly more with Erikson, and to be honest this essay has been quite difficult as all three dip in and out of each others base theories. The expanded Freudian theory by Erikson certainly seems the most logical and more applicable so far.

Bibliography

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