

Hergenhahn's An Introduction to the History of Psychology

Eighth Edition

EIGHTH EDITION

HERGENHAHN'S
An Introduction to the
History of Psychology



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Chapter 7

Romanticism and Existentialism

Learning Objectives (1 of 2)

After reading and discussing Chapter 7, students should:

- Be aware that romanticism and existentialism were criticisms of the philosophy of the Enlightenment.
- Understand the general characteristics of romanticism:
 - Be familiar with Rousseau's ideas regarding feelings (in contrast to reason), nature of humans, and education.
 - Be acquainted with the ideas of Goethe, including his general view of life experience and view of science.
 - Be familiar with Schopenhauer's philosophy and views on human nature.

Learning Objectives (2 of 2)

- Understand the basic philosophy of existentialism.
 - Be familiar with Kierkegaard's philosophy regarding man, religion and God, truth, and his views on personal freedom.
 - Be acquainted with Nietzsche's views of human nature, views on God, opinions vs. convictions, will to power, and supermen.

Romanticism

- Emphasized the irrational components of human nature
 - Jean-Jacques Rousseau
 - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
 - Arthur Schopenhauer

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1 of 2)

- Father of Romanticism
- Rousseau emphasized feelings in contrast to reason as the important guiding force in human nature, the best guide for human conduct is a person's honest feelings and inclinations.
- For Rousseau, humans are basically good—born good but are made bad by societal institutions. Humans are, by nature, social animals who wished to live in harmony with other humans.
 - Noble savage

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2 of 2)

- The general will is what is best within a community
 - Should be sharply distinguished from an individual's will.
- Suggested that education should take advantage of natural impulses rather than distort them.
 - Educational institutions should create a situation in which a child's natural abilities and interests can be nurtured.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1 of 2)

- Goethe viewed humans as being torn by the stresses and conflicts of life.
 - Life consisted of opposing forces, love and hate, life and death, good and evil.
 - The goal of life should be to embrace these forces rather than to deny or overcome them.
- Insisted that intact, meaningful psychological experience should be the object of study, rather than meaningless isolated sensations
 - Was an early phenomenologist.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (2 of 2)

- Goethe proposed a theory of evolution before Darwin
- Used a form of what is now called behavior therapy.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1 of 3)

- Equated Kant's noumenal world (things in themselves in nature) with “will” —a blind force which cannot be known.
 - In humans, this force manifests itself in the will to survive. This will to survive causes an unending cycle of needs and need satisfaction.
 - Most human behavior is irrational
 - An unending series of pains due to unsatisfied need which causes us to act to satisfy the need, followed by a brief experience of satisfaction (pleasure) followed again by another need to be satisfied, and on it goes.

Arthur Schopenhauer (2 of 3)

- Felt that the intelligent beings suffer the most.
 - Stated “almost all our sufferings spring from having to do with other people”.
- Intelligent people seek solitude while the common people are gregarious.
 - For the intelligent, solitude has two advantages
 - Can be alone with his or her own thoughts,
 - Prevents needing to deal with intellectually inferior people.

Arthur Schopenhauer (3 of 3)

- A way of looking at life is as the postponement of death.
 - People do not cling to life because it is pleasant, rather, they cling to life because they fear death.
- Wrote of positive and negative impulses, the unconscious, repression, and resistance before Freud.

Existentialism

- Existentialism
 - Stressed the meaning of human existence, freedom of choice, and the uniqueness of each individual.
 - The most important aspects of humans are their personal, subjective interpretations of life and the choices they make in light of those interpretations.
 - Søren Kierkegaard
 - Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Søren Kierkegaard (1 of 3)

- The first modern existentialist.
- Was an outspoken critic of organized religion and believed the most meaningful relationship with God was one that was personal and not dictated by the church.
- Truth is always what a person believes privately and emotionally.
 - Truth cannot be taught logically, truth must be experienced.
 - Truth is subjectivity—your subjectivity.

Søren Kierkegaard (2 of 3)

- The approximation of personal freedom occurs in stages.
 - Aesthetic stage
 - People are open to many types of experiences, and do not recognize their ability to choose.
 - Live on a hedonistic level.
 - Ethical stage
 - People accept responsibility for making choices but use as their guide ethical principles established by others.

Søren Kierkegaard (3 of 3)

- Religious stage
 - People recognize and accept their freedom and have a personal relationship with God. The nature of the relationship is personal.
 - People at this stage see possibilities in life that usually run contrary to convention, and tend to be nonconformists.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1 of 4)

- Nietzsche proposed two aspects of human nature:
 - Apollonian aspect
 - Rational side
 - Desire for tranquility, predictability and orderliness.
 - Dionysian aspect
 - Irrational side
 - Attraction to creative chaos and to passionate, dynamic, experiences.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (2 of 4)

- He believed the Western philosophy had emphasized the intellect and minimized the human passions
- Result was lifeless rationalism
- Urged a fusion of the two aspects
 - Not a totally irrational, passionate life but a life of reasonable passion.
- Believed that because of human actions, we had, in essence, made God “dead.”

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (3 of 4)

- Philosophers and scientists who killed God took purpose from the universe and stripped humans of any special place in the world.
- Convictions are thought to reflect truth, but cause fanaticism
 - Opinions are tentative, challengeable, and easily modified in light of new information.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (4 of 4)

- All people have a will to power
 - To control one's life, tendency to gain mastery over one's self and one's destiny.
- Supermen are people who are approaching their full potential because standard morality does not govern their lives
 - This was misused by the Nazi party who claimed that the German people were these supermen.

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche as Psychology

- For both men, Hegelian philosophy was a favorite target, and both men preached reliance on direct, personal experience.
- The major difference between the two was that Kierkegaard accepted the existence of God, whereas for Nietzsche God did not exist.