



Sex Offenders: Theoretical Underpinnings of Personality

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KEYWORDS :

Personality is the relatively enduring distinctive integrated and functional set of psychological characteristics that result from people's temperaments interacting with their cultural and developmental experiences.

Personality describes an individual's characteristic ways of relating to others, experiencing and expressing emotion, thinking about self and others and behaving. Personality is best viewed dimensionally (Widger et al. 2011). An individual has a personality disorder when they display a lifelong pattern of pervasive problems in personality functioning which cause difficulties in inter-personal relationships, leading to distress, poor social functioning and/or problems for other people. Various types of personality disorders (e.g. anti-social, borderline, narcissistic, paranoid, schizoid, etc.) are currently described in mental disorder (APA, 1994).

The Personality characteristics of sexual offenders are heterogeneity and there is no 'sex offender personality' (Craissati et al. 2008). Although personality disorder is common in sex offenders, it is particularly prevalent and severe in serial offenders those who cause serious harm. Adult rapists have higher rates of psychopathy, antisocial traits and paranoid traits (e.g. sense of entitlement, hostility and bearing grudges) than child molesters who have higher rates of avoidant and dependent traits (e.g. feelings of inferiority, needy and over-reliant on support from others). Sexual homicide offenders have very high rates of psychopathy and other personality disorders, particularly sexually sadistic and serial offenders (Hill et al. 2007).

In Hanson & Morton – Bourgon's (2004) meta-analysis psychopathy and personality disorder (grouped with other indicators of 'anti-sociality') were associated with sexual and violent recidivism in sexual offenders.

Psychopathy is one of the strongest predictors of future offending and violence in offenders including sexual offenders (Hare, 2006). Psychopathy in combination with sexual deviance has been found to be particularly malignant combination (Olver & Wong, 2006). Sexual deviance is a strong predictor of sexual recidivism, whereas psychopathy is a strong predictor of violent and non-violent recidivism. In cases where both exist, they interact significantly suggesting that psychopathy enhances the influence of sexual deviance. According to Olver & Wong, 'Psychopathic characteristics, such as callousness, lack of empathy, manipulation and so forth, would likely mate the commission of sexual crimes by treating victims and potential victims as object for self gratification and would, therefore, potentiate sexual recidivism' (Olver & Wong, 2006, p.79)

Personality defined as " Pattern deeply embedded and broadly cognitive, affective and overt behaviour traits that emerge from a complex biological – environmental formative matrix" (Millon, T. & Everly, G, "Personality and It's Disorders; John Wiley & Sons: New York, 1985).

Allport (Ibid, p.41) denoted etymology of the word "persona" Greek theatrical mask worn in the Greek drama later used by Romans.

Personality is that organization of unique behaviour equipment an individual has acquired under the special condition of his develop-

ment. Comprehensive study of Personality from psychological point began with Sigmund Freud. Most all the early personality theorists were physicians who combined their theories of personality with the practice of psychotherapy as a means of treating mental disorders. Sigmund Freud was pioneer and a genius in his ideas have had a profound influence on modern psychology. The early study of personality has distinguished itself from branches of psychology by being more speculative and less subjective to careful controls i.e. based on more intuition than experience.

PSYCHOANALYTICAL AND PSYCHOPHILOSOPHICAL

Id: Basic to every living every human being, with him at the most of birth and remaining with him through out life, is the phenomenal energy system called by Freud the 'Id'. The id only knows the pleasure principle and cares not for anything else. It is the raw, savage, undisciplined, pleasure seeking basic stuff that energizes man throughout life. It knows no laws, follows on rules and consider only its appetites. It gives man his will to continue and sparks all the other energy systems which might be imposed upon it. Despite the proclivity of the id to go in any direction it wishes, it must conform to other systems, which conformity produces the need for the polarity and tensions reduction principles.

Ego:

Supposedly, if the raw id were left to its own devices it would destroy itself. Something is needed to police its energy and to direct it towards as much fulfilment as can be allowed under the exigencies of life without letting the id destroy itself. Freud said that the ego performs these functions. The ego follows the principles of reality. The ego makes no ethical value judgements. It is an extension of the id and is never independent of it. Where, the id may be considered, the organic part of man's personality, the ego becomes psychological part. The ego enjoys all the gratifications that it permits the id to enjoy, but it acts with intelligence in controlling, selecting and deciding what appetites will be satisfied and just how they are to be satisfied.

Super Ego:

The superego is the last to develop in Freud's trichotomized picture of the human personality. It is understood that Superego is internalized. It is within personality and not a set of governmental laws. The Superego is the ethical-moral arm of the personality. It is idealistic and not realistic. Perfection is its goal rather than pleasure. It makes the decision whether an activity is good or bad according to the standards of society which it accepts. Societal laws mean nothing to it unless it has accepted them and internalized them.

PSYCHOINDIVIDUAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL

Inferiority Principle

According to Adler, man is born with the feeling of incomplete and unfulfilled, with a deep sense of inferiority. Everything that lies before the newborn is better, bigger and more than competent to be. To a neonate, this state of affairs hardly makes any difference in his struggle for existence. Feeling inferior, he wishes to emulate the strengths and capacities of others. In few cases, child remains at the inferior level, unable to try anything new or reverts to an even more inferior role, but most human beings want to go beyond where they are, like a child who desires to be more complete than he is at any given mo-

ment in his early development. The moment he can see something bigger and better beyond where he is at the moment, he again feels inferior, unfulfilled and incomplete. The entire process starts again, a process that leads from inferiority to efforts for new attainments, to achievements of the new level, to recognition of a still higher level and the inevitable feeling of inferiority introduced at birth is what keeps man living through the ages. Biologically and psychologically he inherits the feeling of inferiority.

Superiority Principle

According to Adler, man simply wishes to be superior and that this superiority which grows out of feelings of being inadequate or inferior. Adler, continued to feel that wanting to be superior is a universal and timeless property of man's personality.

As per Adler, there are no separate drives or needs as those mentioned by Murray. There is only one drive and that is the desire for superiority, which Adler felt grows out of feelings of inferiority. The two principles are inseparable. It does not mean that one human is necessarily more gifted than another, but that each human is striving to be superior within himself and not necessarily in completion with other men, Adler pointed superiority in terms of *'Superiority over self'*.

Style of Life Principle

In order for man to achieve superiority out of his feelings of inferiority, it is necessary for him to conduct his life in a certain prescribed way. This Adler called the style of life. The style of life that each human being pursues is a combination of two things: his inner self driven and dictated direction of behaviour and the forces from his environment which aid, interfere or reshape the direction the inner self wish to take. The most important part of this two-way system is the inner self. A singular event may produce an entirely different reaction within the inner selves of two humans. The main feature is that behaviour is caused primarily within the self but always in counter play with the environment.

Creative Self Principle

Man is more than a product of his environment. Adler meant that the human animal creates a self-structure out of his inherited past, interprets the impressions he receives from his ongoing life, searches for new experiences to fulfil his desires for superiority and put these all together to create a self that is different from any other self and that describes this own peculiar style of life. The creative self is a step beyond style of life. The latter is reactive and mechanical. The creative self, is more than that. It is original, inventive and makes something that never existed before: a new personality. It creates a self. To Adler, term was very accurate in all its connotations.

Conscious Self Principle

Adler never discoursed on his belief that man is a conscious, aware animal, but his belief is evident through all his work. He felt that man is aware of everything he is doing and upon self-examination can deduce why he has acted in certain ways. Consciousness is the core of personality. The human animal is fully aware of what he is doing everyday, and nothing like the unconscious, preconscious or subconscious lurks beneath his personality ready to erupt at any moment.

Fictional Goals Principle

According to Adler, the past is tremendously important, since out of it grow man's style of life and his creative self, it is the future which shapes what man will do with his creative self at any given moment. The past is prologue, but the future is the scene Adler says *"The final goal alone can explain man's behaviour"*. Although man is motivated by organic needs for food, clothing and shelter, these basic needs become represented in fictional ways. In other words, the goal may be a fiction because it is fabricated as an ideal to strive for, it is removed from reality and will be attainable to the creative self striving for superiority.

Social Interest Principle

Adler expanded his theory in 1929 to proclaim that man is also socially interested. He reasoned that man is born with an interest in social-beings, it is a universal interest. Like all instincts, it needs a contact to bring into action. This contact with other human beings, Adler stated, in an automatic condition. Man has to be brought up by man just with, a human being is predisposed to be interested in like ap-

pearing human creatures. The interest is in the societal environment surrounding him; it is not yet social interest as later developed.

SELF-INTEGRATIVE – BIOSOCIAL

In his *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (1937), Allport produced history of the word personality out of the original Greek word *persona*. He used the writings of the Roman statesman, orator and author Cicero, who found four distinct meanings of *persona*:

- The external appearance but not the true self
- The characters or role someone plays in life
- The collection of highly individual qualities that enables one to live an adequate life
- The distinction and dignity with which one fulfils his role in life.

"Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment" (*Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*, 1937, p.48; changed slightly in *Pattern and Growth in Personality*, 1961, to "Characteristic Behaviour and thought", p.28)

The key phrases in Allport's definition are important for an understanding of his conception of the term personality:

- *Dynamic Organization*: Meaning that man's personality is more than a loose collection of behaviours, that is organized and further that is organized human is constantly evolving and changing in motivation and self-regulation.
- *Psychophysical Systems*: meaning that man is both brain body.
- *Determine*: "*Personality is something and does something*" and by for itself, which removes personality from being a mere play of others.
- *Unique*: Meaning that every human being is unique in time, place, person and adjustment quality and is unlike any others in these characteristics.
- *Adjustment to his environment*: "*Personality is a mode of survival*".

There is a difference between normal and abnormal human being. Allport was willing to admit borderline or a linear continuum in behaviour. He was also willing to admit a relative shifting from culture to culture in man's behaviour and some abnormal behaviour. However, he insisted that there is vast difference in the motivational structures, in the perceptual systems and in the behavioural process of normal and psychotic human beings. In 1937, he delineated some of the characteristics he felt normally behaving people possessed. In a sense, therefore, he was saying that the abnormal person or the psychotic has different behavioural processes (especially p.154 in *Patterns and Growth in Personality*). The process of going from normality to abnormality is not continuous.

Conclusion:

The paper surfaces different theories of Personality which outcast the sex offenders from the normal population. Although the nature of personalities have different levels and paradigms towards understanding the development of personality among an individual, but these itself serves the basic contemplation in studying sex offenders and further purporting in rehabilitation of them.

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