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Critically Analyze the biological theory of criminality

Introduction

Criminality is the behaviour that is against law. The person who commits crime, his behaviour is studied in biological terms. In biological theory, it was studied that whether a person/criminal is born-criminal or the society that made him criminal.

Cesare Lombroso was the founder of positivist school of thought. He claimed that not only free will but other factors are involved that are responsible for committing a crime. One of them is biological factors. He rejected the classical school of thought and wrote a book "Criminal Man".

In Biological theory, he explained the physical features that are responsible for committing a crime. Various theories explore the biological aspects of criminal behaviour. One of them are: Atavism, William Sheldon's somatotype, ^(physical approach) genetic approach and neuroscientific approach.

Lombroso's Atavism

Italian criminologist described criminals as atavistic people/people who were less developed, in his book "L'uomo delinquente" ("Criminal Man"). Criminals are primitive and genetically different from law-abiding citizens. Not

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only that, but they also look different compared to normal citizens. They shared a number of common physical attributes, such as sloping foreheads and receding chins, drooping eyelids, large ears, extra toes. They are ape-like.

For example, A murderer has drooping eyelids or a thief has extra toes is considered as criminal because they look different.

Lombrose argued that criminals were at more primitive stage of the evolution. They are unable to fit into contemporary society and prone to commit crime.

Sheldon Somotypes theory (1942) William proposed correlation between personality and somatotype (physique). He described three types of somatotype. Endomorph - whose body is heavy and rounded. They involve in fraud, property and financial crimes.

Mesomorph - are well developed people, having muscles. They are aggressive in nature. They escape easily after setting something on fire or after shooting fire. Sheldon noted that the vast majority of criminals were mesomorphs because of their appearance.

Ectomorphs - are thin people. They can't do anything.

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Genetic Approach:-

XYY "Super male" Syndrome:-

This theory explain criminal behaviours. XYY syndrome is a genetic condition in which a human male has an extra male (Y) chromosome. ~~This idea~~ The male having XYY chromosomes are expected to be more aggressive. When ~~the~~ XYY chromosome is studied then more male was found in prison having XYY (extra Y) chromosomes.

Neuroscientific Approach:-

To determine the criminal behaviour of individual, ones level of electroencephalograms (EEG) is measured. Low level of EEG irregularities indicate that an individual suffers from neurological deficits which in turn lead to poor impulse control and impaired judgment that might increase the risk of a person engaging in criminal behaviour.

A biological theory that is used to explain criminal behaviour is referred to as the autonomic nervous system (ANS) theory developed by Mednick. The theory is based on the assumption that individuals who inherit slow autonomic nervous systems are unable to control their aggressive behaviour. The ANS of human beings carry information from brain to the rest of the organs of the body. These connections

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factors:
• Back ground & nature
• direct effect of
physical + physiological
processes
behaviours

have impact on human mind (ANS) which leads to emotional disability. ~~Emotional~~ Emotional disability leads to is one of the causes of criminal behaviour.

Physiognomy (physical Approach) It is the study of facial features. Lombroso linked the physical facial feature with criminal identity. In 1880, Black people were put into the prison. Lombroso had seen ^{more} Black people there and labelled them as rapist. He argued that criminals could be identify by physical characteristics.

He further added that, physical shape of the head and face determined the "born criminal". ~~but~~ He measured the distance of the toes of criminals and non-criminals.

Modern days Neurological theories of Crime

There are several regions of the brain that criminologists and neurologists have focussed on in modern biological studies of crime. Chemicals in the brain known as neurotransmitters that influence thought behaviour and emotions.

For example, excessive level of dopamine may be related to aggressive and criminal behaviours and antipsychotic drugs that reduce dopamine may also be used to reduce aggression

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Conclusion

Biological theories of crime attempt to explain biological influences on criminal behaviour. Biological theorists assess the causation from the biological angle, looking for causes in neurology, genetics and physiology. On the other hand contemporary biological theories emphasize biosocial causes rather than strictly natural ones.