

Date: _____

Day: _____

Q Critically examine the biological theories of criminality.

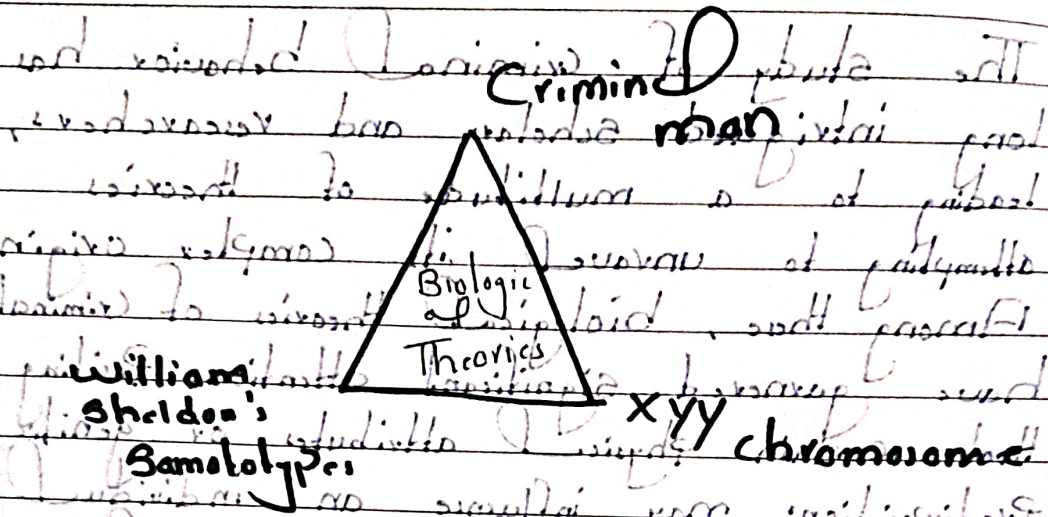
1, Introduction :-

The study of criminal behavior has long intrigued scholars and researchers, leading to a multitude of theories attempting to unravel its complex origins. Among these, biological theories of criminality have garnered significant attention, positing that certain physical attributes or genetic predispositions may influence an individual's criminal behavior. These biological theories include Cesare Lombroso's theory of the "criminal man", William Sheldon's somatotypes, and the xyy chromosome anomaly. These theories have both strengths and weaknesses. Some of their strengths include being highly deterministic in nature, having biological basis, and lacking predictive power. While their strengths include a focus on empirical observation and influence on the development of criminological thought, and broadening the scope of criminology.

2, Biological Theories of Criminality

- i) Cesare Lombroso's theory of the "criminal man"
- ii) William Sheldon's somatotypes
- iii) xyy chromosome anomaly

make
chart



William Sheldon's Somatotype

Cesare Lombroso's theory of the "Criminal Man"

Lombroso's famous book in 1880: "The Criminal Man" in which he expounded his theory of the "Atavistic Man".

He focused on anatomical, physiological, genetic, and abnormal characteristics within an individual.

He argued that the physical shape of the forehead and nose determined the "inferior criminal".

William Sheldon's Somatotype

William Sheldon used body measurement technique to connect body type with personality and outlined three basic body types.

i) **Endomorphs** : have heavy builds and are slow moving. They are known for lethargic behavior, rendering them unlikely to commit violent crimes.

ii) **Ectomorphs** : are tall thin, intelligent and more intellectual than other types. These types are the least likely to commit crime.

iii) **Mesomorphs** : have well-developed muscles and an athletic appearance. They are active, aggressive and sometimes violent, and are most likely to become criminals.

iii) XYY Chromosome Anomaly

Humans have 23 pairs of chromosomes. The last pair determines gender.

- Male: XY pair
- Female: XX pair

A study of Scottish prisoners found that a small number had an XYY chromosome. These were identified as potentially violent and labelled "Supermaleness".

3, Critical Examination of the Theories of Criminality

→ Flaws in these ^{Biological} Theories:

3a) These theories ignore external factors which make them highly deterministic.

Biological theories suggest that criminal behavior is largely predetermined by biological factors. In his theory Lombroso argued that certain physical characteristics such as asymmetrical face, excessive length of arms, and twisted nose etc determine the born criminal known as Atavistic man whereas Sheldon argues that a certain body type is linked with criminality. This deterministic view oversimplifies the complex interplay of social & environmental, and

Psychological ^{and} factors that contribute to criminal behavior. Therefore, such approach make these theories highly deterministic. There is no hard evidence to prove that

3b) Biological Theories have methodological weaknesses that generalize criminal behavior.

Biological Theories' methodology have been criticized for its subjective and

unscientific nature. For example, Lombroso's Sample Primarily consisted of incarcerated individuals, and Sheldon's body types is based on subjective observations rather than rigorous scientific methods. ^{and} In the ^{case of the} XYY chromosome anomaly, a small number of Scottish prisoners were examined. This leads to a biased sample that may not accurately represent the general population. So these theories lack solid empirical foundation.

3c, Stigmatization of certain physical characteristics lead to discrimination

Certain physical characteristics, genetics, and body types are predisposed to criminal behaviour; can lead to stigmatization and discrimination against those who possess these variations. Such stigma can have harmful consequences, including social ostracism, employment discrimination, and denial of opportunities without any basis in scientific evidence.

3d, These theories lack predictive power

Biological theories have limited predictive power in identifying individuals who are likely engaged in criminal behavior.

While the proponents of these theories claimed that certain features, genetic variables and certain body type could serve as markers for criminality, subsequent researches have failed to support these assertions. Therefore, these theories are not credible in terms of predicting criminal behaviour.

→ Strengths of Biological Theories

3e, Biological theories shifted the focus from moral and legalistic explanations of crime to empirical.

The proponents of these theories shifted the focus of criminal inquiry from moral and legalistic explanations of crime to scientific and empirical. By studying genes and physiology, these theorists laid the groundwork for the development of positivist criminology. Therefore, the reasoning of criminal behaviour has shifted from abstract to scientific.

3f, Biological theories exerted a significant influence on the development of criminological thought.

These theories exerted a significant influence on the development of criminological thought. It sparked a debate

stimulated further research, and prompted scholars to critically evaluate biological, psychological and social factors underlying criminal behavior. So, it has exerted significant influence.

3c) They have broadened the scope of criminological inquiry beyond social and environmental factors.

The theories of Cesare Lombroso, William Sheldon and the XYY chromosome theory, collectively broadened the scope of criminological inquiry beyond social and environmental factors. Lombroso's emphasis on biological determinism encouraged scholars to explore the physiological basis of criminal behavior. Similarly, Sheldon's body type prompted investigation into the potential correlation between physical characteristics and personality traits.

The XYY chromosome theory sparked interest in genetic influences. Thus, these theories have transcended social and environmental factors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the theories of Cesare Lombroso, William Sheldon and XYY chromosome expanded the horizons of ~~the~~ criminological inquiry by exploring physiological, biological and genetic factors in relation with criminal behaviour, they have faced significant criticisms and scepticism.

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add charts and flow diagrams