

## Prodromal Psychopathy

Although I greatly enjoy Otto Kernberg's work and find it useful in all sorts of ways, Greg, I am less sanguine about his concept of criminal behavior (from his contribution to Millon et. al.'s work, as well as a talk he gave at BPSI some years back). Internalization never stops nor is the "actor" the only author of the play. While I'm sure that attachment crystallizes in the personality (marvelous analogy to IQ, but not separate from it no matter what is currently thought about David Rapaport's work), it doesn't determine by itself the career criminal. Few would argue that Oscar Wilde or Laing or Foucault or any of our really unruly thinkers had normal attachments, but the chaos of life and its expression across all levels of human systems produces both wondrous and terrible things without great regard for our attempts to tame it or control it. Frick's work certainly seems important in the way that Hare's is. Tyler

From: Greg Shannon <gregshannon64@HOTMAIL.COM> Reply-To: law and psychology discussion list <PSYLAW-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU> To: PSYLAW-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU Subject: prodromal psychopathy Date: Wed, 30 Mar 2005 00:53:02 -0500

Aloha Dr. McIntyre,

Frick is right; and (IMHO) has been on the right track for years. Byron Egeland at U Minnesota has a longitudinal study from the 70's...subjects are now almost 30 y.o. Last I heard, he had arrest records up to age 21, and continuing to follow/collect data. that will be good stuff...

Rather than "fledgling psychopaths", I would like to suggest the term "prodromal psychopathy", to describe the children who do not yet meet the criteria for psychopathy.

Otto Kernberg has a useful concept concerning personality structure and etiology. One might argue that the formation of the personality structure it is a process underlying Attachment; or personality is the crystallization of attachment, as crystallized intelligence might be viewed as a function of experience. Temperament was found not to influence the quality of infant attachment, but rather the expression of the attachment (the cite escapes me-available on request). The internal working model of the external environment is created by the infant. The ambiance of this internal model influences the creation of hardwiring during the fastest growth period of the human brain. Just as other personality disorders that arise in childhood, and persist across the decades, psychopathy historically has been essentially intractable to treatment. Most Conduct Disorder children will grow up to become responsible adults. Some who did not squander their educational opportunities will become policemen, lawyers, doctors and psychologists. While most psychopaths will meet the criteria of APD, most APD will not meet the criteria of psychopathy. There is a difference. The CD children that grow up to be APD are different from the CD children who grow up to be psychopaths. A growing body of literature is looking at the Callous/Unemotional

(CU) child and how he is different from the Impulsive/Conduct Problem (I/CP) child (Frick, et al, 1994). There appear to be neurological and biological differences; galvanic skin response, language processing, and response preservation among others. These are analogous to the features and studies that are done on adult psychopath and non-psychopath populations. As mentioned here on this list recently, discerning adolescent developmental phases from personality disorder is difficult for clinicians, but there is a difference.

“...recent developments indicate that the PLC: YV has much the same factor structure as the PCL-R” (Hare, 2003, p. 80).

Frick, P.J., O'Brien, B.S., Wootton, J.M., & McBurnett, K. (1994). Psychopathy and conduct problems in children. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 103 (4), 700-707.

Forth, A.E., Kosson, D., & Hare, R.D. (in press/2003). Hare Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL: YV). Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems.

Hare, R.D. (2003) Hare psychopathy checklist-revised, 2nd Edition, technical manual. Toronto Ontario: Multi-Health Systems.

Best wishes, Greg Shannon

From: Robert McIntyre <robert.mcintyre4@GTE.NET> Reply-To: law and psychology discussion list <PSYLAW-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU> To: PSYLAW-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU Subject: Re: APA General Counsel's response to Justice Scalia's - personality (not Scalia Date: Tue, 29 Mar 2005 22:14:31 -0700

So Joe, pertinent to your question but possibly not exactly on point, here's what I recently learned at forensic psychology school.

During his day long presentation titled Developmental Pathways to Severe Antisocial & Aggressive Behavior at AAFP-LaJolla on 3-4-05, University of New Orleans developmental psychologist, Paul Frick, presented his research and the related research of others on this topic. Toward the end of the day the inevitable question was raised, i.e., does Frick et al's research establish how psychopaths develop from infancy to adulthood?

Frick's answer was: NO.

Frick then went on to say that the links between factors identified as contributing to child / adolescent antisocial conduct and adult psychopathy are only conceptual, and that to his knowledge the studies have yet to be completed with respect to actually following the research cohorts into adulthood and finding out if these same factors contributing to childhood and adolescent antisocial behavior also result in adult

psychopathy.  
Bob

Robert McIntyre, Ph.D., Boulder, CO

----- Original Message ----- From: "Joe W Dixon" <jwdixon@NC.RR.COM> To: <PSYLA-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU> Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2005 7:46 PM Subject: Re: APA General Counsel's response to Justice Scalia's - personality (not Scalia

Tyler and Joel,

Astute points well made, as usual. How do you see the work of R. Hare, and his idea that psychopaths are indeed born (biogenetic)? If true, then perhaps the adaptation of the PCL-R for kids, PCL-YV, either is accurate in identifying these personality types, or with more work, could be fine tuned for better discriminate ability.

IOW, given the publication of the PCL-YV, is that not a statement that we already posses the technology to accurately ID psychopathic persons while they are adolescents? If the latter is true, I feel better about my impressions rendered that some of the little folks I have examined are indeed "bad seeds."

Anyone herein used the PCL-YV and want to venture an opinion on it? Tnx.

Best, Joe

-----Original Message----- From: law and psychology discussion list [mailto:PSYLA-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU] On Behalf Of Tyler Carpenter Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2005 6:15 AM To: PSYLA-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU Subject: Re: APA General Counsel's response to Justice Scalia's - personality (not Scalia

Although it has been some time since I followed personality research more closely, it seems to me that what we refer to as personality is an amalgam of a variety of things and that it not only grows out of temperament and genetics - meaning aspects likely to be turned "on" and "off" by environment (e.g., extraversion has the greatest heritability of what was study in the Minnesota Twin studies if I remember correctly), but famously expresses itself across or only in certain contexts (remember the old trait vs. context debates of the 70s). When I think about the chronic criminals I work with this propensity to being problematic and violent often is modulated by h/o trauma, TBI, prison/anti-social subculture, substance abuse, hyperactivity/learning disabilities, absence of graduated structured environments, etc.

One way of thinking about how dynamic vs. static factors play into the equation is by considering how a static factor like age of or number of crimes before a certain age, raises the likelihood that a person had correlated birth complications and separation from his/her primary caregiver at an early age (increasing likelihood of violent acting out) and hence less likely to have education, socio-economic resources, education (e.g., "protective factors"). When the dice is loaded this way it increases/decreases the probability that a person has co-morbid dynamic factors like substance abuse, etc. Laub and Sampson point out in "Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70" (2003). Harvard U. Press, (p.16) the continuity of offending from childhood to adolescence and adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood "with the earlier the onset of criminal activity, the longer the the criminal career" is one of the fundamentals that "any reasonable theory of persistence and desistance from crime must address".

It seems to me that what we have in psychopathy is a constellation of factors which influence the trajectory toward crime and when murder is committed at an early age there are often a confluence of these factors associated with persistent offending. The death penalty in this context reflects the social impulse to eliminate what is probably persistent (criminality) and what we in the broad sense have not been famous for successfully treating. A sad, but thoughtful and somewhat optimistic look at the life of a young girl who killed at an early age, was placed in the English criminal justice system, and seems to have emerged pretty well (has a child) is "Cries Unheard: The Story of Mary Bell" by the reporter Gita Sereny (think I got that right). Tyler

From: JoeltheD@AOL.COM Reply-To: law and psychology discussion list <PSYLAW-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU> To: PSYLAW-L@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU Subject: Re: APA General Counsel's response to Justice Scalia's Date: Mon, 28 Mar 2005 23:50:47 EST

In a message dated 3/28/2005 4:03:51 PM US Mountain Standard Time, jwdixon@NC.RR.COM writes: Me, too, regards multiple decades of clinical dx and tx experience with adolescents and adults of the criminal persuasion.

I am intrigued by what you say (above). What of the literature, not to mention my experiences, that argues to the contrary of your opinion, i.e., that personality traits are largely formed by late childhood; and, also of considerable importance, the more recent data suggesting for a bio-genetic basis for personality per se? If the later is true, then genotypic personality traits are present at birth, and arguably manifest phenotypically certainly by late childhood and early adolescence. Bear in mind that late childhood and adolescence per se are rather new conventions appearing in modern society in only the past century or so.

This is interesting, and I look forward to your comments. Thanks.

Joe This is an interesting question, And there are lots of people who know more about personality research than I do, so I hope that they will chime in. The research to which I

referred (Steinberg, Cauffman, Steiner, Elliot, etc.) is quite clear in asserting that many, many kids act like psychopaths during developmental stages, largely determined by their peer influences. Some of these kids were good kids and some of them will turn out to be good adults. The question is our ability to identify which is which.

As for the notion that personality is formed quite early, I think that lots of kids act very differently during adolescence than they did before and/or after, so it is possible that both points of view could be correct.

I must admit, despite my respect for the work of Adele Forth, her effort to identify "fledgling psychopaths" scares me. While it is true that a small number of kids account for a large number of offenses, only some of them carry these behaviors into adulthood, and again there is no way that I know of to know which are which.

As for the bio-genetic bases for behavior and personality, it's a shame that Carl Osbourn is no longer on the list. He taught me a lot about this issue on the list. In response to your question, I guess I would say that even if we are variably loaded for the risk of violent or criminal behavior due to our neurological, biological, or genetic make-up, that still doesn't mean that psychologists have the ability to assess such biological loading. (I hope that made sense.)

Finally, even if we are differentially loaded for risk biologically, it does not mean that lifestyle, parenting, peer influence, etc. will not affect which of us manifest the "loaded" trait. Generally, I believe that nature and nurture are independently and interactively influential in determining the course of our lives, but that debate won't end any time soon.

Thanks. Those were very good questions.

Joel

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