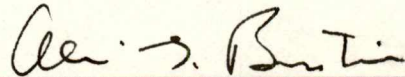


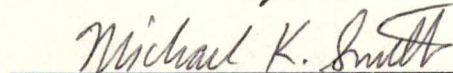
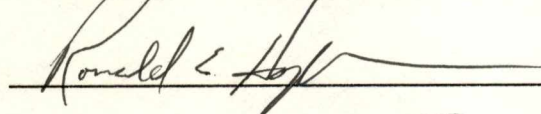
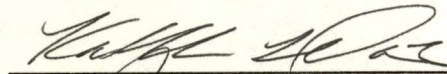
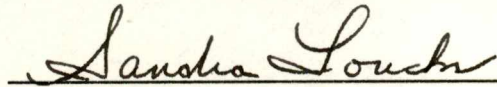
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Julie Shaing entitled "A Preliminary Rorschach Investigation of Psychological Conflict and Interpersonal Experience in Felons Committing Crimes Against People and Against Property." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Psychology.

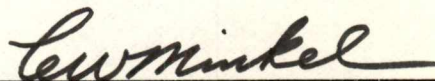


Alvin G. Burstein
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Vice Provost and
Dean of The Graduate School

A PRELIMINARY RORSCHACH INVESTIGATION
OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICT AND INTERPERSONAL EXPERIENCE
IN FELONS COMMITTING CRIMES
AGAINST PEOPLE AND AGAINST PROPERTY

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Julie Shaing

August 1992

To Dr. Al Burstein and Dr. Jim Murray
for whom no words can fully express
my deepest gratitude

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate differences in measures of psychological conflict and interpersonal experience between felons committing crimes against people and against property. The instrument used was Rorschach's test. The variables compared were psychosexual drive expressions and motivational valuation as measured by the Burstein-Loucks comprehensive Rorschach scoring system (1989). Results demonstrated a significant difference in psychosexual drive conflict and benevolent interpersonal expectations between the groups. There was no significant difference between the groups with respect to malevolent expectations. The results demonstrating felons committing crimes against people display a higher amount of psychological conflict and benevolent interpersonal experiences suggest a lack of psychological development. The results are discussed in terms of the fixation/regression model of mental development (Fenichel, 1945) and the concept of "splitting" (Kernberg, 1975).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that the number of criminal offenses increased 20.5% between 1978 and 1987. For every 100,000 inhabitants, reports of violent crime (i.e., murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) rose from 498 incidents in 1978 to 610 in 1987, and property crime (i.e., burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson) rose from 4,643 incidents in 1978 to 4,940 in 1987 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1989). The Department of Justice reported that based on self-report by 447,185 inmates in 1986, 81.5% were recidivists, i.e., individuals previously been sentenced to probation or incarceration (Jamieson & Flanagan, 1989). Laws for mandatory sentencing and stricter parole standards have been passed in an attempt to control the growing rates of crime and recidivism. An inevitable consequence is prison overcrowding. The 1989 Census indicated that there was a 56% prison overcrowding nationwide in that year (Jennings, 1989).

Alternatives to prison programs have emerged in recent years as a means of dealing with this distressing problem. Research in the behavioral and social sciences has aimed at understanding the nature of criminal behaviors and

designing helpful programs. Psychologists have been motivated to understand the causes of crimes at the person level because crimes are committed by people. Empirical studies in psychology have attempted to discover predisposing factors that may explain whether an individual will drift into crime and remain a criminal. Psychologists view criminal conduct and antisocial behavior as a consequence of genetic and environmental interactions, but research has mainly focused on the identification of crime-prone individuals.

Psychological research in criminality has focused on genetic, personality, and constitutional factors. Findings from studies of twins (Christiansen, 1977; Loehlin & Nichols, 1976) and adopted children (Crowe, 1972; Hutchings & Mednick, 1977; Schulsinger, 1977) have demonstrated a predominant genetic influence on the predisposition to criminality and suggested that a "bird of a feather" hypothesis of delinquency may not be fully warranted.

Personality researchers have explored the differences in ability and temperament between offenders and nonoffenders. Specifically, they studied intelligence, psychoticism (i.e., emotional independence), neuroticism (i.e., emotional instability), and extraversion (Eysenck, 1977). Empirical research on large-scale data demonstrated that not only a negative correlation between IQ and

delinquency exists but it remains after partialling out effects of socioeconomic status (McGarvey, Gabrielli, Bentler, & Mednick, 1981; Moffitt, Gabrielli, Mednick, & Schulsinger, 1981). Studies across ages (Allsopp & Feldman, 1974; Rushton & Chrisjohn, 1981) and across cultures (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1976; Narayanan & Mani, 1977) have suggested high psychoticism, neuroticism, and extraversion in delinquent population.

Constitutional theories of criminality explained criminal conduct in terms of physique or body build (Glueck & Glueck, 1956; Hartl, Monnelli, & Eldekin, 1982; Seltzer, 1951) or stigmata or minor physical anomalies (Masters & Greaves, 1967; Paulhus & Martin, 1986). These theories have been largely influenced by Lombroso, who proposed that at least one third of offenders to be born criminals who resemble "savage man" and possess at least five "degenerative symptoms" (Lombroso, 1917).

As the above review suggests, psychological research in criminality has mainly concentrated on the identification of specific factors that isolate offenders from nonoffenders. This study takes a different approach and is based on a different rationale. In order to decrease crime rates, recidivism, and prison overcrowding, perhaps a focus on the differences between offenders and nonoffenders is important but insufficient. Rather, an

exploration of the psychological make-up of felons committing different types of crime is called for at the present time.

A fundamental psychoanalytic assumption is that perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors are organized by drives as well as by the demands of external reality. An individual repeatedly reconfirms his or her internal world, which is based on his or her past significant relationships, by projecting it onto the current external reality in order to fulfill specific needs and wishes as well as to confirm specific interpersonal expectations. Based on this assumption, felons committing different crimes may have different interpersonal experiences and may thus be motivated by different needs. Consequently, efforts to rehabilitate and return felons to mainstream society need to be tailored to the specific needs of different types of felons. These efforts may be successful with an exploration of the different internal realities and interpersonal expectations of felons committing different crimes.

This study will explore the quantity of internal conflict and the quality of fantasy life in criminals who committed crimes against people and against property respectively. The instrument used is Rorschach's test. An individual's response to each Rorschach card is determined

by his or her perception of the card, which is largely dependent on the need to reconfirm his or her internal world, the physical properties of each card, and the individual's perception of what is demanded of him or her in that situation (Holt, 1970). Consequently, Rorschach responses offer an insight into an individual's desires and/or fears, the mechanisms as well as their effectiveness which the individual uses to modulate impulses and cope with external demands, and his or her early emotional ties with significant others. Rorschach responses of the two groups of criminals should provide an avenue of understanding the respective nature of the past relationships and thus the corresponding pattern of their current functioning. It is hoped that knowing this will contribute to effective rehabilitation programs for both types of felons as well as to other forms of social planning relevant to control, recidivism, and crime rates.

CHAPTER 2

PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE ON CRIMINALITY

Psychodynamic understanding of criminal behavior has undergone a series of changes which reflects the changes in psychoanalytic thinking in general. Traditional psychoanalytic theory, as formulated by Sigmund Freud, uses inner, dynamic forces to account for human behavior and stresses the impact of psychosexual development during childhood on later adult functioning. Contemporary psychoanalytic views, including modern object relations theory, have shifted to a more phenomenological interest in experiential matters, such as "self- and object representations" (Mayman, 1967) during the first three years of life (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975), and developed a focus on the internalization of interpersonal relations (Kernberg, 1976).

Freud said little about criminals initially. He came to assert that the motive for some criminals is a very powerful unresolved Oedipal guilt that can be assuaged only through a provocation of punishment (Freud, 1946). This "unconscious sense of guilt" concept was stressed by Glover (1960) who referred to it as "the key to all problems of delinquency." Glover explained criminal behaviors partially in terms of the defensive mechanism of projection

of guilt. He stated that the criminals unconsciously project on the environment their need to be punished. That is to say, instead of deserving punishment themselves, they become the punishers. Criminal behaviors are punishment they inflict on others. This viewpoint later led to the thinking that crime results from a need to assert one's sexuality and to compensate for a precarious sexual identity (Freeman & Savastano, 1970; Lewis & Yarnell, 1951).

Other psychoanalytic theorists explained criminal behaviors in terms of father unavailability (Andry, 1960; Cortes & Gatti, 1972; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951; Newman & Denman 1970). Kardiner and Ovesey's (1951) analysis of black families demonstrated that in families where fathers are absent, sons frequently are found to be engaged in aggressive behaviors as a means of acting out the rage of their frustrated mothers. Andry (1960), Newman and Denman (1970), and Cortes and Gatti (1972), on the other hand, postulated that in cases where fathers are physically and/or emotionally unavailable, the minimal amount of castration anxiety, limited control, as well as lack of model for identification in males lead to unresolved Oedipus complex, which in turn result in superego lacunae. Johnson (1949) also used superego lacunae to explain the selective deficits in superego functioning of most

criminals. She found that the individual's superego deficits often correspond with the parents' and that the latter gain vicarious satisfaction from the individual's acting out their own unconscious antisocial impulses.

These aforementioned explanations of criminality assumed that the criminal individual has traversed the earlier developmental stages unscathed and could only provide explanations for limited criminal behaviors that reflect unresolved Oedipal guilt, a need for sexual identity assertion, or superego lacunae. Bowlby's (1951) theory of maternal deprivation, on the other hand, offered a perspective that traced the origin of criminality to traumatization in earlier development. He postulated that separation from and rejection by the mother, or permanent mother substitute, in the first three or four years of life accounts for many cases of delinquency. The link between deprivation and crime is provided by the assertion that deprivation powerfully damages the ability to form affectionate relationships with others, who may then be damaged without remorse.

Contemporary object relational theorists have traced the origin of criminality to an even earlier stage and offered an explanation for the inordinate amount of instinctual aggression that is often demonstrated by a criminal each time he or she commits a crime.

Consequently, this perspective has been able to better explain the causes for many more criminal behaviors than previously stated ones. Mahler's contributions (Mahler, 1968, 1971; Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975) argued that in normal development an inevitable resurgence of aggression occurs during the rapprochement subphase of the separation-individuation process when the child is between the age of 15-24 months. During this stage the toddler becomes aware of his or her separateness and often strives for separation, but at the same time experiences a growing need to share his or her new discoveries and skills with the mother and wishes for her love. When the mother successfully empathizes with the toddler's ambivalence, continues to provide libidinal supplies, while encourages the striving toward separation, the child gradually develops the capacity to handle mourning and eventually achieves individuation.

Masterson (1972) contended that the mother, during the rapprochement subphase, may be gratified by the child's symbiotic involvement and is anxious about the child's increased ambivalence, aggression, and autonomy. The mother is therefore likely to withdraw her libidinal availability each time she experiences a threat from the child's assertion for separation. The child is caught in a dilemma wherein regression toward dependency is encouraged

and efforts toward independence are punished (Masterson & Rinsley, 1975). An inevitable consequence is "a surplus of aggression" in the child as a means of fending off maternal impingement and engulfment as well as protecting a fragile sense of pseudoautonomy (Kernberg, 1975).

Kernberg (1967) categorized these individuals who have not successfully traversed the rapprochement subphase in the "borderline level of personality organization." Certainly not every individual who has unsuccessfully traversed this developmental stage becomes a criminal. In fact, any character style can be organized at the borderline level of functioning (Sugarman, 1980), although certain personality disorders are particularly prone to this level of organization (Guntrip, 1968; Kernberg, 1967, 1970; Kohut, 1971; Sugarman, 1979). Kernberg (1975) explicitly referred to the psychopath as a severe variant of the narcissistic personality disorder that functions at the borderline level.

Kernberg (1967, 1975) delineated four major areas of disturbance which are often manifested by individuals that function at the borderline level of personality organization. They demonstrate (1) a general weakening of ego functions, which may take the form of low tolerance for anxiety or occasional misinterpretation of external reality; (2) a shift toward primary process modes of

thinking on projective tests such that "drives dominate cognition" (Holt, 1970), specifically, a manifestation of primitive aggression; (3) primitive defensive maneuvers of which "splitting," i.e., an active keeping apart the affectively polarized self- and other representation, is primary; and (4) a particular form of internalized object relations in which others are considered as existing only to meet the needs and wishes of the individuals.

Depending on the character style in question, the expressions of these disturbances vary. Criminal individuals, similar to others who function at the borderline level, are generally capable of molding themselves to environmental cues (Deutch, 1942) and developing "false selves" (Winnicott, 1965), and are thus able to behave in a socially appropriate and reality-oriented manner in familiar and predictable situations. This explains why it is often impossible to predict who may commit a crime before the fact as well as it is bewildering to discover his or her identity after the fact. However, when criminal individuals attempt to draw upon internal cues to manage an affect-laden or ambiguous situation, the difficulty to integrate negative and positive emotional experiences as well as thoughts and affects compels them to temporarily distort or misconstrue external reality and renders them to fluctuate between the experience of a

helpless victim and an omnipotent destroyer. Individuals who are previously considered as benevolent, supportive, and nurturant may now be experienced as malevolent, engulfing, and attacking. The criminal individual finds no other solution but to ruthlessly and exploitatively aggress against the attacker or the potential attacker in order to revenge or escape from the experience of victimization.

Psychoanalytic theorists do not converge in their explanations of criminality. This is at least in part due to a lack of thorough empirical investigation. It is reasonable to infer that the common thread among psychoanalytic theories of criminality is that felons demonstrate a defective relationship with society. Based on our understanding of psychoanalytic thinking, an individual's good relationship to society should be a function of the capacity for favorable interpersonal relationships. This latter is largely dependent upon the neutralization of originally instinctual behaviors, the resolution of psychological conflicts, and positive experiences with early objects.

It is argued that felons' limited capacity to relate to other individuals has its origin in unresolved psychological conflicts, which are rooted in early psychosexual development. Furthermore, felons that attack humans may demonstrate a higher amount of psychological

conflicts and a more impaired capacity to relate to others than those that commit crimes against property.

Rorschach's test allows us to empirically investigate these assumptions by considering the variables of psychosexual conflict characteristics and motivational valuation.

Psychosexual conflict characteristics on Rorschach's test are inferred from the presence of psychosexually relevant material in Rorschach responses. A PD¹ (psychosexual drive) score is assigned to each response that contains oral, anal, or phallic content. In accordance with the detailed scoring rules, examples of responses that contain oral, anal, and phallic content include womb or vampire, feces or explosions, and penis or ugly hags, respectively (Burstein & Loucks, 1989).

Motivational valuation is an index of an individual's qualitative conceptualization of his or her environment and is assigned to every Rorschach response. A response that suggests the presence of a welcoming, pleasant, or constructive interpersonally oriented fantasy is scored as

¹See Rorschach's test: Scoring and interpretation (Burstein & Loucks, 1989, pp. 56-59) for a detailed description of the scoring.

B.² In accordance with the detailed scoring rules, an example is a child praying. A response that suggests the presence of a threatening, painful, or destructive interpersonally oriented fantasy is scored as M.² In accordance with the detailed scoring rules, an example is two women gossiping. A response that suggests the presence of a neutral, indeterminate, or mixed interpersonally oriented fantasy is scored as N.² In accordance with the detailed scoring rules, an example is two persons talking. Correspondingly, a score of (B),² (M),² or (N)² is assigned to a response that suggests the presence of benevolent, malevolent, or neutral fantasy in the noninterpersonal sphere. In accordance with the detailed scoring rules, examples include a rainbow, a monster, or a spaceship, respectively (Burstein & Loucks, 1989).

In summary, the aim of this study is twofold: (1) to investigate the hypothesis that different criminal behaviors reflect different capacities to control or modulate the expressions of drives, and (2) to investigate the hypothesis that different choices of victim in criminal behavior express corresponding differences in interpersonal expectations of the criminals.

²See Rorschach's test: Scoring and interpretation (Burstein & Loucks, 1989, pp. 52-55) for a detailed description of the scoring.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Participants

Subjects were 80 male felons referred for psychological evaluation to assess their eligibility for alternatives to prison programs. The current study consisted of a retrospective review of the eighty evaluations. Disposition regarding each subject's future had been determined at the time of this study. Therefore, the results would not in any way affect their future. Moreover, each subject was each assigned a number and only this investigator had access to their identity. Lastly, under no circumstances shall the identity of any subject be revealed in conjunction with the report of the study.

Subjects were equally divided into two groups depending on the nature of their crime. The first group consisted of 5 blacks and 35 whites, between the ages of 21-59, who committed crimes against people. The second group consisted of 7 blacks and 33 whites, between the ages of 19-55, who committed crimes against property.

Crimes against people included assault, aggravated kidnapping, armed robbery, incest of minor, molestation, rape, sexual battery, and second degree murder. Crimes against property included arson, breaking and entering,

burglary, concealing stolen property, forgery, petit and/or grand larceny, possession of marijuana and/or cocaine, and selling and/or delivering marijuana and/or cocaine. Any subject who had a record of crimes against people was considered in the first group, irrespective of the crime committed at the time of the study. Subjects with only drug-related charges were considered in the second group. It is assumed that they were more likely to steal than kill for drugs if they had not committed a crime against people by the time of the evaluation.

Instrument

Description. Rorschach's test consists of 10 inkblot cards. It was developed by Herman Rorschach in 1922 as a psychodiagnostic technique to determine the quality of cognition and perception in different personality types. Rorschach's test can provide a rich information base of an individual's psychological experience, such as interpersonal expectations, imaginal qualities, cognitive complexity, coping styles, and characteristics of psychosexual drive content. Moreover, attempts at standardization in administration and scoring systems as well as psychometric evaluation of their reliability and

validity have allowed the development of norms for all age groups. Understandably, the Rorschach has continued to be widely used for clinical as well as research purposes.

Administration. Administration of Rorschach's test was based on the comprehensive scoring system formulated by Burstein and Loucks (1989). The instructions consist of two stages. In the free association stage, each subject is asked to report what each card looks like to him. The subject is encouraged to take as much time as needed as well as to give more than one response on each card. After the subject has responded to all ten cards, the inquiry stage begins. The subject is presented with each of the ten cards a second time. The subject is now asked to state what about the card brought a particular response to mind.

Scoring. The scoring system used was the Burstein-Loucks system, which is based on psychoanalytic theory. It was developed to resolve the shortcomings and inconsistencies present in but overlooked by major scoring systems such as Exner's, Beck's, Piotrowski's, Klopfer's, and Rapaport-Schafer's. It was also developed to provide an exploration of a spectrum of personality dimensions rather than an isolated examination of independent characteristics (Burstein & Loucks, 1989).

A four-step scoring process was used in order to ensure the reliability of the scores. All records were first scored by this investigator and then double scored by an individual who is familiar with the Burstein-Loucks system. Any discrepancy between the two scorings was then reconciled by a third individual, who is equally experienced with the system. Finally, the discrepancies between the reconciler and this investigator were brought to the first author of the system and a final decision was made.

The following Rorschach scores were considered. PD%, psychosexual drive percent, is the total number of responses that contain the expression of oral, anal, and/or phallic drive divided by R, the total number of responses of the record. M%, explicitly malevolent motivational valuation percent, is the total number of responses that reflect the presence of a conscious malevolent interpersonally oriented fantasy divided by R. (M)%, implicitly malevolent motivational valuation percent, is the total number of responses that suggest the presence of a unconscious malevolent valuation of the noninterpersonal world divided by R. B%, explicitly benevolent motivational valuation percent, is the total number of responses that reflect the presence of a conscious benevolent interpersonally oriented fantasy divided by R. (B)%,

implicitly benevolent motivational valuation percent, is the total number of responses that suggest the presence of a unconscious benevolent valuation of the noninterpersonal world divided by R.

Statistical Procedure

The statistical procedure used was the one-tailed Mann-Whitney Sums of Ranks test, given the nonnormality of the data distributions. The independent variable was the type of crime committed, which was divided into crimes against people and crimes against property. The dependent variables were psychosexual drive expressions and motivational valuations, which are both operationally defined according to Burstein-Loucks scoring system (1989).

Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis I. There will be a relationship between the type of crime committed and the expression of psychosexual drives. In particular, individuals who committed crimes against people will demonstrate a significantly higher number of oral, anal, and phallic responses and thus a higher PD% on Rorschach's test than those committed crimes against property.

Hypothesis II. There will be a relationship between the type of crime committed and the qualities of interpersonal expectations. In particular, individuals who committed crimes against people will demonstrate a significantly higher number of malevolent motivational valuation scores and a significantly lower number of benevolent motivational valuation scores on Rorschach's test than those committed crimes against property.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The hypotheses of this study, concerning expected differences between felons committing crimes against people and against property, were investigated by computing the sums of ranks of their scores on the dependent variables. Table 1 contains the mean, standard deviations, medians, and results of one-tailed Mann-Whitney U tests for the dependent variables.

The first hypothesis predicting that felons committing crimes against people would have a higher number of oral, anal, and phallic responses and thus a higher PD% was supported. A one-tailed Mann-Whitney Sums of Ranks test indicated that the difference in psychosexual drive percent was significant below the .035 level. This supported the hypothesis that felons who committed crimes against people experienced more psychological conflict than those committed crimes against property.

The second hypothesis predicting that there would be a difference in the quality of interpersonal expectation was only partially supported and in an unexpected fashion. Mann-Whitney Sums of Ranks tests indicated that the groups did not differ with respect to conscious malevolent expectations [M%], unconscious benevolent expectations

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Medians, and Results of
Mann-Whitney Sums of Ranks Tests of Dependent Variables
for Felons Committing Different Types of Crime

	Felons, Crimes Against Property			Felons, Crimes Against People			
	Mean	SD	Median	Mean	SD	Median	z
PD%	12.79	14.77	9.09	16.92	14.75	14.29	-1.8595*
B%	3.14	6.78	.00	5.93	7.02	4.72	-2.3804**
M%	5.86	8.24	.00	6.16	8.35	4.26	- .3755
(B)%	19.52	10.53	19.68	18.55	10.03	18.18	- .4526
(M)%	40.73	17.16	36.93	37.78	16.01	36.04	- .7558

*p < .035

**p < .01

[(B)%], and unconscious malevolent expectations [(M)%]. A one-tailed Mann-Whitney test indicated that the difference in conscious benevolent expectations [B%] was significant below the .01 level. Surprisingly, however, felons committing crimes against people demonstrated a more, not less, conscious benevolent interpersonal fantasy life than those committing crimes against property.

Post hoc statistical analyses were conducted as a direct consequence of this paradoxical finding. An explicit motivational valuation score is given each time a response alludes to human movement and/or human emotion (Burstein & Loucks, 1989). Mann-Whitney Sums of Ranks tests were conducted to determine differences between the groups with respect to the social appropriateness of human movement and human emotion responses. These results can only be interpreted with caution given the number of statistical analyses conducted. Two-tailed Mann-Whitney tests indicated that there was no difference with respect to the social appropriateness of human movement responses. However, felons who committed crimes against people expressed a higher quantity of conventional human emotion responses than their counterpart (see Table 2).

A series of additional scores reflecting social appropriateness and conventionality were investigated at this point: popular responses, proportion of socially

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Medians, and Results of
Mann-Whitney Sums of Ranks Tests of Socially Appropriate Human
Emotion and Human Movement Rorschach Responses for Felons
Committing Different Types of Crime

	Felons, Crimes Against Property			Felons, Crimes Against People			z
	Mean	SD	Median	Mean	SD	Median	
HE+%	.38	1.67	.00	1.84	4.22	.00	-2.0097*
HM+%	9.37	11.03	7.14	10.06	9.08	10.82	- .8669

* p < .045

appropriate pure form responses, proportion of socially appropriate fantasy responses, and proportion of overall socially appropriate responses. Mann-Whitney tests suggested no difference between the groups on any of these scores.

Given the impression that many felons failed to justify their responses, a two-tailed Mann-Whitney test was conducted to determine a difference in their tendency to offer responses without justifications. Although no difference was evident, both groups failed to justify their percepts almost four to six times more often than any other group tested using the Burstein-Loucks system (1989). Lastly, for reasons elaborated in the next section additional post hoc comparisons of total number of Rorschach responses and total number of Rorschach card rejections were done (see Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, Medians, Minimums, and Maximums of Total Number of Rorschach Responses for Felons Committing Different Types of Crime

	Mean	SD	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Felons, Crimes Against Property	14.57	5.83	13	6	31
Felons, Crimes Against People	14.23	5.51	13	6	27

Table 4

Total Number of Rorschach Card Rejections for Felons Committing
Different Types of Crime

Rorschach's Cards	Felons, Crimes Against Property	Felons, Crimes Against People	Total
I	0	0	0
II	3	3	6
III	1	0	1
IV	4	5	9
V	0	1	1
VI	9	9	18
VII	5	6	11
VIII	0	0	0
IX	12	9	21
X	3	6	9

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the major hypothesis that felons committing crimes against people would be different from those committing crimes against property on the basis of psychological conflict and interpersonal experiences. In support of this hypothesis, felons committing crimes against people displayed significantly more psychosexual drive and conscious benevolent expectations, in particular conventional human emotions, on Rorschach's test using Burstein-Loucks scoring system (1989). It is worthwhile to take a closer look at the scoring system used, our understanding of felons in light of these results, and implications for future research.

Burstein-Loucks Scoring System

Unlike other major scoring systems, Burstein-Loucks scoring system (1989) systematically attends to the formal scoring of content from both traditional drive theory and contemporary object-relations point of view. A fundamental psychoanalytic premise is that an individual's interpersonal difficulties are rooted in unresolved psychological conflicts, which have their origins in early psychosexual development. An investigation of the quality

of interpersonal relatedness is thus incomplete without a careful consideration of the sources of early traumas and their impact on current level of emotional functioning. Burstein-Loucks system is unique in that human experience is considered in terms of the presence or absence of conscious fantasy of human action and/or human emotion, its quality, social appropriateness, and degree of articulation, as well as roots and manifestations of psychosexual conflict.

The results demonstrate that a theoretically based Rorschach scoring system, taking into account both drive and object-relations theory, is fruitful in differentiating felons committing crimes against people and against property. More importantly, Burstein-Loucks system has determined the accuracy of a psychoanalytic prediction of the relationships between psychosexual drive, interpersonal expectation, and type of felons. The adequacy to which psychoanalytic formulations account for relationships between personality characteristics measured on Rorschach's test and felon type demonstrates construct validity in both psychoanalytic formulations of felons and Burstein-Loucks scoring system (Weiner, 1977).

Burstein-Loucks system permits an insight into how, in addition to what, an individual experiences. This system not only assesses an individual's conceptual interpretation

of Rorschach's cards, but also the work process leading to the interpretation, the justification used for the interpretation, and the appropriateness of the interpretation. A unique feature in this system is taking note of the individual's failures to justify his or her initial responses. This additional justification score, "f", given to responses such as "I don't know, it just looks like it" (Burstein & Loucks, 1989) has demonstrated a characteristic that is distinctive to the felon population. Its meaning and significance will be addressed in the next section.

Myths and Empirical Evidence of Felons

The evidence suggesting felons committing crimes against people display a significantly higher amount of psychological conflict, conscious benevolent interpersonal expectation, and banal emotional life has shed a new light on our stereotype of felons. Our preconceived notion of violent criminals as vicious and frightening beings who may be a breed apart and may even resemble "savage man" (Lombroso, 1917) may have been intuitively appealing but possibly inaccurate.

Psychological researchers' attempts to identify predisposing factors in felons have implied that they may be perverted aliens who masquerade with a convincing "mask

of sanity" (Cleckley, 1955) and that crimes may be prevented if these individuals are isolated. Empirical findings suggest, however, that many felons may not be perverted mummies of sanity contemplating bizarre and frightening activity, but rather individuals who lack psychological development.

Psychoanalytic formulations of human nature are based on a fixation/regression model of mental development (Fenichel, 1945). Any disturbance in mental development may manifest in the manner of a complete developmental arrest or in the manner of retaining more features of prior stages than is normal. Moreover, whenever a new development is encountered with difficulties, a backward slide where the development retreats to previous stages that were more comfortably experienced may take place. Mental development seldom progresses to a higher stage completely. Instead, characteristics of previous stages are present either alongside of or behind the new stage. Criminal behaviors are therefore viewed not as perverted acts committed by grotesque aliens, but as maladaptive manifestations of unconscious drives of certain individuals who lack psychological development.

Burstein-Loucks scoring system (1989) systematically assigns a motivational valuation score to each Rorschach response. As pointed out in a previous chapter, dependent

upon the quality of the interpersonal or noninterpersonal fantasy, a score of M (conscious malevolent expectations), (M) (unconscious malevolent expectations), B (conscious benevolent expectations), (B) (unconscious benevolent expectations), N (conscious neutral expectations), or (N) (unconscious neutral expectations) is assigned to each response. The evidence supporting felons committing crimes against people demonstrate a more conscious benevolent interpersonal fantasy life and the groups do not differ in the amount of malevolent fantasy life suggests that felons committing crimes against people have less neutral fantasy life than their counterpart. This implies that felons actively keep separate the different affective experiences of their environment and suggests the use of splitting as a defensive mechanism (Kernberg, 1975).

In retrospect, clinical impressions during psychological evaluation support empirical findings. Felons were given a choice to partake in the evaluation. Those who agreed to participate were motivated to be considered for alternatives to prison programs. It is thus not surprising that most appeared either cooperatively engaging or passively compliant, while only a few were covertly belittling and passively aggressive. However, no one was physically or behaviorally intimidating for this investigator. Felons' general cooperative efforts and

polite attitude suggest their conscious perception of the investigator as a benevolent, or at least a nonthreatening, authority figure who held the power to recommend them for alternatives to prison programs. Their fears of the perceived omnipotent figure withholding that power might have been "split off" or covered up and thus hostility was only mildly and indirectly expressed. This further lends support to Kernberg's hypothesis that individuals who are psychologically underdeveloped often perceive the other as the provider of their needs and employ splitting as a main defensive mechanism (Kernberg, 1975).

Post hoc comparisons reveal that felons evaluated offered 6 to 31 responses on Rorschach's test with a median of 13. This median is lower than any other adult group tested using Burstein-Loucks system, and is only similar to healthy children of 11- and 12-year-olds and foster adolescents with a median of 14 responses in each group (Burstein & Loucks, 1989). Moreover, card rejections, scored when no response is given to a card (Burstein & Loucks, 1989), occurred frequently. Almost 25% rejected cards VI and IX.

Keeping in mind that many psychological evaluations were conducted under trying circumstances, a low number of total responses, a high frequency of card rejections, and a high occurrence of failures to justify as reported earlier

all point to a lack of psychological development or psychological conflicts and further support the fixation/regression explanation of criminality. These felons appeared to be guarded, revealing only a below average level of mental activity, and unable to offer a rationale for their percepts. Massive anxiety was experienced when encountered with affectively stimulating situations, in particular themes surrounding phallic or superego issues. Lastly, the experience of overwhelming conflict was generally managed by blocking, which is an ineffectual manner of coping.

Implications for Future Research and Intervention

This investigation is exploratory and has its limitations. The subjects were a sample of opportunity on whom only very limited information was available. The length of incarceration varied from less than one month to more than ten years. The gross categorization of crime only offers a surface understanding of the quantitative and qualitative differences in the conflict and experience of felons. The large number of Rorschach protocols with a low number of total responses influences the percentages calculated for each variable investigated. Interpretations

of findings when compared with other groups tested using the Burstein-Loucks system can only be made with caution.

Future research can be approached in four ways. One, using the available data for this study an exploration of the roots of psychological conflicts and the effectiveness of defense may further differentiate the two groups of felons. Two, an orderly collection of subjects comparing specific rather than gross categories of crime, e.g., incest of minor and rape, or arson and burglary, while controlling race, sex, age, SES, years of schooling, history of incarceration, and drug usage at the time of crime will offer a fuller understanding of the experiences and conflicts of heterogeneous groups of felons. Three, a systematic investigation of the nature of conflict and experience among members that engage in organized criminal activity, antisocial individuals who carry out solitary criminal actions, and law-abiding citizens may shed light on the relationship between socialization and aggression. Four, construct validity can be assessed by determining the correlation of a projective instrument with other measures of theoretically related personality characteristics (Goldfried, 1971). Specifically, the relationship between the sources of psychosexual drive as measured on Rorschach's test and the different needs as measured on Jackson's Personality Research Form (Jackson, 1974), e.g.,

need for succorance, need for aggression, and need for impulsivity, may be investigated.

Given our knowledge of the fixation/regression model of mental development and the empirical findings it is conceivable that situational management such as changing laws or introducing penalties without incarceration can only influence criminal conduct superficially and temporarily. Mandatory sentencing and stricter parole standards are not likely to serve as a permanent deterrent for individuals who lack psychological development. The frequent occasions where felons indulge in their favorite pastimes while on parole or after release are unfortunately to be expected. Rearrests, reconvictions, and reincarcerations are thus commonplace and inevitable.

One solution to prevent this vicious cycle from escalating may be to provide felons with psychoeducational services that are tailored to their needs. Regular attendance and active participation need to be enforced both pre- and postsentencing. Moreover, continuation with the program needs to be a mandatory condition for parole or release. Felons will thus be compelled to come to face with their motivations for delinquent behaviors, learn about effective means of impulse control and anxiety management, acquire new models of interpersonal relatedness, and eventually become adaptive citizens in

contemporary societies. Consequence of psychoeducational rehabilitation programs may be monitored and empirically investigated to facilitate more effective social service planning.

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