

Dual instinct theory

Psychology



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THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GORE AND WHITEFIELD CASES

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Theoretical analysis of the gore and Whitefield cases

For years, academics have tried to understand the reasoning of a serial killer. They try to understand why people engage in such an inhuman act, the motivators, and how such deviant behavior can be eradicated. In studying serial killers, academics take three theoretical approaches namely: Biological, Psychological and Social. The biological approach seeks to find DNA anomalies in a serial killers genetic code. The psychological approach analyses a serial killer's mind, while the social approach tries to understand a serial killer by studying his/her environment. This study seeks to apply psychological and social theories in analyzing serial killers David Alan Gore, and his cousin Fred Waterfield. In specifics, this study will apply the dual instinct theory (psychological approach) in Gore's case and the Strain theory (social approach) to Waterfield's case.

To start with, is the dual instinct/death drive theory and its application to David Gore. According to renowned psychology theorist Sigmund Freud, there exists a force in human nature that operates against the pleasure principle (Duncan, 2014). Sigmund argues that this force is derived from a need to preserve energy in a living being. While under Sigmund's pleasure principle self preservation and fulfillment are the primary drivers of human actions, the death instinct seeks to cut anxiety by reducing energy to a zero point (Duncan, 2014). This zero point is a state of respite, free from feelings. Sigmund views the state of respite as the true state of matter (Duncan, <https://assignbuster.com/dual-instinct-theory/>

2014). Sigmund points to primitive masochism, aggression and hate as examples of the death instinct. He states that such behavior overruns any feelings of love or apathy.

Sigmund's dual instinct theory is quite applicable in David Gore's case. Most of Gore's victims are young girls with no means of defending themselves. He ties them, rapes and slaughters them in the most barbaric way possible. The aggression, masochism and lack of apathy for the kids in Gore's behavior, is an indicator of the death instinct at work.

As to whether the sentence handed down to Gore was fair, the answer is a resounding yes. The dual instinct theory points to the human ability to counter and control the death instinct (Duncan, 2014). As such, Gore was deliberately letting out his death thirsty side, with full knowledge of his actions and their repercussions.

Next on theory and its relation to serial killers, is the Strain theory and its application to Waterfield's case. The strain theory as advanced by Robert King Merton states that social structures in a given society might drive individuals to illegal behavior (Gennaro & Jeffrey, 2011). Such strains may either be structural or individual. Structural strains occur where a society's core fiber lacks the capacity to satisfy an individual's needs, forcing such an individual to deviate to satisfy his/her needs (Gennaro & Jeffrey, 2011).

Individual strains occur when an individual experiences unending frictions and pain while trying to satisfy certain needs. This leads the individual to focus more on need achievement, the means notwithstanding.

This theory is quite applicable to Whitefield's case. Whitefield seems to play along to his cousin's idea of rape and murder. He has a need for sex, which is unsatisfied until Gore gives him an idea of how to achieve it. This augurs

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well with the strain theory in that, his lack of intimacy whether due to personal inadequacy or a high societal bar for achieving it forces him to seek out intimacy, regardless of the consequences.

From a legal point of view, Whitefield received the sentence he deserved.

The only excuse to crime in law is insanity. Personal desires and inability to achieve them whether due to personal or societal barriers is no excuse to rape and murder.

References

Duncan C. (2014). *Psychoanalysis, Violence and rage-Type murder: Murdering minds*. London: Routledge.

Gennaro V., Jeffrey M. (2011). *Criminology: Theory, Research, and Policy*. New York: Jones & Bartlett Publishers.