

Callous Unemotional traits and Psychopathy in Reference to Bougainville

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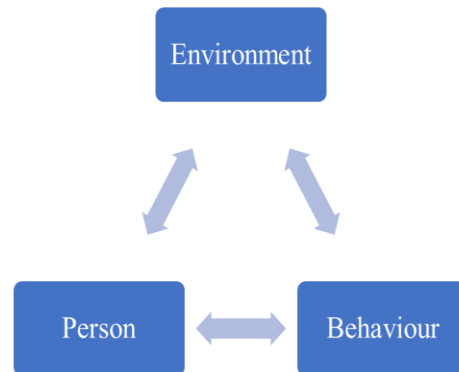
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Abstract— Criminal proclivities are potentially be innate. It persists in the familial space, with the young imitating the more concerning aspects of the parent or close-knit family member. True criminality is ultimately a learned behavior even if the individual's lineage has criminal elements. In a patriarchal society, it is an expected norm that women bodies should always be available to men and any choice over their body is controlled by their male partners. This paper explores the relevance of Social Learning Theory in a patriarchal setting with reference to the protagonist Dr. Royce Thomas in the movie *Bougainvillea**. How and why the lack of empathy, remorse, or guilt in the formative years could potentially lead to psychopathy in adulthood is considered in this paper.

Index Terms— SLA (Social Learning Theory)
GBV (Gender Based Violence)
RA (Retrograde Amnesia)
CU (Callous Unemotional Traits)

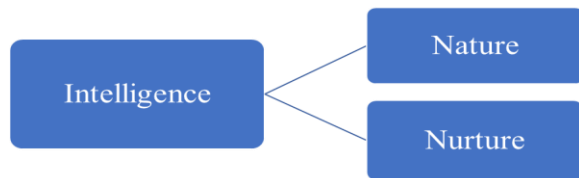
I. INTRODUCTION

Social Learning theory in crime states that criminal activity or anti-social behavior in adulthood stems from the actions of closely knit family members through imitation or reinforcement. Criminal activity is a learned behavior, which has its roots from the environment and unresolved childhood traumas. SLA was formulated by Albert Bandura through his experiments with the Bobo doll theory. An adult and a child along with a doll were locked in a room. The child was made to see the adult repeatedly hitting the doll fiercely. Again, the same child was left with the doll in the same room, this time in the absence of an adult. The child started hitting the doll, as if it is what he was supposed to do with the object. Gender roles and its biases take root early in the childhood.



Dr. Royce Thomas, along with his wife Reetu, is settled in a house in a hill station for the past few years. The couple has shifted to this new dwelling ever since his wife has been battling with a clinical condition called Retrograde Amnesia. The couple met with a car accident a few years ago and the doctors declared that Reetu might need lifelong care. Dr Thomas seems a generous, altruistic, empathetic personality. His demeanor is one that of a devoted and a caring husband. Later into the movie, the audiences get to know the backstory of Dr. Royce where it is revealed that he's a psychopath in his adult life, attributed to his upbringing in a patriarchal family where women are sexually assaulted and slaughtered in the quietude of night. There's a dialogue exchange between the law enforcement personnel and Reetu in the wake of realization where DCP David Koshy (Fahad Faasil) tells Reetu that "Dr. Royce was too convincing as a doctor and a husband". Reetu was never his wife. She happened to be one among the victims who he picked up on his way on that ill-fated night. In fact, she was one among the thirteen victims whom Royce didn't kill, turning her medical condition to his advantage. She was used as a bait to abduct the other victims, which goes on to show his manipulative persona. This article tries to give an insight on how unresolved childhood trauma and upbringing in a family that

fosters criminality and positive reinforcement of said criminality might lead to participation in anti-social behavior in adulthood. American sociologist and criminologist Clifford Robe Shaw, established Social Disorganization theory along with his assistant Henry McKay. It claims that high rates of crime in the neighborhood occur in when the setting is rural, where intervention by the minority communities to crimes or reporting to the authorities is low, owing to their poverty and ethnic heterogeneity.



There are a multitude of factors that influences the criminal behavior in adulthood which can be attributed to both environmental and genetic factors. Upbringing a child in a family that's made to normalize Gender based violence (GBV) targeting women lays the foundation of concrete reality of the commodification of violence against women. What happens in this process is that their status is merely reduced to objects of sexual gratification, assert control and inflict suffering. There are instances where anti-social behavior stems out of the blue from no visible environmental stimuli. The genetic constitution does play a crucial role where Callous Unemotional traits (CU) and subsequent psychopathy in adulthood may run in the family inheriting criminal traits in the conduct. This is manifested by a lack of empathy, remorse, guilt even after committing acts deemed unacceptable. They simply don't acknowledge the rights of other people instead gain an accelerated momentum in propensity of being impulsive. Characteristically risk takers, they act without thinking much about the consequences. The character, Dr. Royce modelled his behavior from his grandfather, Devassya, who allured by the act of seizing power and dominance that is rooted in violence. Being the victim of sexual abuse in the formative years and the conflict resolution in his case came with a negative connotation.

In the light of scientific study, mutilation in the A(MAO-A) gene the deficiency of monoamines

oxidase enzyme triggers the surplus production of hormones like serotonin, thereby causing neurotransmitter imbalance causing escalation in aggressive behavior.

Under false pretenses that keep their marriage a concrete reality, Dr. Royce is gaslighting his wife, Reetu making her doubt her own sense of perception, reality, feelings. He keeps a Diary in the chest of drawers in their bedroom, filled with fabricated information that profoundly fosters her false identity on reading it every day at the crack of the dawn and her immediate sense of being. The diary could potentially act as a compensatory tool to Reetu struggling with her condition, but to Royce it could be counted on as one among the broad spectrum of manipulative tactics that he resorts to keep Reetu reaching out to her true self. The mask of sanity that Royce worn began developing cracks ever since information regarding the missing who went missing began to make its way to the periphery through Reetu's paintings. Reetu finds exposure to the past cues, when she began to know about the girls who were abducted which helped her to connect the dots and retrieve her past memory and also of the times when she was associated with the absconding victims.

Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse where distorted narratives make the victim doubt their own course of actions and makes them fall prey to reality bending. Etymologically, the term gaslighting originated from 1938 play, "Gas Light" by Patrick Hamilton where the husband manipulates his wife by intentionally dimming the gas lights and refusing to acknowledge it when she notices it. Keeping expectations unrealistic and the stakes high, Dr. Royce never thought of a window for Reetu to have connection and social belonging up until the arrival of Meera, the criminologist, working on the case. Dr. Royce who has built a persona on deceit now became vulnerable to exposure and ruin.

The term Anti-social Personality Disorder is often explained in the light of individuals having problems interacting with the people in the society or those who missed out on the good years of forming bonds with their dear ones. What lurks beneath the surface is a criminal mastermind who doesn't want to comply with moral, social, legal framework, violating the rights of the people. In literature, popular media where the term Psychopath is the descriptive, sociological term among the realm of researchers, psychology students,

definitely not the clinical diagnostic term. In an interview with Dr. Ramani Durvasula, Clinical Psychologist on a YouTube channel Med Circle, she said she would identify Anti-social Personality Disorder to be one with the Psychopathy traits wherein the individual lacks the empathetic behavior and violates the ethics of societal structure. Terms such as psychopathy and sociopathy are interchangeable overlapping. To unfold it in a straight line, psychopathy is a danger while sociopathy is a distress. A sociopath could be identified with a bar fighter who impulsively take out the emotions (be it rage, sorrow or malevolence), on the other hand a psychopath would execute the murder in three days with surgical precision, which making him manipulative, calculative and intelligent unlike a sociopath who is sloppy and unskillful. As Bonafide experts say, it is the procedure that for a person to be diagnosed with Anti-Social Personality Disorder, he has to have a history of clinical diagnosis of Conductive Disorder within the first fifteen years of age.

Possibility of psychopaths confessing to their crimes is not suggestive of feelings of remorse rather it points to a need and space for assertion of their superiority, intelligence and uniqueness. Though the character Royce speaks at length about his grandfather's past glories and the degree to which he idolizes to the criminologist, Meera, who visits him at his farmhouse. There is not even a single instance in the movie where Royce dictates his past crime records to any media person or a law enforcement agency. The criminologist grew suspicious of his behavior and the surroundings of farmhouse which seemed to her a desolate and abandoned establishment though Royce claims to visit the farmhouse with his on weekends. His façade almost had a crack when she took his leave, at the exact moment when he has an to blurt out his true identity when he felt intoxicated and enraged.

II. THE COLONIZING ASPECT OF PSYCHOPATHS

Psychological colonization in interpersonal relationships refers to a dynamic where one person imposes their worldview, values, and sense of self onto another.

Reetu was psychologically colonized, her movements were monitored by her husband and it can absolutely be described as a form of psychological colonization.

The term as such is applied to describe the psychological aspects of people who became subjects to historical, political colonization where the oppressors imposed their ideologies, etiquettes and code of conduct on a relatively significant proportion of subjugated classes. It can be taken to the realms of interpersonal situations wherein extreme control is exercised over the submissive, steering the course of actions of their everyday lives. Here the immediate present of the character (Reetu) suffering from retrograde amnesia is choreographed by an outside party (Dr. Royce), hence it can be interpreted as an instance of psychological colonization. Her personal history is shaped by his narrative and a manufactured one is constructed in both her mind and the people in the workspace, home and society. The diary that's maintained by Royce dictating her lived experiences becomes a testimony to this. Just as the colonial subjects were expected to view the world through the perspective or lens of the colonizer, an amnesiac must navigate through the course of the day through the lens provided by the "choreographer" of their said reality. Her identity is merely reduced to that actor in a script. The psychopath exploits the personal history of the victim (in the context of the film the character of Reetu) is gaslighted following her medical condition of Retrograde Amnesia. The information processed in the memory is filled with false narratives which is cemented in a "rinse and repeat" pattern. The above-mentioned phrase holds true and is applicable in the case of Reetu. In Forensic science and Psychology, extensive study and research had been conducted, reaching the conclusion that psychopaths have a predatory memory which enables them to observe behavioral patterns and other non-verbal cues spotting their vulnerabilities. Dr. Royce somehow managed to discover once her face is dipped in the bathtub, she completely forgets the occurrences and events of the day. He accompanies her to shower, where she is physically assaulted and abused indicating his Machiavellian personality. In the sphere of political and cultural colonization, following 1857, British Imperial powers understood that the country India as a nation has fair proportion of Hindus and Muslims who could join forces against them. This was tackled by the Britishers gaining the knowledge that these communities have unresolved, unsettling issues since the past. Having understood this non-verbal cue they ignited communal issues and riots that became the

ideology of “divide and rule”. Another way he gained control over Reetu by making her submissive is through creating a Pseudo-personality tool which would enable the husband to enter the buffer zone to reach out to the victims. Once the trust gained and the victim is in the threshold, they are tricked, on getting into the car thereafter drugging them.

The events in the movie are strikingly analogous and there is a substantive parallelism to Fritzl case.

Josef Fritzl, an Austrian man, imprisoned his daughter, Elisabeth Fritzl, in a hidden, fortified cellar beneath his Amstetten home for 24 years (1984-2008). He sexually abused her, resulting in seven children; three lived in captivity, three were raised by Fritzl and his wife upstairs, and one died.

III. PATTERSON COERCION THEORY

The theory coined by Gerald Patterson, in the 1970s can provide a robust framework for giving an explanation to the cinematic analysis (Bougainvillea) where undesirable acts exhibited in the adult years not necessarily stems from mere observation in the formative years, thus the theory itself is a second-generation extension of the Social Learning theory, thereby making the meanings of the term fluid and inter-changeable. The core difference between the two overlapping theories itself explains the cause of criminality in the adulthood, in cases where SLA itself cannot provide sufficient explanation. Here the intolerable traits are perpetuated by the offender is a refusal to the reciprocal reinforcement by the parents. What happens in such an upbringing is the evolution of an adult who is incapable of forming healthy bonds with the society. Their haughty existence comes a refusal to accept constructive criticism and guidance, thus having an existence that's rooted in negation of societal rules. The coercive cycle repeats perpetually, by the child throwing tantrums and the parent refusing to surrender their control. Thus, the epicenter of the argument can translate from criminal activity learned not just from an observational pattern but by maintenance of the unacceptable behavior that stems from the act of arrogance. For instance, a child being told off by the parent for behavior that is unacceptable is likely to repeat the same act if the parent is to intervene with a negative reinforcement. this continues in a cyclical pattern until one of the two sides is to give in.

IV. CONCLUSION

Psychopaths often have a grandiose self-image and an underlying belief they are superior and deserve special privileges. “Being found out” challenges this belief and their sense of superiority, which can trigger intense narcissistic rage and a strong desire for revenge. They view the person exposing them as an obstacle to their inherent right to get what they want. This is the reason why he preferred to keep Meera as his next victim to keep the secrets digging its way out. Control over a female body by the male counterpart is typical in a patriarchal family. Traditional ideologies surrounding masculinity struggle to find acceptance in modern societal expectations.

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