

SOC 3290 Deviance

Lecture 6: The Pathological Perspective 1:

It has been noted that a transformation has taken place in modern society: behaviors that were once defined as immoral, sinful, or criminal have been given medical meanings - and while some say that rehabilitation has replaced punishment, in many cases such “treatments” have become a new form of punishment and social control.

Indeed, we are becoming more and more prone to see unusual or inexplicable behaviors as evidence of some form of illness than as anything else (e.g. the Malay factory workers’ hysteria and shouting at “unseen voices” we see at the beginning of the chapter). So, in this example, the largely rural, oppressed female factory workers were diagnosed as suffering from a form of temporary insanity and prescribed sedatives and a few days sick leave. Yet, this isn’t the only way to interpret their behaviors. For example, in some cases the traditional Malay “spirit healers” were performing rites aimed at ridding the factories of “ghosts.” Moreover, the exploitative character of their employment had radically altered these womens’ social and economic conditions - now becoming much more subject to male supervision and control. Perhaps, then, the so-called “factory spirits” represented a form of unacknowledged social resistance to the womens’ new and troubling situation. This possibility is ignored by a pathological perspective on deviance. Moreover, this “modern” way of concealment and control works in a more sinister way than native beliefs in demons - gradually dispossessing these women of their own culture while the modern social and economic causes of their upset are left untouched.

Pfohl argues that it is the “alchemical” power of pathological theorizing that renders it able to transform other possible explanations into a singular focus on abnormality, sickness and disease. Employing the language of medicine, pathological theorists attempt to transform images of badness into sickness. They have been remarkably successful in this endeavor - convincing much of the world that deviants are no longer to be considered bad but sick - and that deviant behavior may be explained as the result of physical, mental, or emotional abnormalities.

This image of deviant individuals as sick is today extremely widespread. Indeed, by the late 19th century advocates of pathological theory had successfully transformed the classical perspective’s emphasis on free choice into an image of medicalized causation. This suggested that people deviate as the result of an illness of the body or mind. This view was legitimized by the rhetoric of science. Yet, this was not entirely scientific, and there was more than a little magic in the “concealment and control” strategies associated with these explanations. We must ask whether such explanations are successful because they offer compelling scientific evidence that nonconforming actions are diseased, or are they successful because they offer theoretical images that are attractive to a particular historical audience thirsty for simple solutions to complex problems?

Theoretical Images:

The pathological perspective became prominent in the late 19th century, representing a dramatic break with both the classical and demonic traditions. Deviance was neither a choice nor a sin, but was caused by a disease infecting the body or mind. It needed treatment, not penance or punishment.

Most historians trace pathological theorizing to the 1876 publication of Cesare Lombroso's Criminal Man. Once, upon performing an autopsy on a notorious criminal, Lombroso was struck by a couple of unusual, apelike depressions on the skull. He hypothesized that this man - and many criminals - were thus evolutionary throwbacks called *atavists* - or "born criminals." Lombroso reasoned that the pre-modern bodies of atavists were ill-suited for the civilized demands of contemporary life and were thus prone to crime and deviation. He sought to test this idea by comparing the bodies of some 400 Italian prisoners with those of a group of soldiers. Each was measured for evidence for such physical anomalies as unusual head size, eye defects, receding forehead, large ears, excessive jaws, fleshy and swollen lips, woolly hair and long arms. He found that 43% of the prisoners had five or more atavistic anomalies, compared to none of the soldiers. Only 11% of the soldiers had more than three. This was taken as evidence that, at least for some criminals, biology was destiny: pathological or inferior bodies produced pathological behavior.

Lombroso's ideas were extremely influential, particularly following his co-founding of the *Archives of Psychiatric and Anthropological Criminology*. Yet some doubt that he originated pathological theorizing in its broadest form. For example, Hippocrates thought that madness was caused by a physical imbalance of various "humors" in the body. Both Giovanni Battista Della Porta and Johann Lavater and posited a relationship between human facial characteristics and criminal behavior. Benjamin Rush suggested that severe mental disorders were caused by an arterial disease of the brain. Finally, the *phrenology* of Franz Joseph Gall and Johann Kasper Spurzheim argued that human behavior was explainable by the shape of the human skull. Indeed, they argued that when certain faculties of the brain were overdeveloped, bumps would appear at certain points on the skull. By studying the skull, it would therefore be possible to distinguish deviants from others, as well as the likely direction of an individual's deviation.

All such early theories view nonconformity as resulting from some physical or mental defect. For analytical purposes, however, we will date the full development of the pathological perspective from the late 19th century work of Lombroso. This combines the three essential components of pathological theorizing: (1) determinism; (2) positivism; and (3) an image of organic infection.

Determinism essentially looks for the natural causes for deviance - linking human behavior with that of other species. This was in line with the 19th century popularity of the Darwinian evolutionary perspective, with its emphasis on the laws of natural selection. According to this view, certain types of behavior were superior, other not, but all were

determined or caused by some natural law. In this competition, this “survival of the fittest,” superior forms were believed to naturally prevail. Much pathological thinking is shadowed by this evolutionary view. All pathological theorizing is similarly deterministic: deviance is transformed from a moral choice into a dependent variable, something caused by something else.

Going hand in hand with this, the pathological perspective contends that the causes of deviance can only be known through positivistic science. Positivism argues that valid knowledge is obtainable only through controlled observation and scientific experimentation. The causes of deviance will thus only be known when nonconformists are placed squarely under the microscope of modern physiological and behavioral science. This methodological perspective was common in many disciplines in the late 19th century - even in the sociology of Auguste Comte.

Finally, pathological theorists view society as akin to an “organism,” composed of interrelated parts. In turn, deviance is likened to a diseased or sick part of that body - weakening the whole.

History of Pathological Theorizing: Cycles of Optimism and Failure:

Generally, the pathological perspective runs in historical cycles. It starts with optimism, is followed by failure, and then rebounds into optimism again. In the first phase it is confident about scientific advance and humanitarian progress. Next, previously promising images of pathology are undercut by an awareness of the faulty research methods which produced them. Yet, within a short time, a new optimism reemerges and the cycle of pathological investigations renews itself. Much of this cycle is linked to the dominant social forces which have transformed the material and cultural landscape of modern society. In what follows, we detail chronologically the ups and downs experienced by the pathological perspective from Lombroso’s day until today.

From Body Types to Chromosomes:

Lombroso’s ideas remained popular until 1913, when English physician attempted to rigorously replicate Lombroso’s findings in a broader study, but failed. For a short time, the idea that deviance was caused by physiological inferiority was put to rest.

Soon, however, American researchers resurrected Lombroso’s thesis. In 1939 Earnest Hooton published a study entitled The American Criminal. This compared almost 14,000 criminals with 3200 controls from 10 states, concluding that criminals were organically inferior (i.e. had low foreheads, high, pinched nasal bridges, excessive nasal deflections and compressed faces). These were said to make it harder for individuals to cope with their environment, thus producing deviance. Indeed, Hooton went further - classifying criminals by bodily types (thin men went for murder and robbery; tall heavy men for forgery and fraud, etc). Of course, Hooton’s findings were soon subject to numerous critiques. (1) His sample of prisoners cannot be equated with criminals, because the successful ones aren’t caught. (2) His control groups were hardly representative of the general population, frequently showing greater internal differences

than between themselves and prisoners. (3) His “physical inferiorities” were value judgements. (4) These were not necessarily biologically inherited, but could be socially derived (e.g. from poor nutrition and care). (5) Many repeat offenders had previously been incarcerated for other types of crime. Hence, Hooton’s work was soon completely discredited.

Next, William Sheldon emerged suggesting that certain body types predispose people to certain types of deviant behavior. This idea arose out of a study of 200 Boston schoolboys. According to Sheldon, the adult body structure corresponds to the differential development of the three layers of embryonic tissue: the endoderm (digestive viscera), the ectoderm (skin/nervous system), and the mesoderm (bones, muscles and tendons). If one develops disproportionately more than the others, this results in both a body *and* a personality type. “Endomorphs,” characterized by a fat, round body were said to be characterized by a personality craving luxury and relaxation. “Ectomorphs,” characterized by frail, skinny bodies, were said to be oversensitive, plagued by chronic fatigue, skin trouble and bodily complaints. “Mesomorphs,” finally, dominated by muscle and bone development, were said to be active, dynamic and assertive. It is these mesomorphs, according to Sheldon, who are more prone to a life of delinquency. Again, however, the methodology underlying this scheme is suspect. His definitions of delinquency were extremely vague - not rooted in behavior but in psychological measurements of failure or “disappointment.” This led him to mis-classify as healthy individuals who had actually committed violent crimes.

Sheldon, however, did do later research with Eleanor Glueck that more carefully measured these factors - and again found that so-called “mesomorphs” were more likely to be delinquent. All the same, sociological factors may well explain why adjudicated delinquents have stronger looking bodies (e.g. one needs a tough body to succeed as a tough delinquent, and such physical characteristics may figure in selective sentencing decisions - excluding fat or weak looking kids). Why then, only focus on individual pathology?

Still the push to search for physiological explanations of deviance pressed on. English physician Goring, who had critiqued Lombroso, later went on to claim that heredity was a central cause of deviance: comparing criminality among (1) brothers and (2) fathers and sons. Even when controlling for those living together and not, as well as for visible vs. Invisible crimes, Goring found the correlations in the levels of criminality to be high. This was taken to suggest that heredity outweighed environmental factors in causing crime. Even though Goring’s experimental controls were inadequate, his distinction between visible and invisible crimes problematic, and there was no evidence that intelligence was inherited, he speculated that an inheritance of poor mental ability might predispose one to a life of deviance. This opened a whole new theoretical direction for pathologizing deviance.

This was soon given impetus by the publication of two sensational studies of “degenerate families” (e.g. Robert Dugdale’s “The Jukes” which detailed the extraordinary number of 709 blood relatives in one family behind bars for various crimes in a 150 year period.). This suggested that poverty and crime were hereditary. This work was only undermined when a

critical journalist compared a so-called respectable family in a similar fashion and found a comparable level of deviancy. A second degenerate family study was published by Henry Goddard on the Kalliak family (one line descended from an illegitimate child with a “feeble-minded” mother, the other from a legitimate marital relationship with a “normal” mother). The former line was filled with deviant offspring; the latter not. Again, this is hardly an example of objective research (i.e. it was hard getting access to unbiased family records, the odds were stacked against the poor, and previous ratings of intelligence were too subjective).

But Goddard went further and pioneered the use of the IQ test. He found the average IQ in a school corresponded to a mental age of 12, and then compared this to local prisoners - 70% of whom scored below this. He argued that this shows low intelligence causes crime due to difficulty handling complex conditions. Yet, these findings were undermined in 1926 by the work of Murchison’s Criminal Intelligence, showing that many in society (e.g. WWI army recruits) also fell below this age, so the upper end of the “age of feeble-mindedness” had to be lowered to 9. With this new measurement, significant differences between prisoners, soldiers and everyone else disappeared.

Yet, even today there is a resurgence of interest in IQ and criminality. Even when offenders test lower, however, we have to be careful to keep in mind the generally wide variation in IQ scores, the fact that good schooling and low motivation can impact these, along with economic and linguistic background. If most prisoners come from the lower class or families discriminated against on the basis of color, ethnicity or language, they will not score so well as the favored white, middle-class subjects (e.g. illustrated by Dove’s “Chitling” IQ test).

Other hereditary theories focus on genetic factors, supposedly free of environmental influence. Beginning with the 1929 research of Johannes Lange, it is claimed that there are significant differences in the criminality of identical vs fraternal twins. Many such studies have been done over the years, generally showing this pattern. Yet, even in these studies, the highest correlations (identical males) rarely exceed 35.8%, compared to 21.3% for fraternal. While the difference was slightly greater for female identicals vs. fraternal (21.4 vs 4.3%) these differences are hardly overwhelming. Indeed, if heredity really caused crime, we would expect 100% concordance. Perhaps the social environment simply affects identical twins more harshly - especially when parents and others treat them the same.

To avoid this issue, other biologically oriented researchers have compared the deviance of biological vs. adoptive parents to those of adoptees, noting that there was a small but higher percentage of disturbance among the biological children of psychopaths living in adoptive homes. Similarly, studies have been done on the adopted kids of male and female offenders compared to adoptees whose biological parents had no record. There were differences in criminality, but these were really quite small (i.e. 6%) - deflating the notion that genetic predisposition is a primary determinant of future deviance.

In sum, these findings may be more indicative of flawed research methods than of actual

genetic predisposition (e.g. people give kids up for adoption when they have few resources or abilities, and the criminality of their kids in adoptive homes may be influenced by the adoptive parents' knowledge of biological parents' past, the amount of time kids spent with biological parents before adoption, and the criminal records of the adoptive parents).

Then there is what is known as the XYY male, whom are hypothesized to be associated with an increased propensity for violence. Preliminary studies have been done suggesting that more prisoners have this chromosomal abnormality than does the general population (3% vs. 0.15%). Yet, despite the paucity of evidence, this has caught the public imagination and even was used as a defense in several criminal cases (but not always successfully). Subsequent research has failed to link XYY with higher levels of deviance across the board, nor violence.

Psychological Pathology: The Abnormal Mind:

The second major pathological tradition emphasizes sick minds rather than sick bodies. Beginning with Lombroso's colleague Raffaele Garofalo, it was argued that "psychological degenerates" could be diagnosed by the trained clinical eye. While Garofalo's ideas were never validated, these were followed by later attempts in the same vein by psychoanalysis, psychometric assessment, and theories of psychopathy.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, deviance is caused by unconscious desires, fears, or conflicts operating beneath the surface of the individual's experience. Our conscious experience is a distortion of "what's really going on" - and what's really behind our actions and problems. Sigmund Freud pioneered this school of thought - focusing on repressed traumatic childhood experiences and the "talking cure" whereby whereby what was banished from memory might be brought to the surface and dealt with. Over time, psychoanalysis became very influential, and an increasingly important component of pathological theorizing about deviance. Much was traced to repressed sexuality (libido), as well as the "death instinct" (thanatos), both of which make up one's primal desires in the id. These are restrained by the superego - essentially moral rules related to society. Between the two is the ego, or reality principle which attempts to mediate between these two antagonistic forces. A lack of proper balance between these three components is said to be the cause of deviance. Whether this involves an overdeveloped id or an underdeveloped superego, in either case the ego is weak and unable to mediate between drives and constraints.

A second psychoanalytic application relates to what Freud calls the various stages of personality development: oral (weaning); anal (toilet training); and phallic (sexuality). The famous Oedipal complex, for example, is associated with the phallic stage and a desire for the opposite sex parent, restrained by the presence of the same sex parent. According to Freud, the successful passage through all of these stages is a prerequisite for the healthy adult personality, and failure to do so increases the risk of deviance (e.g. fast talking con artists are stuck at the oral stage; thieves at the anal, sexual deviants at the phallic).

Psychoanalytic thought has been applied to deviance many times (e.g. Alexander and Healy's idea that unconscious guilt may drive people to break the law in order to get caught and punished). This perspective appears to account for nearly everything: if one probes deep enough, unconscious motives may be found beneath any form of misbehavior. But how adequate is this view? There are many problems. First, the reasoning is often circular: people are said to deviate because they are driven by unconscious forces; unconscious forces are evidenced by the symptomatic fact of deviation. Secondly, the model of ego adjustment offered by psychoanalysis is based on a relatively unquestioned acceptance of modern male heterosexuality as a timeless cultural norm. What about the experiences of girls? Of Homosexuals? Of people in different time periods and cultures? Freud's answers (e.g. "Penis envy") are sexist and often demeaning of women (e.g. "masochism is truly feminine"). Earlier psychoanalysts' attempts to "cure" homosexuals are also problematic. Finally, Freudian thought exaggerates the importance of early childhood experiences in determining later thoughts, feelings and actions. This discounts the individual's other social, political and economic experiences in later life.

The second type of psychological attempt to get at "sick minds" is represented by various psychological tests to measure aspects of the human personality. Clinicians who use such tests to diagnose deviance assume that certain personality traits dispose people toward deviant actions. There is, however, little evidence to support this assumption. Extensive reviews of the clinical literature on this matter generally fail to provide evidence that psychological testing successfully distinguishes deviants from those who conform. There are two exceptions: studies involving the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and the California Personality Inventory. The MMPI contains a particular scale (the "pd scale") measuring psychopathic deviation. This consistently differentiates criminals from non-offenders. The socialization scale of the CPI claims similar results. Is it possible that these measurements have finally isolated the pathological determinants of deviance? Not really: the pd scale really asks about how people view deviant activity, and criminals respond more positively. This is hardly surprising - but it is surprising that pathological theorists consider this evidence of a crime prone personality. This may actually reflect the fact that someone has committed a crime and was caught. Similarly, on the CPI scale where criminals score as more hostile to authority, again hardly surprising when one has been subject to the harsh arm of the law backed up by authority. Thus, despite their predictive claims, neither the MMPI nor the CPI gives much hard scientific information about alleged personality characteristics which cause deviance.

Yet there continue efforts to nail down a measurable deviant personality. For example, Hans Eysenck's theory of genetic personality deficiency, which is supposedly reflected in criminals' lack of conscience and inability to be deterred by punishment (expressed in psychological measures of "extroversion and neuroticism"). This is problematic: (1) in its assumption of a neurobiological relationship between extroversion, neuroticism and criminal behavior: body chemistry can be conditioned by how someone behaves, as well as by social influences; (2) this alleged relationship may be canceled out by the fact that anxious people may tend to admit more deviant behavior, while extroverted ones place themselves in more risky situations. Indeed, both crime and personality traits may be the result of other, more complex

patterns of social learning in poor, stigmatized social contexts.

Similar attempts are made by Yochelson and Samenow in The Criminal Personality. They suggest that criminality is not defined by unlawful behavior, but by one's state of mind - reflected in abnormal thought patterns in place since childhood. These act to make criminals a manipulative and self-serving lot. But if two persons act similarly, how do we know a criminal mind is at work? If they have a criminal record. The circular nature of this reasoning is alarming - failing to distinguish between types of criminals or utilize control groups. Indeed, as proof these authors demand that subjects admit that they have a criminal personality. This is far from scientific research.

The final psychological attempt to get at "sick minds" is represented by the literature on psychopaths - the ongoing search for people who are devoid of conscience and detached from the moral fiber of society. Alternatively termed morally insane, psychopathic, or sociopathic, these individuals are currently said to have an "antisocial personality." Estimates vary as to their prevalence, ranging from 3% of the general population to 20% of adult prisoners.

An old idea traceable to French reformer Philippe Pinel and others who pointed out that intellectual impairment is not always a feature on mental disorders, this condition is said to be recognizable according to a list of symptoms first enunciated by Hervey Cleckley (e.g. superficial charm, the absence of delusions, untruthfulness and insincerity, lack of remorse or shame, pathologic insincerity and incapacity for love, etc.). Yet, the listing of symptoms is not defined in a very precise fashion ("superficial charm"), and some are often seen as normal (e.g. "absence of delusions"). How does one measure insincerity? Quite frankly, the empirical research on psychopathy is not much more precise. It generally fails to adequately distinguish the disease from the behaviors it is said to produce, nor to avoid circular reasoning (e.g. supposedly sociopathic cell-mates in prison were found less able to see themselves through others' eyes, but that was a criterion for classifying them in the first place). Other research merely shows that those who acted anti-socially as kids were likely to do so as adults. Without more evidence, why call this a disease?

More recent studies have suggested that biological anomaly may lie behind the psychological abnormality of the psychopath. Funkenstein found that so-called psychopaths could endure much higher rises in blood pressure than others without apparent discomfort. Lykken reported that psychopaths are biologically less sensitive to environmental stimuli, and need to act out and make things happen. Schactner and Latane reported that sociopaths learned better when injected with epinephrine compared to controls. Yet, all of these studies are plagued by a basic methodological flaw: How are subjects defined as psychopaths in the first place to be included in these studies? Cleckley's vague symptoms, the MMPI, and an anxiety scale are used. In this latter case, psychopaths are assumed to have low levels of anxiety when faced with laboratory induced stressors. Again there is circular reasoning. Sure low anxiety has a biological correlate, and injecting anxiety producing drugs into low anxiety people can make them more anxious. Nothing proves that low anxiety people are the carriers of a disease.

Two things stand out here. The first is problematic sampling procedures. Low anxiety or underaroused prisoners are classified as remorseless psychopaths compared to their peers - but how does this distinguish them from the remorseless politician or the ruthless business executive? While not ordinarily labeled as psychopathic, if undergoing the same winnowing procedure they might reveal a similar biological profile. Secondly, there are problems with the causal inferences characterizing these studies. Even if antisocial behavior can be correlated with physiological underarousal, this doesn't mean that it is biologically caused. Maybe it is behavior which causes biological differences - as happens with ulcers or high blood pressure. These don't cause one to lead a fast-paced, high stress life. Why argue this, then, in the case of psychopathy? The answer lies in the simplistic social and political attractiveness of pathological theorizing.

Identifying Pathological Deviance:

The search for the causes and cures of pathological deviance has been underscored by faith in the power of positivistic science. The belief is that valid knowledge is obtainable only through rigorous and quantifiable measurements of cause and effect. The true test comes in the scientist's ability to predict and control the way things occur in nature. Rational mastery over nature is the ultimate goal. This way of seeing the world is so deeply ingrained in modern consciousness that it is difficult to imagine a time when such "scientific" explanations were not applied to everything we think, feel and do. When coupled with an image of deviance as sickness, the positivistic human sciences promise a medical-like explanation and therapeutic cure for the disease of nonconformity.

Yet, as we have seen, the history of research on pathological deviance has been flawed by serious conceptual and methodological problems. Studies of physiological pathology have been traditionally limited by imprecise definitions of abnormality, poor sampling, and inadequate control groups. Assessments of psychological pathology are frequently hampered by the professional socialization of diagnostic experts, contextual variation in diagnostic practice, problems of class and cultural stereotyping, and definitional ambiguity in the formulation of psychiatric classifications.

Given this inadequacy of much pathological research, it's important to consider why this perspective has for so long been blessed by the image of scientific respectability. The answer is to be found in the complex historical link between the promise of positivistic human science and the medicalized vision of nonconformity.

Some Historical Considerations:

It is no accident that from their inception positivist explanations of human behavior were linked to pathological images of deviance. Both were linked to the development of western capitalism. Let's begin with the relationship between capitalism and human labor. The more efficient capitalists are in exercising control over human resources, the greater their profit. This demand precludes the possibility of direct physical control over the work of each worker: it

would be too inefficient. Moreover, centralized control cannot be totally effective. Thus, this is replaced by the “invisible hand” of a more subtle and omnipresent form of control: the technology of inner discipline. Foucault suggests this produces the rationally self-controlled workforce needed by capitalism.

This is the nexus between the disciplinary demands of capitalism and the promise of positivist human science. Habermas suggests that positivist human science has always been linked to a promise of technical control. Its aim is to make possible the control of the social life processes in a way not unlike that in which material science becomes the power of technical control. Foucault goes further, tracing this to the rational social control facilities of the early 19th century (prisons). These classically-inspired institutions were quickly transformed into institutions for corrective “treatment” and “rehabilitation” due to their inherent technical control possibilities.

Prisons capture the bodies and minds of inmates, day and night surrounded by the watchful eyes of those who stand guard. For control purposes, inmates are classified into types, each reducing individuals into abstract categories of thinking, feeling and acting. Foucault suggests this was the first step toward “capturing the soul” of the deviant. Out of these early classifications arose the impetus for the predictive-control promise of the human sciences. It is but a short leap from comparative classifications to explanatory causal accounts.

The impetus for human science arose at the same time in other classificatory projects in the 19th century (e.g. categorizing or streaming students, mechanistic medical classifications). Each heralds a new vision of what people are and how they might best be controlled. Not only were people classifiable into a variety of types, but the types themselves were arranged along a graded continuum of normality: some fit in well with capitalist society; others did not.

We may find it hard to understand the newness of this today, because we all have been classified and reclassified ever since we were born (by doctors, educators, employers, government bureaucracies, etc). But this was a profoundly new thing in the early 19th century, out of which grew the human sciences and their claim to be able to distinguish the normal from the pathological.

This also provided an intellectual justification for new strategies of disciplinary control, strategies aimed at correcting, rehabilitating or curing abnormal types who would be useful and motivated laborers. This essentially also legitimized the power of the capitalist enterprise out of which they were born. This is because the positivistic human sciences are a means of exercising instrumental or disciplinary control over people. Yet, this function is not exercised exclusively in capitalist countries (e.g. psychiatry was used to great repressive effect in the USSR). Indeed, with the return of capitalist economics to eastern Europe, the fate of positivism’s promise of instrumental mastery remains a question of great historical concern.

This instrumental nature of positivism is also linked to gender-specific and racial

hierarchies. Concerning gender, positivism's advocacy of contextless, emotionless objectivity suggests its historical grounding in the minds of mostly male theorists (e.g. Auguste Comte). This abstract embrace of an emotionally detached perspective resembles Griffin's study of pornography as male-dominated culture's revenge against the natural world which it both denies and fears - cultural practices whereby many men distance themselves from the material reality of their own human-animal interdependencies with nature. The pornographer denies his own vulnerable participation in nature, projecting distorted images of his own fragile mortality onto the bodies of women, children, non-whites, children and others he envisions as threats to his own "masterful" abstractions. This silences the voices of others as well as alternative, less masterful voices within himself. The positivist scientist may perform a parallel operation - viewing himself as if he is outside nature and looking down at what is laid bare by his supposedly "naturalistic" laws.

This parallel is far from accidental. We have already discussed the historical parallels between individualism, classical thought and sadism. These, as well as positivistic science, repress the recognition of interdependent human animality. In representing humans as rational calculators of pleasure and pain, classical theorists violently abstract us from the real social contradictions in which we - as gendered human animals - find ourselves struggling. This substitutes a dispassionate virtual reality for the passionate actualities of our existence. Sadistic pornographic fantasies promise something similar - silencing women by substituting dispassionate literary signs of male dominance and female subversion for the passionate intensity of actual struggles between men and women. Yet, even this virtual sphere of operation was nowhere near as effective as the subsequent emergence of positivism - and the practices that followed.

It is noted that the Marquis de Sade went beyond the classical perspective's view of rationally deterring punishments to suggest "a world where isolated humans would be forced into submission not by rational signs but by disciplinary machines that would bind and break into their minds and bodies." This vision, though merely a literary fantasy, represents a crossroads between the virtual realities of pornographic fiction and the positivist actualities of emerging scientific practice. Positivist medicine may put into practice what such thoughts can only promise. Through surgery, pharmaceutical treatments, genetic manipulations, and other forms of therapeutic discipline, positivism goes beyond previous projections of control in that it literally makes over the body and/or the mind of the alleged deviant. In this respect, positivist approaches to deviance resemble pornography that is put into practice: forcing non-conformers to submit to the masterful scientific objectifications of the scientists who study them. This isn't to equate positivism with the realization of a pornographic imagination, but to point to some disturbing parallels between these two 19th century social forms - and to suggest that the positivist control agent - like the violent pornographer - may be driven not merely by the pursuit of knowledge, but also by passions for abstract and disembodied forms of social power.

It also should be pointed out that, in addition to its gender issues, positivism's commitment to value neutrality and emotional disengagement place it at odds with many

nonwhite or non-Eurocentric cultural traditions (e.g. the African-American tradition of “ecstatic” knowledge that attempts to emotionally dissolve the distance between subject and object, observer and observed). By dismissing traditional methods of ecstatic wisdom, western institutions have encouraged white male and positivist methods of instrumental world mastery. Hence, it comes as no surprise that positivist studies of “pathological deviance” have often characterized blacks as organically weak or mentally inadequate to modern social norms (e.g. Andrews and Miller, in the late 19th century, suggested that high rates of “Negro insanity” were caused by their inherent inability to handle their greater levels of freedom - but ignoring the brutal control practices that were going on).

It isn't simply that positivism transforms the historical effects of racist power hierarchies into matters of individual pathology. By presenting itself as an exclusive standard of truth, positivism also denies the material reality of alternative forms of knowledge (e.g. based in concrete interactional experience, dialogue and caring). This is an unfortunate legacy of positivist thought, particularly evident when considering the history of pathological theories of deviance.

In the next class, we will see how these themes play themselves out in the social control practices that have been carried out under the inspiration of the pathological perspective, including those that continue to this day. We will also give an overall assessment of the adequacy of this perspective.