**SOC 3290 Deviance**

 **Overheads Lecture 4: The Demonic Perspective:**

**\***Supernatural explanations of deviance are important because:

 - not entirely absent from our society

 - other theories emerged in response

 - some modern theories may be same thing in new guise

 **Theoretical Images:**

\* Demonic perspective:

 - cause/cure of deviance lies in supernatural

 - deviance=sin

 - our world=battleground for good/evil forces

\* Individuals succumb to evil forces & engage in deviance through:

 - temptation (some choice/responsibility)

 - possession (no choice/responsibility)

\* Cosmic consequences:

 - for individual

 - for natural order

 - for everybody

 **Identifying Demonic Deviance:**

\* Methods:

 - Spiritual “diviners”

 - Trial by ordeal

 - Trial by battle

\* Lateran Council:

 -banned ordeal by fire/battle

 -introduced sacrament of penance/confession

 - encouraged focus on individual responsibility

\* Colonial America: Salem Witch Trials (1692):

 - Witchcraft hysteria in community/accusations

 - Judicial proceedings followed: many executed

 - Evidence included:

 Mistakes in Lord’s Prayer

 Testimony of aggrieved citizens

 “Marks of the devil”

 Confessions

 “Spectral evidence”

 **Social Control of Demonic Deviance:**

\* Little differentiation between types of deviance

\* Control = religiously administered public punishment:

 - purges sinner’s body of devil

 - restores body of community to correct relation to God

 - administered by Priests/clerics (e.g. burning)

 - variations by social rank

  **Public Spectacles:**

\* 3 types:

 -public executions

 -public shaming

 -symbolic rituals of penance

\* Relied on:

 (1) centralized authority

 (2) community control practices

\* Centralized authority:

 - emerged as technology permitted economic surplus

 - hierarchical organization replaces egalitarian

 - religious revelation legitimizes

 - laws specify who can/can’t do what

\* Community Control:

 - deviants dealt with locally/publicly

 - rituals restore community to grace

 **Heterosexist Patriarchy & Religious Control:**

\* Western religious ideas favor male/ demonize female

\* 80% of witches burned were women.

\* Paganism driven underground (esp. After 12th century)

\* Biblical imagery portrays women as “conduit of evil”

 **The Demonic Perspective Today:**

\* Still seen in:

- popular culture (horror movies, popular literature, some churches)

 - canvassing literature

 - the “religious right” lobby

 - the controversy over women/gay clergy

 - the “Moral Majority”

 - televangelism

 - marketing Christian merchandise

\* Not merely conservative:

 - civil rights movement

 - antiwar movements

 - liberation theology

  **Assessment of the Demonic Perspective:**

\* Inadequate:

 -relies on belief - not observable fact

 -not testable

 -suspending viewpoint enables other useful questions

 **Naturalistic Observations:**

\* Some attempt to explain witch trials by substituting modern untestable superstitions (e.g. psychoanalytic theory):

 - both avoid responsibility

 - both rely on “experts”

\* Other explanations: social disruptions:

 -British revoking legal charter/economic crisis

 -Religious tolerance confronting orthodoxy

 -Shifts in orthodoxy (from dependence to mastery)

\* Results: Internal dissention & blaming women/less powerful

\* Demonic beliefs/actions must be situated in social/historical contexts

 - suspend judgement of validity

 - note influenced by/influencing social/economic/political matters

 - produces useful questions for research

 **Spiritual Observations:**

\* Naturalistic analyses lack sufficient perspective on evil

\* Calls to integrate spiritual dimension:

 - Stanford Lyman (evils in “social bedrock”)

 - Richard Quinney (need to integrate “sacred void”)

 - Tifft & Sullivan (control by others denies our “spiritual home”)

 - Pagan revival (Goddess-centered spiritualities)

\* All call for tempering of naturalistic analyses of deviance:

 - need to incorporate moral/spiritual/cosmic

 - neutral language disguises that deviance about good and evil

 - winners=saints; losers sinners