

Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History

By Stephen Pfohl

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Criminals. Witches. Rebels. Outsiders. Lunatics. Regardless of label, these groups stand outside the common sense of society and its relations of power. Whether by anguish, accident, or desire, they resist falling in line with that power. The story told within this comprehensive, thought-provoking text is a sociological one. Pfohl employs a social-historical perspective to describe and analyze the theory, methods, and control policies associated with nine major ways of conceiving deviant behavior. He analyzes each of the nine perspectives with three objectives: to describe the basic theoretical imagery, research strategies, and social control policies associated with the perspective; to locate the perspective within a general sociohistorical framework; and to develop a sense of critical evaluative thinking regarding the perspective s strengths and weaknesses. The theoretical perspectives examined span a wide variety of religious, legal, medical, psychological, social, economic, and political concerns. Throughout, attention is drawn to the ways that both images of deviance and strategies of social control are shaped by powerful social forces located at the historical intersections of gender, race, and class. In addition, references to literature, film, music, and painting are integrated to show parallels between images of deviance produced by scientists and those produced by artists.

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“Awesome book. The frameworks as described by Pfohl are of great use to students in applying theories to contemporary contexts.” — Leslie Elrod, *University of Cincinnati*
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