

Supernatural criminology vs classical criminology



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During the 17th and 18th centuries crimes were looked at as being caused by a sort of supernatural (evil) forces. Known as Supernatural explanation or Deontological Theory, crime is considered a sinful act in violation of the command of the Supreme Being. Humankind was literally at the mercy of the supernatural; fates, ghosts, and spirits. Felonies or mortal sins were manifestations of human nature, linking an alliance with the prince of darkness'. Some of the best examples of this in history include the Salem witch trials and the Spanish Inquisition.

In Europe during the Middle ages, truth is discovered by Trial by ordeal and confessions. It was said that punishment restores the balance of natural order. This struggle of good vs.. Evil led to brutal capital punishments such as mutations, burning, and hanging to clearance the body. During the 18th century a radically new approach to crime was introduced. Know as classical criminology, this theory was based on the idea of free will and rationality s the source of behavior.

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It says that people are rational while having free choice and are responsible for there actions. A Penal policy was put into place to control the " dangerous classes" which include property-less peasants, workers, and the unemployed. It assumes Hedonism and the fact that people are pleasure seekers known as the " Pleasure Principle". A big player in this theory Cesar Bacteria states that punishments should be proportional to the seriousness of the crime while deterring possible offenders.

Classical criminology emerged when social contract thinkers of the naturalistic approach started to challenge the spiritualistic approach that had been dominating European thinking for over a thousand years. Prior to the classical theory, the administration of criminal Justice was unpredictable and cruel which really had no deterrent value. Instead of acting in the place of God against what was identified as sin, criminal Justice began to shift to a more rational approach defining crimes and specific punishments for those crimes.