



On Deviate Behavior



Ordinarily the pathology which first draws attention to the patient's condition is conduct that is "inappropriate in the situation." But the decision as to whether a given act is appropriate or inappropriate must often necessarily be a lay decision, simply because we have no technical mapping of the various behavioral subcultures in our society, let alone the standards of conduct prevailing in each of them. Diagnostic decisions, except for extreme symptoms, can become ethnocentric, the server judging from his own culture's point of view individuals' conduct that can really be judged only from the perspective of the group from which they derive. Further, since inappropriate behavior is typically behavior that someone does not like and finds extremely troublesome, decisions concerning it tend to be political, in the sense of expressing the special interests of some particular faction of persons rather than the interests that can be said to be above the concerns of any particular grouping as in the case of physical pathology....

pp 363-364

Erving Goffman, (1961). *Asylums*. Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company.

