

Man's greatest pain, whether in life or in prison, is the sense of personal insignificance, of being helpless and of no real value as a person, an individual – a man. Imprisoned and left without any voice or control over the things that affect him, his personal desires and feelings regarded with gracious indifference, and treated at best like a child and at worst like an animal by those having control of his life, a prisoner leads a life of acute deprivation. The psychological pain involved in such an existence creates an urgent and terrible need for reinforcement of his manhood [instant gratification] and personal worth. Unfortunately, prison deprives those locked within of the normal avenues of pursuing gratification of their need and leaves them no instruments but sex, violence, and conquest to validate their sense of manhood and individual worth.

"Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe." Douglass

What then can we do about crime and punishment? To ask that question is to ask what we can do about violence— whether it takes the form of crime or punishment. **The first and most important principle might be to start doing nothing**; in other words, to stop doing the things we already do that only stimulate violence, such as responding to the kind of violence that we call crime with the kind that we call punishment.

Rather, all violence—both the kind that is called crime and the kind that is called punishment—is a symptom of an epidemic social pathology, which has been called structural violence since it is a product of our social and economic structure. That is, both crime and punishment are symptoms of the social pathology that results from the division of society into "higher" and "lower" social classes, castes and age groups, with huge differences of power, wealth, prestige, honor and privilege

As **Lawrence M. Friedman** put it, "the sad fact is that no amount of tinkering, no amount of jail building or amendments to penal codes will do the trick, at least not in this society ... [T]he "crime problem" flows largely from changes in the culture itself; it is part of us, our evil twin, our shadow; our own society produced it." (1993, 446-7, 460-464)

Capitalism has also brought economic recessions, global wars and terrorism, all of which emphasized personal insignificance and helplessness. The individual became subordinated to capitalist production and worked for profit's sake, for the development of new investment capital and for conspicuous spending... In Authoritarianism people surrender their independence and acquire strength by integrating themselves with a higher order. In an authoritarian situation, masochism and sadism assist people in escaping feelings of aloneness and powerlessness... Destructiveness tends to remove the objects that contribute to the individual's hopelessness and to which he often compares himself ... Automaton conformity is the most often used mechanism of escape ... Original thinking, spontaneity, emotional expression, and deep feelings are often subdued ...and replaced by making 'truth' relative, "a matter of taste."

Everybody watching ... is a nobody regardless of who they are; they may be sitting next to each other but all eyes are focused on the field; if they speak to each other it is almost never about each other but about the game which is being played before them and although the football fans cannot participate in the game they are watching or exert any influence over them, they attach the utmost importance to these events and associate their own needs and desires with the outcome in a most unusual way; rather than focusing their attention on things which have a real bearing on their desires, they reconstruct their desires to revolve around the things they pay attention to; their language even conflates the achievements of a team they identify themselves with, with their own actions: "we scored a goal"... shout the fans from the seats and their sofas; this stands in stark contrast from the way people speak about the things that go on in their own cities and communities: "they're building a new highway" , they say about the new changes in our neighbourhood ...

The allure and the fear of the primal myth about blackness as Eros drove Europeans and America whites to justify violence against black men. **Gunnar Myrdal** in *An American Dilemma* notes that the fear of miscegenation, which became an obsession in the America south, was acted out in irrational mob violence against blacks... hence, blackness retains its ambiguity as well as arousing curiosity and disdain.