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A prisoners perspective

A prisoner's perspective on the deranged, depraved, and deprived condition of 3rd class citizens
 an essay by [REDACTED]

The word caste, according to the American Heritage dictionary, is defined as a social class separated from others by distinctions of hereditary rank, profession or wealth. The most known use of this word is in the class system of Hindu society, but the word *casta* itself comes from the Portuguese word *casta* which means race.

For as long as recorded history can account for, there has been a high and low class, dominators and the dominated, oppressors and the oppressed. Many revolutions, reforms, and wars occurred to eliminate such social orders, but like when Hercules fought the Hydra, after chopping off one head another took its place. Sometimes two like in the famous gang expression "we don't die we multiply". Years later we have a country with so many different heads, so many different faces of oppression, and not just here, but around the world.

The purpose of this essay is not to delve into the exhaustive subject aforementioned, but to discuss the specific caste to which I belong to. Some identifying words for this can be minority, economically lower classed, and to further specification an inmate. During civil rights era, American Blacks had to contend with caste issues, and pointedly used the identifying term 2nd class citizens to describe their social status in America. The incarcerated citizen, if truly classified as a citizen, could then be categorized as a 3rd class citizen in America deprived of the civil liberties or fundamental individual rights supposedly guaranteed to all citizens by the 13th and 14th amendments to the U.S constitution. All citizens except those convicted of a crime.

As outlined in the 13th amendment or in the article of the constitution that states

1. All person's born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the states wherein they reside. no state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or happiness, without due process of law, nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Carefully, reread the ambiguous language of the aforementioned article in which it expresses that no state shall make or enforce laws that abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens nor deprive any person of life, liberty or happiness without due process, nor deny any person the equal protection by law, the privileges and immunities of citizens, as well as life, liberty, and happiness.

Generally, people tend to see prisoners and not without good reason, as deranged, depraved, and deprived. I don't know the exact point in which this extreme case of mental illness infested itself into the minds, hearts and soul of my people. Perhaps it is simply an aggravated form of the natural derangement found in the human conscience intensified by the deprived circumstances of lower caste existence.

Now, living in this deprived condition of 3rd class citizenship I could propose that this deranged, deprived mental state of the common incarcerated citizen is a result of prison. However, the majority of prisoner's already descend from lower class backgrounds, poverty, and political as well as racial minority origins. I would then argue that the depravity and derangement which is inherent within the collective human psyche across all classes, races, backgrounds, and eras are intensified by environmentally deprived circumstances, and that prison the usual product of such circumstances, further propagates this deteriorating, degenerative collective human psyche.

Depravity was common place in my upbringing where children were dying and being killed not by government officials, or Bill Gates or Donald Trump, but by members of one's very own community. I remember a 5 year old girl was shot to death in my neighborhood along with her auntie, and for what? By who? Having outlived several peers I saw the greater threat to my life lied with my very own kind

By the time I was 12 I had already grown callous and accepted the reality that I would probably die young and that human life couldn't be as valuable as people proclaimed it to be. That year a 15 year old kid named Nick got shot on my block and another kid my age also died that year from my middle school.

Years later, I'd find myself in prison as a juvenile caught in the grips of a kind of deranged depravity common to my generation and background. one of my favorite songs from my youth was lil Boosie's "Mind of a Maniac" which not only expressed some of the madness experienced by peoples of a certain background, but also the sense of madness I personally related to. The following are lyrics from the song:

"Ma ya wonder why your child so bad? Because the fucking body bags hypnotized my ass"

and as the chorus goes:

"welcome to the mind of a maniac, street nigga, street nigga, I ain't got no mind"

Hip-Hop music has long illustrated the madness and poor mental health of one born into such environments. Into such a caste, where exploitation of one's own people through selling crack to children and pregnant women to using misguided youth for criminal enterprise and prostitution is a commonality. This madness however, was originally caused by deprived and oppressive conditions which perpetuated itself into today's insanity.

Now within the context of prison, I see the same oppressed become even greater oppressors themselves. Prisoner's are oppressing prisoners. I've been at institutions where an inmate rapes another one, where gangs use their collective power to rob and extort other prisoners. Where drug dealers pridefully exploit the depressed and addicted for their own financial gain.

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Prisoner perspective pt 2

Yet, we cry out the evil of the traditional concept of an oppressor(white European or white american males) who are said to have raped our ancestors, robbed and extorted our lands, people and resources as well as exploited us financially, emotionally, and intellectually by various means. We however, do not take responsibility for our own actions when we do the same. Jesus wisely said:

"why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

We however do not remove this plank which keeps us from seeing clearly. The plank that obscures our own evil. The plank which is depravity, derangement, madness that keeps us from seeing clearly or rationally. The plank that covers the light of truth. Until we can all remove this plank we will continue to be hypocrites, continue to view things as us v.s them, continue to be a nation divided, and from these divisions we perpetuate caste, race, and class differences. All this contributes to the deranged, depraved, and deprived conditions of human kind, but more inherently so when it comes to 3rd class citizens.

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