

What Actually Causes Crime?

The Cause of Crime T

Recently, my local newspaper announced that an elderly lady had been beaten up and robbed in the street by an eight-year-old boy. I have to say that I am not in the least surprised: what else might the eight-year old do? When I was eight (1959) I lived in a world firmly committed to ideas of objectively-originated ethical values, which had issued by the same basic means as the entire framework upon which civilisation had (long ago) been built. Parents, teachers, and any authorities, would have shared not only belief in these things, but in their ultimate origin.

Unlike the eight-year old I recently heard about, that is to say, I would have had teachers in school who generally accepted a set of ideas about the origin and nature of reality, and of human destiny; today, if any teacher held such a set of beliefs (except very privately), he or she would soon be in very hot water - for the world has changed very much since 1959; now, suggesting that there might be objectively-derived sets of ethical values would either be treated with derision, or some trumped-up accusations of fascism. Three or four generations ago, the boy's forebears would have passed their ethical and moral values down, but by now they have all-but disappeared under progressive layers of amorality.

The “causes of crime” was not just an electioneering slogan. I would like very much to have asked one or two of our political leaders what, actually, they considered the cause or causes of crime to be, perhaps in a question in Parliament, or an open letter to our rulers, printed in a leading newspaper. I shall surely never get an opportunity to do either of those things, but I am fairly certain I know what form the answer would take. Today the universally-held idea - which dominates not only governments and rulers, but people of power and influence everywhere is ultimately derived from ideas about the nature of humankind which arose from the Eighteenth century.

Today, we would call them humanist or humanistic ideas, perhaps with a capital H. In this, it is thought that humans are in some sense possessed of an ethically-neutral nature, or rather, that they have an essential tendency towards, and this tendency is only removed by the damage of experience in the world. Thus, if peoples' experience of life is one of security, plenty, and fulfilment, they will inevitably behave in a “good” way. If the opposite, then we have the source of badness. The causes of crime - and all human badness - are due simply and solely to bad things happening to people, or the absence of good things which they might reasonably expect.

Thus, the “causes of crime”, as our leaders' would assume, would inevitably be something to do with deprivation - material probably, or perhaps something more to do with equality or basic justice. Of course, any kind of deprivation - say of livelihood, decent means of living, or of any measure of social justice - is a vile evil which we are all right to oppose; but if we assume that opposing such things successfully - bringing about a fairer, more just world, the kind of world which we all hope for - is likely to remove crime, or any kind of human badness, we will be very much mistaken.

The idea that we are born into the world - coming into existence, in some morally-neutral state, only to be corrupted later - is a hopeless dream, a futile, dangerous wish (it is obviously false, since if all people come into existence “good”, then there cannot be any

human institutions or human means or methods which could be corrupt, and corrupting, since all that we have is made by people - could animals have made something which originated human evil? It is dangerous, since all human attempts to regain or recreate this innocent state have resulted in misery, and always will).

In reality, the *cause* of crime is the nature of humans, the way people are - *all* of us - and always will be. The only thing we can do is manage this situation as wisely and effectively as possible (foolishly, in modern times, we have tried simply to deny it, to turn away from the truth, to embrace illusions). At least in the past - bad, but better than unreality - they tried to contain, to hold in check, the worst of things (this was called *discipline* and punishment was involved).

Christianity taught the doctrine of an essential human flaw *and* human responsibility; but the eight-year old in my city simply has a world in which people decide for themselves, and live for themselves, and all truths and falsehoods are equal.

Inevitably, there will be more eight-year-old criminals on our streets, for our authorities have abandoned, wilfully, any shred of moral authority they would once have had (any government - for example - which allows the large-scale destruction of human life carried out by the abortion industry has ineluctably jettisoned any moral ground it might have had for arguing that killing is), and indeed, the whole idea of “wrong” presupposes a system of moral laws proceeding from a greater-than-human source, within a framework of beliefs and ideas which have, some while ago, been left behind.

Manslaughter is now no more than that which the law tells you not to do; human law now really is simply those who *have* protecting themselves against the rest, the protection of the interests of the few.

