

# Take pity on odd behaviour of 'do-gooders'

Those who advocate jail for rapists need tolerance says Dr Jon Garvey, tongue firmly in cheek.

EVERY time a British court acts with rationality towards a convicted rapist, as has been recently publicised in the press, hordes of vociferous individuals may be relied upon to raise their voices in protest, and demand imprisonment, castration, or even hanging rather than psychiatric rehabilitation.

It is all too easy to pass judgment on these clearly unreasonable individuals as 'do-gooders' without realising that they are suffering, through no fault of their own, from a personality disorder predisposing them to such behaviour.

Many of these unfortunates were brought up in pathogenic family systems, where sympathy always tended to be directed towards the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of such crimes as rape, murder or terrorism. Once such views are inculcated in individuals, they can be resistant to all forms of treatment, including drugs and psychotherapy.

They often hold rigid moral codes which regard slashing young girls with razors as evil, rather than maladaptive, and this creates in them, when they encounter such behaviours, a sense of inner tension, which is often only relieved by seeing the 'criminal', as they would term him, incarcerated in prison for long periods, or even executed.

This feeling of inner tension, over which such people have no control, leads them to wish to see laws passed which will satisfy their desires.

Partly underlying this obsessional dislike of people whose



Many still believe criminals can exercise 'control' or 'will' over their actions.

behaviour does not fit their own rigid system is the belief, all too common nowadays, that individuals are able to exercise some sort of 'control' or 'will' over their actions. Absurd as this is in the light of modern knowledge of inheritance and the effects of environment, we are all prone to this anthropocentric view.

For example, as I type these lines, it is all too easy to feel that I have some sort of choice in doing so, rather than its being the inevitable outcome of the pressures brought to bear on me by my upbringing and surroundings, and that I could have equally written a piece on the history of catsmeat, or even nothing at all.

But, of course, it is a logical absurdity to suggest that I could have written anything other than

what I have... there! I've written it. QED.

What, then, is to be done to protect society from such a person as I have described? First, criticism and censure, and particularly prevention, are clearly counterproductive. If frustrated by society from pursuing his aims, his sense of inner tension will only continue to mount until it engenders far more serious outbursts of morality, of greater danger to you and me.

No, far better to let him and his fellows pass their laws, and execute the rapists, for he will then be in a much calmer frame of mind for psychotherapeutic counselling, wherein he may be taught to understand, respect and even love his former victim.

Over a period of years he may be encouraged to abandon his old views, although one may expect many relapses whenever he comes across a case of 'wickedness' or 'injustice'. A true sense of patience on the part of the counsellor, and endless tolerance of his patient's actions, is required.

But should he succeed, how rewarding to think he might have helped society one step nearer to the time when all bigotry and ignorance has given way to respect and sympathy for our fellow human beings.

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