

A MOMENTARY OR LONG-TERM

"DIMINISHED CAPACITY TO REASON"

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A penis got me going on this Thinksheet, the only abused penis in our country's legal history. It got cut off by a wife who logically, though irrationally, reduced her problem-analysis from the whole of her husband to this one part of him. As I write, her forensic psychologist is arguing momentary mental incompetence, specified as a "diminished capacity to reason." Translation: She knew what she was doing to her sleeping husband but, in the moment of passion, couldn't think straight. This new wrinkle on the insanity plea would of course spring all criminals except those who committed their crimes not in a seizure of passion but, in Truman Capote's phrase, "in cold blood." But since the prosecution's cold-blood case is unprovable, on this reading violent crimes would be unactionable.

Now that I have reduced this whole mode of jurisprudential "reasoning" to nonsense, ie cognitive insanity, behold Calvin's Erewhom (Sam. Butler's 1872 anagram for "nowhere"):

CALVIN AND HOBBS

By Bill Watterson



1 Calvin's is a self-inflicted diminished capacity for reason. He built his snow-prison, but claustrophobic terror forbids his solving his problem: he can't think straight, & needs counseling & perhaps confronting (as the prophets confronted Israel & Judah) to get him going on demolition or at least (once his reason's working again) on door-making....Resolution #1, then, has the objective of restoring-increasing Calvin's reasoning-power. The message: "Something's wrong with you that you can fix. Your energies have been available to your fears: you can choose to make them available instead to your faith." Calvin's goal was to "be safe": his would-be savior's role is to persuade him to Reason, Enlightenment. Once free, Calvin will need more than reason: without reason, he can't escape on his own. Resolution #1 is *talk-active*.

2 Let's call Resolution #2 karmic. The message is neglect: "Let Calvin yell, he did it to himself; & the sun will melt his fort--though by then he may be dead; but if so, it can't be helped." And its cool, philosophical: "Things work out if you give them enough time." Marx believed private-capital states would collapse of their "internal contradictions" (which may be true of such states, is true of Marxist states). The message: "Something's wrong with Calvin that he can't fix, but nobody's responsible for answering his cry of "Helllp!!" So Resolution #2 is *passive*.

3 Resolution #3 is *force-active*, externally breaching the wall of Calvin's fort. If the battering-ram is used with too much power it may kill him, but that would take nothing away from the fact that the ramming was well-intentioned. (The Janet Reno defense of the government-caused Waco holocaust, the government's argument being that Resolution #1 hadn't worked [though two biblical scholars had submitted evidence that it was working] & Resolution #2 would be too expensive.) The message: "Something is wrong with you that you can't fix, so I'll force a fix on you whether or not you want me to. Trust me, it'll be good for you." Here's

the compassionistic society, by the law of unintended consequences spawning dependency.

4 Resolution #4 is *co-active*. The message: "Something's wrong with you that you can't fix alone: I'll help you." (As I write, the trial of surviving Koresh followers is hearing from some who were ready to help but the government's heavy-handedness cut them off.) Here, Calvin is digging out while his helper is digging through. Contrast with #1, which is only talk & may lead to individual achievement: #4 will lead to co-achievement, to community. Both are necessary to personal & societal wholeness, health.

5 Now, why did Calvin build the wall? Fear. Of what? Perhaps God, the Hound of Heaven. Or truth: said the first Lord Shaftesbury, don't follow it too closely or its heels will kick your teeth out. Or history: everybody's past has awkwardnesses a body wants protection from (& this protection, or circle-wall, is built into every paradigm under heaven: all historiography is "interested"). Of chaos (from moral degeneracy & crime). Of grace, God's doing for us in Jesus Christ what we couldn't do for ourselves, so we can do for God, ourselves, others, & the good earth what we should. Yes, & of reason, divine enemy of ignorance & all violations of reality.

6 Three **fears** deter many from speaking for what they see as truth. (1) The fear of confrontation: what would happen to me if I took the risk? (2) The fear of obloquy (Lat., being "spoken against"), name-calling (being called a sexist, a racist, an anti-Semite [a class of racist], an elitist, an intellectual [ie, egghead]). (3) The fear of being misunderstood. No wonder the multitudes would rather dwell in the valleys of murkiness than on the heights of honesty & clarity!

I'm no paragon of virtues, but I do not suffer from these fears. I prefer--in the faith that truth is finally better served by speech than by silence--to suffer the consequences of risking speaking out.