

Bring back flogging



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Bring Back Flogging

This essay by Jeff Jacoby illustrates an author's use of ironic sarcasm otherwise known as satire to defend and illustrate his platform on his position. Jacoby uses in this essay verbal irony (persuasion in the form of ridicule). In the irony of this sort there is a contrast between what is said and what is meant.

Jacoby's claim in simple is he believes that flogging should be brought back to replace the more standard conventional method of the imprisonment of violent and non-violent offenders.

His grounds for the revival of flogging stems back to his initial mention of the Puritan punishment system. He cites how in 1632 Richard Hopkins was flogged and branded for selling guns and weapons to the Indians, how Joseph Gatchell in 1684 convicted of blasphemy, had his tongue pierced with a hot iron, and finally in 1694 Hannah Newell and her consort were lashed for adultery. He concludes that the corporal punishment system did not vanish with the puritans, Delaware did not get around to repealing it till 1972.

Jacoby's sarcasm can be noted by the way he illustrates the punishment of various acts. He notes in a list that killers, drug dealers, and other acts ultimately end up in prison. Prison he says seems to be the all purpose, all in one punishment. His statistical evidence is that of the startling 1.6 million Americans behind bars today. This represents a 250% increase since 1980. According to him we cage individuals at an alarming rate despite the general consensus of the criminal system being a failure. He cites the information of Princeton criminologist John Dillulio that about three out of four felons are released early or not locked up at all. Many of them are on the streets

without meaningful parole or supervision. And while many believe that amateur thugs should be deterred before they become career criminals, it is almost unheard of for judges to send first or second time offenders to jail. Jacoby then goes on to ridicule our current penal system by estimating the cost to cage criminals at about thirty thousand per inmate per year. Jacoby believes that prison is a graduate school of criminal studies, that they emerge more ruthless and savvy than when they entered. Also for many of them, prison is a sign of manhood or even a status symbol. In 1994 the Globe reported that more than two hundred thousand prison inmates are raped each year, usually to the indifference of the guards. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun has written that the horrors experienced by many young inmates particularly those of nonviolent offenses are unimaginable.

Jacoby's argument of flogging attempts to show how it can be more productive over the conventional method of punishment seemingly the only way, imprisonment. His beliefs are that public whippings will prevent youths and first time offenders from becoming lifelong felons. The benefits deduced from his argument for flogging assuming it proves to be conclusive would be such. Lowering the rate of felons in jail, freeing up space for the more violent offenders. The appalling estimated amount of thirty thousand a year per inmate would be saved. A public whipping would not be associated with respect and sign of manhood or status symbol that prison serves for many offenders. Flogging he believes would deter many of the first time offenders and youth along with preventing them from being repeat and long time offenders. The pain, scars, and embarrassment of public whippings would far

exceed the value or risk reward benefit of doing a petty crime thus forcing people to think about their actions before they did it. Jacoby contends that he is unsure whether being whipped is more degrading than being caged. At the end of his essay he draws attention to the point of the terrible risk of being raped in prison as an argument in favor of replacing imprisonment with flogging.

I think that Jacoby appeals to the readers sense of sympathy for the wrongly accused and incarcerated, along with the non-violent felons in prison. Jacoby asserts that many will value the worth of flogging being that it could prevent wrongly accused or non-violent offenders from being incarcerated and subjected to the terrible risk of being raped along with the other dangerous conditions in prison. All this holds true assuming that public flogging serves its supposed purpose, and the terrible risks of prison are a confirmed reality.

When Jacoby in paragraph three states that today we are more enlightened than our puritan forefathers where they used flogging we lock wrongdoers up in cages, he is portraying a method of verbal irony (sarcasm). He continues his sarcastic voice when he lists a criminal act and states that each punishment seems to be incarceration. His satire of the modern day justice system is even more noticeable when he claims that prison is the all purpose, all in one punishment. His final statement of the essay that perhaps the puritans were more enlightened than we thought contradicts one of his initial statements concluding that we are more enlightened than the puritans how we cage wrongdoers confirms his satire or verbal irony in his essay.

The question arises toward Jacobys first reason for flogging. Jacobys case for the overpopulation and development of new institutions doesnt find favor in my eyes. Yes, the tax paying American is paying for the prison system, but he also pays to employ many of the correction officers along with the contractors who build and restore many of the institutions. Thus the penal system is providing jobs for many Americans. Secondly incarceration is a more reliable method of securing violent criminals for a time as opposed to flogging them in public only to release them back on the street with an intensified vengeance. Studies have shown that many criminals better themselves in prison such as getting a high school, college diploma , or even trade degrees. To say that a stint in prison is a sign of manhood or a status symbol for many inmates is a matter of opinion. Jacobys report about the high risk of rape in prison can be an exaggerated statistic which may include degenerative prisons, or may only include a homosexual population in prison. The general statement of the amount of inmates raped per year in prison isnt a conclusive number without breaking down all the variables of the statistic.

Studies done by psychologists on the use of corporal punishment in adolescents has shown to be effective for short term amounts of time but has negative long term effects. One such effect is showing the recipient that violence is an acceptable form of behavior along with increasing non compliant behavior for the future. Corporal punishment may also present a problem in many non violent offenders as it may teach them that the way to let out dissatisfaction is by physically abusing others. Allowing corporal

punishment may open the door to other brutal and torturous methods of criminal control which may inevitably lead to violation of ones rights.

Jacoby does pose some promising insight to flogging as an alternative method of punishment compared to incarceration. Such as the monetary aspects which can be put forth into a preventive program. Public fear of committing petty crimes, which would result in public whippings exceeding the cost reward benefit. Even the reduced risk of prison rape especially for non violent offenders.

In a final analysis of the pros and cons of Corporal punishment, it seems that the present penal system until further studies on the alternative are conclusive , should remain in effect. Corporal punishment does provide some insight, although presents too many risks and negative possibilities at this time.

Bibliography

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