



On Victoria Coren's plea for nuance in our understanding of Polanski's rape of a child.

Victoria Coren argues for nuance as if we don't understand that rapists can be perfectly ordinary men. Rapists laugh with their children, create beautiful art, they're philosophers, economists, binmen, in short they are people with nuance. We understand this.

Victoria Coren argues that S takes responsibility for drinking and being in a situation where Polanski could rape her, even while she doesn't excuse him for the abuse. Coren argues that this is nuance. That to comment on her victims guilt is patronising. It's not. How could S have been responsible? How? If we accept that she can't have been, and really you have to accept that, then how can we be patronising her by saying 'you weren't responsible'?

We understand that Polanski has never been held to account for his crime, that the system that should have protected S further abused her. How can Victoria Coren be surprised that S seems ambivalent about responsibility when the message she's been given, from almost every quarter, is that somehow Polanski has suffered enough. It's a message that Coren seems determined to underscore with her plea for nuanced understanding.

We live in a world where we want our abusers, our rapists, to be one-dimensional monsters because then we can say that rapists are aberrant, a deviation from the norm, because then they become different from the men that we live with and the film-makers that create beautiful art. They become 'other'. Recognisable. Lacking in nuance. This is the source of the disbelief that seems to surround Polanski the rapist. His sensitivity to suffering, his understanding of humanity and his ability as a film-maker all exist. They're real. They do not negate the fact that he raped a child.

We understand that you don't have to be a monster to rape. We understand that victims have complicated feelings about their rape. We understand nuance Victoria. What you don't seem to understand is that the abuse, the rape, the sodomisation, the crime were not nuanced. He was a grown man that raped a thirteen year old girl. There is no nuance in that.

Admin: We've removed the name of the child as we believe she deserves anonymity.