

Playboy perpetuates unhealthy stereotypes

Playboy photographer David Chan's visit to the University this week has been the topic of often-heated campus-wide debate. Protesters who oppose the concept behind Playboy picketed outside Chan's Eugene motel Monday. But Chan, who was a judge at Tuesday's Air Band contest in the EMU Ballroom, received massive applause when introduced to the contest's audience.

Chan says he interviewed more than 100 University students who want to appear in the publication. But a similar number of University men and women have stated their opposition to Playboy. The campus is clearly split on the issue.

The Emerald's six-person editorial board also is divided on the issue. The board discussed the topic several times between Sunday and Thursday before agreeing upon an editorial position. The arguments presented by board members mirrored many of those presented in other campus discussions.

Throughout the board's meetings, the issue boiled down to a number of key questions:

- Does Playboy portray women as objects rather than people?
- Does Playboy reinforce stereotypes that feminists have battled against for many years?
- Does Playboy perpetuate violent attitudes toward women?
- Does Playboy's portrayal of women impose an undesirable self image on women?
- Is posing for Playboy an issue of free self-expression?
- Why does someone read Playboy?
- Why does someone pose for Playboy?

There are no easy answers to any of these questions. Reading and posing for the publication are very individual experiences. But women who pose for the magazine must understand what they are doing.

Many may simply be posing for the money, to fulfill a fantasy or to simply exhibit their body for others. But the act of posing in Playboy perpetuates stereotypes of women that have been established in our society, just as photos of muscular "macho men" also perpetuate unhealthy stereotypes.

Women who pose in Playboy, Penthouse or similar publications are often not recognized for whatever internal qualities they may possess. Instead, each woman is simply a bag of desirable bones that has been photographed for male consumption. Many men can and do view the magazine without falling into this attitude trap, but too many others simply see Playboy's women as sexual animals.

If any woman wishes to pose for such a publication, that is her right. In a country such as ours that places a high priority on the individual's right to free self-expression, this must be a given.

But feminists — both men and women — have worked hard during the past 20 years to break down the stereotypes that magazines such as Playboy help to perpetuate.

Playboy's models send an unhealthy message to Americans of any age. Young men, by reading Playboy, learn to think of women as sex objects, while some older men think of women as solely existing for man's sexual pleasure. This is not the image of woman that society should portray to our youth. Women need to be told and shown that they are respected as individuals and not as physical playthings.

IS THAT MAN OVER THERE THE MAN WHO RAPED YOU, YOUNG LADY?



THAT'S HIM, SIR — THAT'S THE RAPIST!

HE IS, TOO — I JUST SENT HIM TO PRISON FOR 50 YEARS!!



GOOD ENOUGH — GO TO PRISON FOR 50 YEARS!



ER, WAIT...

I'M SORRY, SIR — THAT'S NOT THE RAPIST AFTER ALL!



VERY WELL, DON'T GO TO PRISON FOR 50 YEARS BUT REMAIN A CONVICTED RAPIST. JUSTICE IS SERVED HEARING CLOSED.



letters

Ethnocentric

Last term I took astronomy and black history as electives. I was surprised to find a common lesson in these two unrelated disciplines. These courses revealed to me the dangerous need of western civilization to see itself as the center of the universe.

European astronomy began with the belief that the earth was literally the center of the universe. It took centuries of gradual erosion to dispel this belief.

At one point, despite overwhelming evidence, it was a religious crime punishable by torture to believe that the Earth revolved around the sun.

When Europeans began exploring Africa, they held the belief that European civilization was the center of the universe.

They not only felt superior to the Africans socially, intellectually, and technologically, but they also felt divinely chosen to "lead the savages to salvation."

As part of this mission, they enslaved the African people, raped the women by the millions, and divided up the entire continent among themselves.

We now know that the Earth is a small planet revolving around a small star at the edge of an average galaxy consisting of millions of stars in a universe containing millions of galaxies.

We now have overwhelming evidence that at the time when Europe was ravaging Africa, there were many African

civilizations superior to Europe intellectually, culturally and technologically.

We know that blacks are in no way inferior to whites. Yet, despite this evidence, racism is eroding unpardonably slow.

End racism now!

Free South Africa.

Colin Davey
Milky Way Galaxy

Last straw

Michael Cross's latest letter (ODE, May 8), is the last straw.

Speaking as concerned members of the community, we feel that frank discussions on bestiality and homosexuality are inappropriate in the Emerald.

Explicit references to female genitalia and unusual sexual acts are in the worst taste.

We're concerned that the Emerald's editorial staff is failing to live up to its responsibility to the University and to the community at large, which it serves.

Arguments about the appropriateness of bestiality and homosexuality are thoroughly outrageous.

Both topics should be limited to more private, personal discussions. Sexual preferences and pastimes are not the purview of the Emerald.

The recent reemergence of the Students for Bestiality controversy makes my point.

That controversy did a good deal of harm to the image of the students and their programs at the University.

Now, once again, we have discussions about homophobia — which is pure balderdash, is it a clinical syndrome? And even students are proudly announcing their gayness or straightness in your pages.

Discussions that allow distinctions between Christians and gays and homophobes and sperm receptacles can only reflect a lack of understanding, which harms the students and the University and reflects badly on the Emerald itself.

We say edit, cut, refuse, but don't subject us to silly, rather obscene discussions on matters more properly discussed in

private.

The Emerald cannot be a place for the advocacy or denial or proclamation of one's sexuality.

Chris Lewis
Edward Metzler

Tradition

Why does China have virtually no problems with AIDS, herpes, gonorrhea or syphilis? Because despite being atheistic, they see the societal and biological advantages to promoting traditional morality — with the exception of abortion.

Needless to say no concentrations of homosexuals exist like those we've allowed to develop in our large urban areas.

If people practiced the moral principles taught by Christ then sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) wouldn't have environments to multiply in and would eventually become extinct.

Actually, the epidemics of STDs (some which cause sterility and birth defects) testify to the dangers of promiscuity.

AIDS (the newest and deadliest STD) wouldn't exist in America — and on a worldwide basis it would be rare indeed — if not for the lifestyles of most homosexuals.

Nearly one million people have been exposed to the HTLV3 virus, a disease unknown of prior to 1978. Why? Because the extreme promiscuity of most homosexuals ensures that the virus will be passed on to multiple contacts.

In other words, someone catches AIDS, has sex with a variety of individuals (who pass it on) and under such conditions the virus is regularly supplied with numerous warm bodies to thrive in.

Oh, by the way, the notion that "lesbian blood is the safest" is ludicrous!

The safest prospect for blood donation would be an individual who, if single, practiced self-control or a married heterosexual couple who were faithful to one another. The danger of catching any STD from them through blood transfusion would be zero!

Lori Parkman
Lane Community College
Friday, May 17, 1985

oregon daily emerald

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