

Knowledge of rape a benefit for society

The Rape Awareness Symposium starts today and should be attended by everyone. It provides a supportive and open outlet for women and men to discuss their fears and learn more about the crime.

Rape has only recently become an acceptable topic to discuss in public. Before victims' rights movements, rape victims were shunned by society. The crimes were hidden because the victim and her family felt embarrassed. In most cases, the victim believed it was her fault, not the attacker's.

Although no rapes on campus have been reported this year, that does not mean there haven't been any. The myths and feelings of persecution still prevent many women from reporting attacks.

Symposiums such as this one break down these fears. They promote awareness of the crimes and relay feelings of trust to the people. If a victim feels accepted and trusted in the society, then more of the crimes will be reported.

In the past, men have almost equalled the number of women attending the symposium. This shows an increasing acceptance of the fact of rape in our society and a willingness to prevent it. Not all men are potential rapists. By breaking down this myth and promoting communication, people will be able to prevent attacks.

Programs like this emphasize that rape is something that could happen to any of us. By attending the symposium, we can develop a better understanding of the crime and how to prevent it.

The symposium is a positive reflection on a society that once scorned rape victims. It shows a change in attitudes and an openness to discuss a sensitive issue. Breaking down the fears and misconceptions of rape is the first step in stopping the crime.

Soviet demonstrations show changing attitudes

The demonstrations and protests in the Soviet Union surrounding the release of 140 political prisoners followed by the recent release of Jewish dissident Iosif Begun show a conflict of interests in Mikhail Gorbachev's move to a more open society.

Gorbachev has promoted a more democratic form of expression recently. The release of the prisoners and Begun shows Gorbachev is attempting to open the iron curtain. Protests on behalf of Begun were allowed. Yet the attack of the protesters, with two demonstrators injured, shows changes in the Soviet Union come slowly.

The violence that marred the demonstrations exemplifies an oppressed country trying to speak out. Gorbachev has made many advances toward acceptance of free expression and cooperation with the United States. However, the Soviet Union was founded on a much different principle. It is as easy for the USSR to become democratic as it is for the U.S. to become communistic.

Gorbachev should be commended on his efforts to allow demonstrations in the first place. But the attacks on the demonstrators can not be condoned. The Soviet Union needs to find a way to allow peaceful protests that won't digress into riots.

The United States should support and help the Soviets in their small, but important changes in the system.



Letters

Scientific

In reply to Ron Rousseve's recent letters to the ODE, I would like to make the following points:

1) Rousseve criticizes my religious outlook as a "pre-conceived" world view that is "discontinuous with rational processes." I have already argued that reason and faith are not necessarily discontinuous, and nothing Rousseve has said disconfirms that. I could as easily argue that Rousseve has a pre-conceived world view. Both religion and science have an associated world view, and it is logically impossible to prove that one is better than another.

2) Despite what many scientists think, many aspects of life cannot be reduced to a series of "scientifically validated" statements. If you doubt this, try to explain to yourself, or a fictional other who has never tasted salt, what salt TASTES like. I don't mean explain its chemical composition or density, but explain what it tastes like. The only way to completely understand salt is to taste salt. The only way to completely understand a religious experience is to have a religious experience.

3) While I agree that Universities should encourage

critical thinking, I also believe that a great deal of what a University should teach its students has nothing to do with issues that can be "scientifically validated." How can appreciation for great art, drama, literature or history be taught only through statements that can be scientifically validated? The essence of great drama or art is that they transcend scientific explanation.

4) If Rousseve is a "post-Christian" agnostic, then I am a "post-scientific" Christian.

Anton Tolman
Psychology GTF

Platoon

After reading Sean Axmaker's review of the movie "Platoon" (ODE, Feb. 5), I cannot help but wonder if Sean truly believes what he writes.

In his review Axmaker maintains that the film did not disturb him and that writer/director Oliver Stone "lets his characters talk about their experiences instead of showing them."

In one scene of the movie a platoon of American soldiers enters a Vietnamese village in search of NVA soldiers. While in the village one soldier smashes in an innocent boy's face with his rifle butt and then laughs about it. Another soldier cold bloodedly murders a woman because she will not stop talking. Before torching the village, a group of soldiers rape two pre-teen Vietnamese girls and justify their actions by saying that the Vietnamese are "gooks" and not human beings.

Considering these events are based on Stone's actual wartime experience, I find these acts deeply disturbing. The fact that Sean did not find these acts disturbing is very puzzling.

Equally puzzling is Sean's criticism that because the characters talk about their experiences instead of showing them, the movie is reduced to "empty, preachy rhetoric." If I remember correctly, the occurrences mentioned above were actually shown and not just talked about as Axmaker contends.

I hope Axmaker's review does not stop people from seeing "Platoon." It is a powerful, compelling, yet disturbing film. But it is one that must be seen by all if travesties like Vietnam are to be avoided in the future.

Todd Worthley
Political Science

Fishy

Mr. Hytrek's observations deserve some comment (ODE, Feb. 9). "Fisheries management is not an exact science." True.

"All sides must cooperate if we want to preserve the severely depleted salmon runs in our present society." A commendable conclusion.

Expediently, the press and media coverage leave out the commercial ocean fisheries. Whose side?

In all forms of entity disagreement truth is the first sacrifice.... Or could it be some corporation predicts a profitable market for radioactive fish?

Leroy George
Former student

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit the letter for length or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

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