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LETTERS

Corrupt money

Until I came to this University last fall, I thought a school's purpose was to educate. I am so relieved to know that, like the outside world, colleges are more concerned with money than the betterment of mankind. What else could explain the apathetic attitude of this conservative vestige, the ODE?

The editorial concerning Phil Knight's donations (April 7, ODE) said that fear was "unwarranted." Why is this so? Pres. Clinton is accused of allowing foreign influence on his presidency for Asian donations of much less than \$25 million. Also, Clinton is probably more trustworthy than Frohn-mayer because he didn't keep any of the money for himself.

People say there was nothing wrong with the donation because Knight gave the school a huge sum of money, which we greatly needed. This is true, but Frohn-mayer could have rejected his take or put it into a trust fund for whoever is president after him.

Thank you also for insulting the intelligence of your readers.

"Blind paranoia... is unnecessary and hurtful." Of course it is. But the inhumanity of Nike is obvious to both the general population and the enlightened ones here at Phil Knight University.

When your workers make only 26 cents an hour, how can you justify donating \$25 million? Why not throw just one million of that back into the company to raise wages in Indonesia?

I am insulted that the editorial board would all be as close minded as to all "blindly" support such a ridiculous editorial. The fact remains that money is the number one priority on this campus.

Early this month, we learned that the Rolling Stones can't play here because they will interrupt the football team's schedule. And, as I found out, the football team is not an opportunity for students but a "cash cow."

Then Monday brings the endless Phil Knight funding saga. What will be the next issue where the University chooses cash over what is right? I'm anxiously awaiting your editorial on that one.

Anthony Kullen
History

Religious freedom

In the April 11 issue of the *Emerald*, I noticed Nicole Kristal's editorial about the Heaven's Gate suicide relating to Christianity. I became offended when Christianity was referred to as "one of the largest cults of them all, sedating people with the Bible."

I believe this statement is inaccurate. Christianity is not a cult and neither is any other religion. A religion only becomes a cult if there is an obsessive devotion to the group, like what happened with the Heaven's Gate cult.

I believe that people do think for themselves and choose what they want to believe. Believing in the Bible does not "deprive" anyone of "sexual desires" or cause people to "dwell in unnecessary shame and guilt."

The Bible is to help people lead better lives and to live Christ-like. Nowhere in the Bible does it say to kill yourself to catch the UFO behind the Hale-Bopp comet.

Nobody is forced to "follow other people's ideology." Everyone has the freedom of choice to choose what they want to believe. Christians believe in the Bible because they want to, not because they surrendered their freedom of right "by allowing another institution or person to think for [themselves]."

Kristal writes, "You were born with the right and responsibility to think for yourself." This statement is correct. People do think for themselves. Just look around. There are Mormons, Lutherans, Atheists, Agnostics, Buddhists, Catholics and many more religious organizations.

Kathleen Norgaard
Pre-Journalism

Cheap shot

Nicole Kristal's editorial on religion (April 11, ODE) makes some strong statements about religion that are very misleading. In defense of the religious views held by those on campus and around the world:

Religion is not "surrendering your right to think for yourself." Granted, you will find a few people sitting serenely in every house of worship who will blindly follow their religious leaders but only very rarely (as in the case of Heaven's Gate) will you find that a religion requires you to "check your brain at the door."

People often invest a good part of their lives to the study of religious texts and philosophy, and many go as far as receiving doctorates in these fields.

Kristal states, "Why think for yourself when you can lazily pick up a black book that will tell you how to lead your life?" If I wanted somebody to tell me how to lead my life, I would move back home with my mother.

Religion is offered as a guide to life choices and is subject to interpretation. For example, look at the large number of Christian de-

nominations present, all of which use the Bible as their text.

We feel that Kristal is taking a cheap and uneducated shot at Christianity. Perhaps this is because it is a religion that has taken a great amount of criticism in the PC wave around college campuses in the U.S. and now at the University of Oregon.

When Kristal insults religion, is she also talking about Judaism? About Navajo religious ceremonies? About Buddhism?

Religion in any form is a crucial part of many cultures around the world. No religion deserves to be treated with such a lack of respect.

Sonnet Bruerto
Renee Vineyard
Spanish / Anthropology

Illogical leap

In the April 11 *Emerald*, Nicole Kristal writes, "Religion is still the opiate of the masses." The Heaven's gate cult is the base of her argument. She is correct — when people don't think for themselves, tragedies occur. The Heaven's Gate cult is certainly an illustration. However, Ms. Kristal makes a large and illogical leap when stating that Christianity is a cult that does not allow free thinking.

Ms. Kristal must distinguish between cult and religion. The dictionary defines a cult as "a religious group made up of dissenters from an established or parent church." A religion is "a system and profession of faith or worship."

The Heaven's Gate was a cult; they did not follow the Faith as expressed by Christianity. Castration and belief of a spaceship trailing the Hale-Bopp comet are not doctrines of the Christian church.

Further research on Christianity would show Ms. Kristal that free will is a basic doctrine of the Church. We choose from the most trivial to the most important: what clothes you wear, what major you study and what religion you follow. The Church gives more freedom than our daily strains of compulsive advertising and peer pressure.

If Ms. Kristal is going to assume that all religions are opiates, she must consider all religions. Ms. Kristal failed to provide any relevant examples of cults and religious sedation in Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism or other religions. She ought to consider further research before proceeding with any subsequent conjecture.

Gonzalo F. del Real
M.B.A. Student

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