

# PERSPECTIVES

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## Misguided MESSAGE

*When anarchists began harassing innocent citizens, they took their demonstration too far*

The likelihood is low, probably non-existent, of finding anyone living in America who believes this is a perfect society. Besides the basic problems — an understaffed, poorly funded education system, for instance — there's the ever-increasing gap between the haves and have-nots in this country.

The obscenity of one individual, Bill Gates in this case, being worth \$90 billion should disgust us all. Even more disturbing is the fact that approximately 1 percent of Americans control roughly 50 percent of the nation's wealth. Throw in the idea that corporations continue to profit from the exploitation of Third World workers and the whole mess makes a person want to, well, revolt.

Which is exactly what happened last Friday when a parade of anarchists thrashed their way through downtown Eugene. The group, fresh off a two-day conference at the University, initially protested in a fairly toned-down manner, smashing a TV set and burning an American flag, among other activities.

Then, as the demonstration gathered steam, individuals began taking out their frustrations in more destructive ways. Several people busted windows in businesses, apparently unconcerned whether the target was corporate-oriented, such as US Bank, or independently-owned, like Brenner's Furniture. In addition to the vandalism directed at buildings, protesters took to stopping cars on

the road and damaging the vehicles under the guise of "reclaiming the streets."

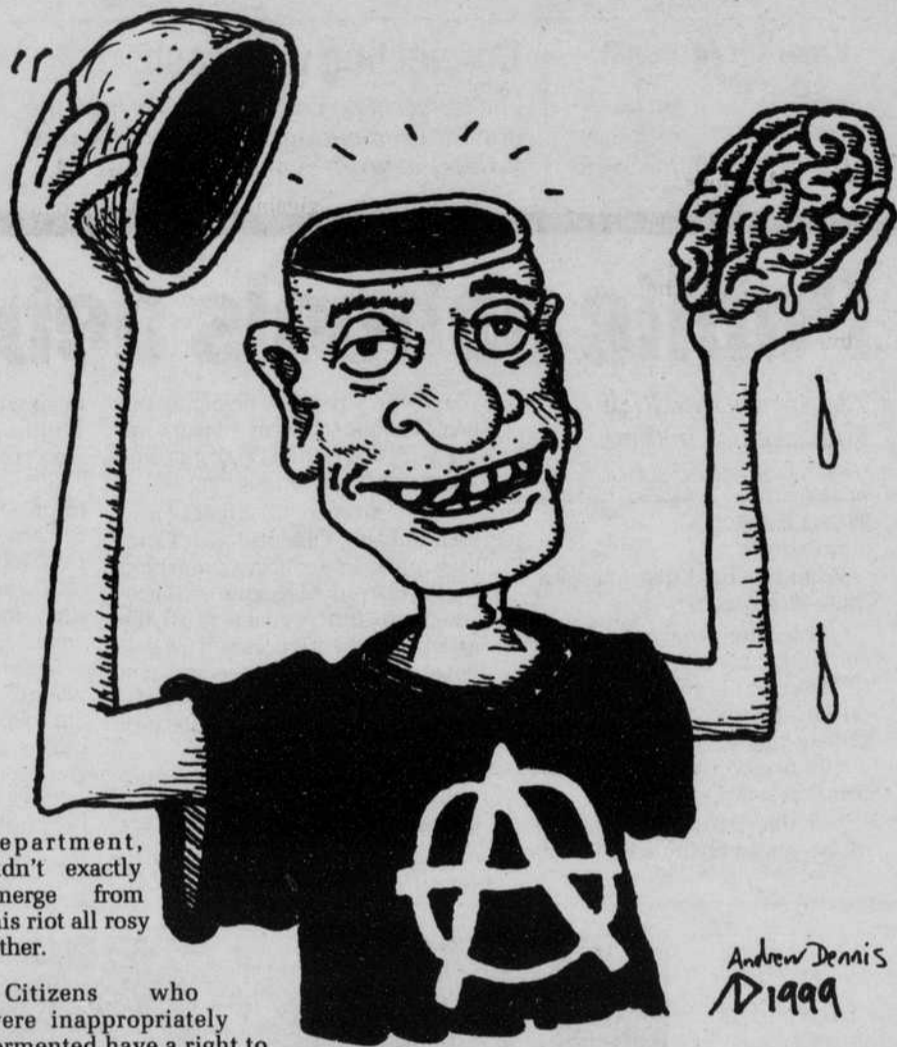
Therein lies the disagreement we have with what took place Friday afternoon.

Rebelling against a government's complicity with the aforementioned societal ills is in many ways understandable. Anger and demand for change are natural reactions to the sense that no one in charge desires a different future. Even holding demonstrations and busting up an idiot box are acceptable behaviors in our book.

However, when the marchers struck against innocent community members, they crossed a line and devalued their message. Yes, it is encouraging to hear spokespeople from various organizations involved in the original, less-violent demonstration denounce what later happened. But what's really needed is more constructive discussion within these activist groups on how to self-regulate their rallies.

There's also the question of whether everyone in the so-called anarchist movement is actually aware of what it means to be an anarchist. One protester said people in their cars who were shaken up needed to be harassed because the issues are so important. Sorry, but that logic doesn't cut it. Take your passionate outbursts to the policy-makers and government officials and leave attacks on unsuspecting individuals out of the picture.

City leaders, especially the Eugene Police



Department, didn't exactly emerge from this riot all rosy either.

Citizens who were inappropriately tormented have a right to ask why there was a delay in response from the EPD. In addition, those protesters who attempted to maintain a peaceful countenance throughout the demonstration have every right to question why tear gas was used so late in the game, after the march had apparently ended near the Washington-Jefferson Street Bridge.

What is the city's policy on riot control anyway? It's not as if there aren't recent events to learn from — three years ago this month was the infamous "tree-sitting riot,"

and the University area has been besieged by a couple of major disturbances during the past two years.

Let's face it, society isn't going to get better anytime soon and taking a "why-can't-we-all-get-along?" stance is just plain naive. But if anyone at City Hall or in the police department is patting him- or herself on the back in congratulations for how this situation was handled, he or she should put the hand to better use by drafting guidelines on how to avoid a repeat occurrence

Andrew Dennis  
1999

## Letters to the Editor

### Compassion wanted

Among various demands, people with alternate sexual orientations have fought for the right to form socially sanctioned, legally recognized same-sex unions, the right to adopt children, and the right to not be discriminated against in employment, housing and the use of public facilities. In general, these are rights that most Americans take for granted and generally never have cause to think would be denied to them.

We live, after all, in a self-centered, cynical society, and rarely are we thoughtful to consider the

thoughts and rights of others, let alone provide each other with some of the most basic courtesies. When we become offended by another human's way of doing things, some people go so far as to invoke God, Jesus Christ or scripture readings from the Bible to justify their own internal feelings of anger and disgust.

For everyone who believes wholeheartedly in Jesus Christ and his teachings, there is more than one other person on our planet who believes in the Buddha and his teachings. As a believer in Christ, for example, an individual isn't going to get anywhere by preaching the Gospel or invoking the Holy Spirit against perceived

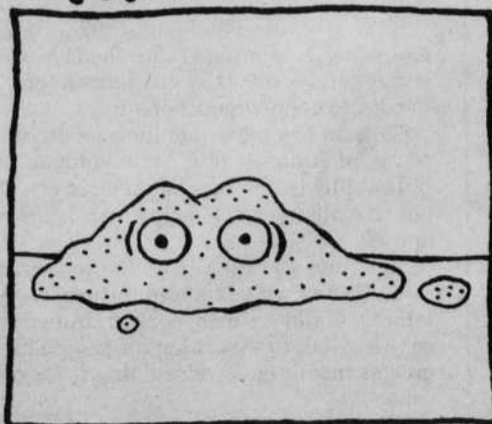
evil where it does not exist because using Christ or other religious figures and their teachings to justify disgust for other people — while it make an individual feel more noble and devout — isn't helping the human race move forward and certainly isn't going to win the loyalty or trust of the people being pinpointed. Rather, it will only serve to drive them away and make them distrust a valid expression of spirituality, creating an additional rift between people when we all should focus on not creating them and repairing those that presently exist.

Don Paulsen  
Ames, low

### LETTERS POLICY

Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.

## "THINGS" by Andrew Dennis



THIS IS NED, THE SLIME MOLD.



WE HERE AT "THINGS" HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR NED.



1999