

PERSPECTIVES

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You can't take it with you



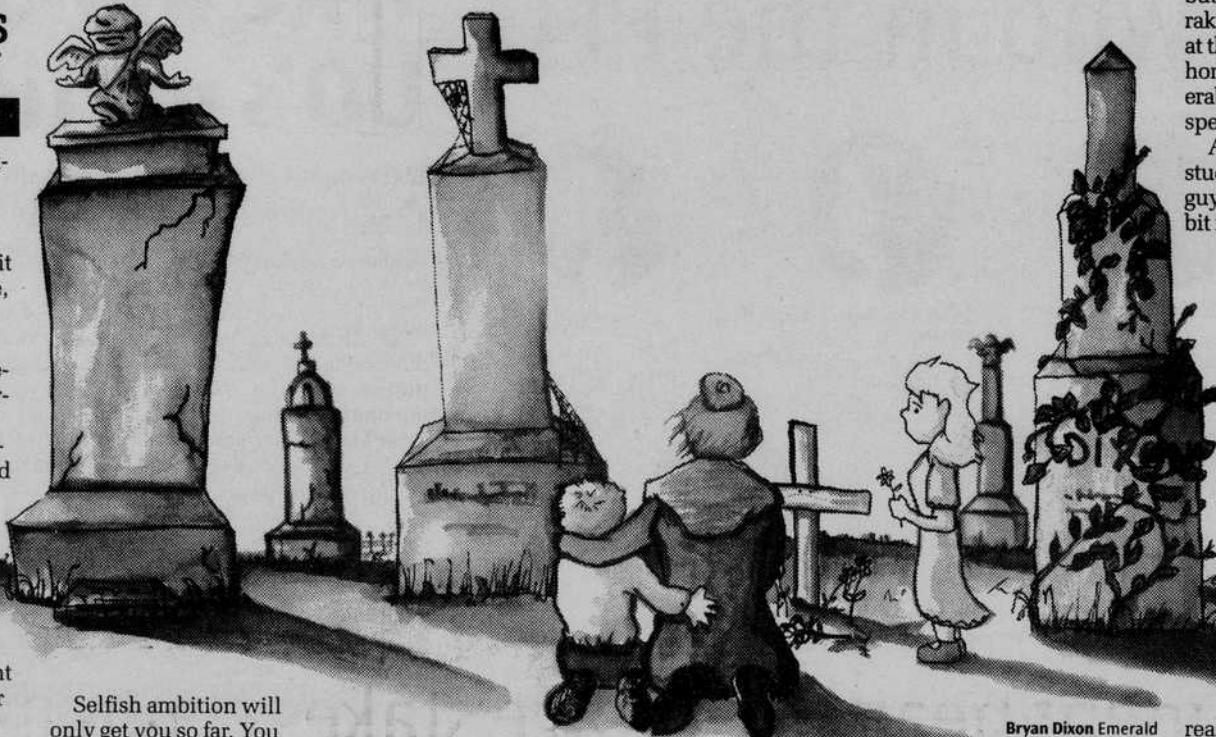
SCRIBBLES OF SANITY

JAYNA BERGERSON

As students, we are educating ourselves for greatness. Failure isn't the focus. If it was, then why spend thousands of dollars to do it when you could just stay at home, live off your parents and fail for free?

We are all here to achieve something. To eventually make a difference in the world is the private dream of the more, dare I say, sentimental dreamers in the mix. And fortune is the goal of the monetary minded. The rest of the group is fascinated with fame, to make their names known to the world. It all boils down to the desire to do what you want, for the amount of money you want and to be recognized by others for doing it well.

But the problem in achieving those goals is that there are hundreds of people around you that want to get there first. In our global community today, one can't help but wonder: How does one distinguish himself or herself from the masses? It is a puzzling dilemma. How does one rise above the other students in the college, not to mention the other students in the United States, and become recognized? The answer is simple: You don't.



Bryan Dixon Emerald

Selfish ambition will only get you so far. You may become rich, famous and able to change the world for the better. But think of all the things you might have to sacrifice to get there: a family, some friends, peace, content. And in case no one has told you yet — you don't get to take it with you when you're dead. There is a shirt that says "He who dies with the most toys, wins." Interesting, but not realistic. Its counterpart says, "He who dies with the most toys, still dies."

The students whose shelves are lined with prestigious awards and certificates of honor that proclaim their scholastic aptitude are in for a shock when the real world comes and says, "Nice plaque. Now what field experience do you have?" All their grades and hard work suddenly become useless in getting them that job they wanted so badly.

Then there are those of us out there who simply come to college to

get a job and make money. That's it. It doesn't really matter what job or where — just as long as we're earning the bucks we're happy. Anything is better than flipping hamburgers forever, right? The obvious rebuttal is that even with a degree there is no guarantee that you won't end up flipping hamburgers. But let's say you do get a job. There is a good chance that you might end up

in a profession that you can't stand, but you stick to it because you are raking in the money. You punch in at the clock, do your time and go home. You will be so tired and miserable that you will never get to spend all that hard earned cash.

A drama teacher might tell his students that Shakespeare was just a guy trying to make a buck. Sounds a bit irreverent for perhaps the greatest playwright in history, but it makes a point. Shakespeare did what he knew how to do. He wrote plays. It wasn't a popular profession at the time, and it didn't pay much, but he just kept pouring them out. And now he is famous, his works are sold all over the world and his words have transformed his profession.

Fame, fortune and changing the world will happen in life or it won't. The point is not to seek them out. They will find you if you give them reason to. Just do what you enjoy doing, and if you perform to the best of your ability then, who knows, your name may stand beside Ernest Hemingway, George Washington, Vincent Van Gogh or Louis Pasteur. If not, then at least you can live life to the fullest, enjoying every moment.

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Sex show leaves bad taste in the mouth, with or without bananas



DIARY OF A MALCONTENT

MICHAEL J. KLECKNER

I attended Ron Jeremy's S&M Sideshow on Jan. 26 at the WOW Hall, and I was disturbed — maybe offended, maybe not — by what I experienced. I decided to write about it because sexual politics is a conversation which has been going on for decades and which never seems to lose its urgency or complexity.

Before I explain my unease, let me say I am an unabashedly pornography, sex-positive queer man. The University has introduced me to the deconstruction of sexual imagery and the often subtle objectification of women, but I don't buy every word.

I understand these ideas, but I believe Madonna is right; women have the power (even if it's difficult) to reclaim their sexuality and be in control. Plus, my own sexual habits are not mainstream, and I can enjoy objectification — finding physicality stimulating for its own

sake. But I think there is a decided difference between reveling in humanity's sexual nature and allowing one's testosterone to become exploitative and demeaning. Unfortunately, the line between those extremes is not always so clear.

The S&M Sideshow had no sadism or masochism, by the way. At best, it was a "sexually-themed sideshow." There was no nudity. But after the bands played and the customers had some beer, Ron Jeremy took the stage, and the tone of the evening turned a little ugly. Jeremy's shtick was stupid, if playful. He wove together references to how many women he has had sex with and self-deprecating jokes.

Then Jeremy launched into a stand-up routine of gross jokes about women, men, dogs and paraplegics. The jokes were old and mean-spirited. As he wound down his 15 minutes of work, Jeremy joked about ethnic versions of "foreplay" — "What's Polish foreplay?", "What's Jewish foreplay?", etc. — the answers to which I will spare you. His final joke was, "And what's foreplay in Eugene, Oregon? 'Get in the truck, bitch!'" The last line certainly hit me as encouragement of nonconsensual sex. After he said the punch line, I was deafened by the male roars of "Oh, yeah!"

The crowd at the WOW Hall was decidedly young and male. The atmosphere in the room grew increasingly aroused and almost hostile, much what I imagine a strip club feels like on a busy Friday night. I think I understand slightly more what it means to be a straight female in an overwhelmingly male sexual culture.

The trickier part was the "Banana Eating Contest." The women participating in this bit were volunteers. No one forced them onstage to simulate fellatio. These women clearly wanted to compete, and they wanted to be sexual. I could examine the reasons these women chose to display themselves, but that's not my point.

During the "best orgasm sound" part of the banana contest, the men shouted and cheered, most enthusiastically for the contestant who made noises reminiscent of pigs being slaughtered. Was I overboard in thinking they were most excited by the woman who sounded as though she were in serious pain? Maybe I was. Sex, after all, is on that line of pleasure so good it hurts.

Jeremy then asked the women their favorite sexual position. The only one to get booed said she liked to be on top. A few men even cursed at her, with words too impo-

lite for this newspaper. Am I over the line to suggest these macho guys didn't like their power being usurped? Maybe I am. But it created an unpleasant vibe in the room.

The worst part, for me, was as the women actually fellated the bananas. The noises and words being ejaculated from the depths of the young studs in the audience were truly offensive. Descriptions of what the men would make the women do, grotesque name calling and a beast-like cacophony filled the hall. It was like a sporting event, only the competitors were women and scoring was, well, "scoring."

I can't pretend that I wasn't titillated. Lots of testosterone in one room can do that to people. And I felt the familiar surge of adrenaline at having sexuality displayed openly. But I left the event feeling dirty, and not the good kind of dirty. I felt as though Eugene itself had encouraged males to treat women without respect for the autonomous sexual beings they are.

Writing a column (or hundreds of scholarly texts, for that matter) won't provide the consciousness-raising necessary to make these horny bucks act differently. Not every man at the show acted boorishly, but the behavior isn't confined to Eugene. Men across the country feel and act

this way toward women. But as a community, do we have to allow shows like Ron Jeremy's to be performed so publicly — as just another entertainment event — so that we all tacitly put our stamp of approval on the behavior?

As far as I know, no one spoke out against the show happening. No one questioned the glowing preview of the event that ran in the Emerald. After all, in our culture, sex sells. If you've read my column to this point, sex is probably part of the reason. And I attended the show, so I'm just as complicit as everyone else. In Eugene, this type of entertainment apparently passes the sensitivity test. Maybe it should. This issue is more complicated than censorship, and I'm sure many people — men and women — enjoyed the show. It was simply silly entertainment, right?

I guess I'm just disappointed that Ron Jeremy is all Eugene can attract and applaud. Where's Susie Bright? I anxiously await a real, fun sex-positive cabaret show, so that I can see sexuality in public without feeling confused and implicated in the ongoing degradation of women.

Michael J. Kleckner is the editorial editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at opededitor@journalist.com.