

Nike should not be given rights, speech that human beings have

Guest commentary

With the Nike free speech case before the Supreme Court now, there is a lot of discussion about how much protection corporations should enjoy under our Constitution. Well here is one plebeian's take on it: They shouldn't get any constitutional protection at all.

Constitutionally protected human rights should be reserved for human beings — and not the legal phantoms we call corporations. Under our current system, a small group of "investors" and their hired guns can build an empire of wealth (e.g. Enron, Bechtel, WorldCom, Nike, etc.) and then, for the most part, never have to face any real consequences if their reckless profiteering ruins the company.

The worst most may suffer is a few ugly headlines and a bankruptcy, which will kill the corporation and the 401(k)s of its employees, while leaving its executives' wealth intact. And these same corporate entities enjoy enormous tax breaks and even subsidies, while working schleps are being hound-

ed by the IRS for every penny they owe, as our civil infrastructure teeters on collapse.

Your kitchen appliances were probably warehoused in better facilities than many of the school buildings which house America's children five days a week. What does it mean for us as a society when an elite few are allowed to profit from wrongs committed behind the veil of "corporate law" and then dissolve their ventures with almost no personal liability? What happens when regular schleps have to declare bankruptcy? We get shafted, that's what.

If we have much in the way of assets, they are usually forfeited to pay our meager debts. But if a few rich guys hiding behind a corporate identity declare bankruptcy (often to the tune of billions) for the corporation which they've made their millions from, everyone under them will get shafted while they keep their personal fortunes.

Isn't a market system supposed to be driven by incentive? What incentives do our biggest financial players have to act responsibly? The corporate system is pushing

most of us closer to the edge every day, and now we are supposed to be worried that corporations are not being given enough freedom to lie?

Nike supporters act as if holding corporations accountable for the idea they are selling is somehow going to make life more difficult or restrictive for all of us average citizens. Can the kind of "speech" promoted in multimillion dollar public relations campaigns really be called free?

How many of you reading this could post billboards and full-page ads all over California, if you wanted to offer evidence that a company like Nike is lying about the things that they say in their PR campaigns? Not many, if any, because that kind of speech isn't free. The cost of those advertising dollars may be a pittance to a few guys hiding behind a corporate identity, but it's more money than many of us will see in our entire working lives.

More rights for corporations? How about more rights for human beings instead?

Paul C. Griffes is a senior geography major.

Students must see results of abortion

Guest commentary

While I did not see the recent anti-abortion demonstration take place, I was glad to hear that many students were repulsed and offended by large photos of aborted fetuses. Abortion is a repulsive and offensive practice, and pro-abortionists need to face the results of the position they support.

I find the response to the demonstration is rather telling: Pro-abortion students who are supposedly for free speech and the free exchange of ideas reportedly tried shouting down the anti-abortion group with abortion 'facts,' and Rachel Pilliod apparently urged others to avoid the area altogether.

Well, reading 'facts' about abortion from Planned Parenthood is similar to reading old tobacco company propaganda about how smoking is harmless. C'mon all you anti-capitalist types: Money equals lies, and the abortion industry is big money. And urging students to avoid the displays is an attempt at censorship; Pilliod must have a low opinion about the student body, or she would encourage people to come to their own conclusions after seeing the photos themselves.

But probably the most telling statement I found in the Emerald article was a quote from Sarah Koski who said, "We're worried about women who've already had abortions seeing these posters and having a negative mental reaction."

Now why would that happen? Aren't we constantly being told by feminists that for women to be treated as equals they must be able to exercise 'choice'? Those photos should be beautiful! Every one of those mutilated fetuses apparently stands for equality!

It is interesting that the pro-abortion crowd is also largely the anti-war crowd. These people will move heaven and earth, to the point of aligning themselves with a murderous dictator like Saddam Hussein, to "protect the Iraqi children" from American bombs. But if a child happens to be in a uterus back here in the United States, they'll applaud as 40 million of them are hacked to death in the womb.

Brian Stubbs is a graduate physics major.

Same-sex marriages stretch back 1,000 years

Guest commentary

Thank you so much for your wonderful editorial on Sen. Rick Santorum ("Santorum goes beyond gay slurs; he's lost hold of reality," ODE, April 29). As a 73-year-old gay male "widower," having lost my "spouse" of 34 years, David, four years ago, I appreciate your words of wisdom.

May I bring to your attention and that of your readers to two books that I hope will enlighten all who read them. The first is "Biological Exuberance" by Bruce Bagemihl, which details the results of 10 years research into sexual orientation in the wild.

Bagemihl found more than 450 species with homosexual, bisexual and transgender members. In his review of the book, printed in the Ottawa Citizen, Ian MacLeod writes, "The list of homosexual creatures, according to author and biologist Bruce Bagemihl, would fill Noah's Ark: apes and monkeys, dolphins and whales, giraffes, zebras, warthogs and woodpeckers. Lesbian gulls mated for life raising chicks to-

gether. Male manatees splashing around in group orgies."

Homosexual animals, Bagemihl's research found, don't experience the harassment or violence of human homosexuals. Bagemihl writes, "Where individuals engaging in homosexual activity do attract attention, it is usually out of simple curiosity or else because other animals want to participate."

The other book is "Same Sex Unions In Premodern Europe" by John Boswell. Boswell, the A. Whitney Griswold professor of history at Yale University, researched the archives of the Vatican, Paris, St. Petersburg (Russia), Istanbul and the Sinai for 12 years and found records of same-sex unions performed by the early Orthodox and Western Christian churches for more than 1,000 years. His book has, for its dust cover, a picture of a seventh century icon showing the marriage of Saints Bacchus and Serge with Christ as the "best man." This icon is in the Kiev, Ukraine, Museum of Eastern and Western Art.

The saints are Roman soldiers and lovers, who were martyred for

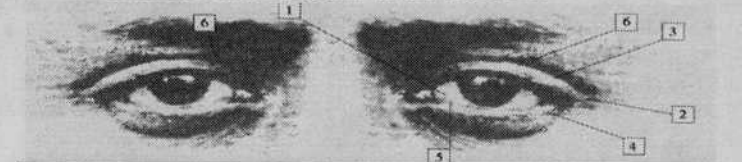
their belief in Christianity. Their love became the standard which all marrying couples were admonished to simulate. Nor was Boswell the only one to find these same-sex marriage rites. In his review of the book in the Irish Times of August 11, 1998, the writer and historian Jim Duffy writes "Nor is (Boswell) the first to make such a discovery. The Dominican Jacques Goar (1601-1653) includes such ceremonies in a printed collection of Greek prayer books." He also states, "At St. John Lateran in Rome (traditionally the Pope's parish church) in 1578 as many as 13 couples were 'married' at Mass with the apparent cooperation of the local clergy, 'taking Communion together, using the same nuptial Scripture, after which they slept and ate together,' according to a contemporary report."

There is a group of scientists who believe that homosexuality has a large role to play in evolution. So you see, homosexuality is natural and normal, and same-sex marriage was a done deal for more than 1,000 years.

Gilbert S. Williams lives in Florida.

HAS A CONVERSATION REALLY HAPPENED?

Race Isn't biological. But that doesn't mean it isn't real.



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EPISODE I - The Difference Between Us

Everyone can tell a Norwegian from a Nubian, so why doesn't it make sense to sort people into biological races? Examine the contemporary science including genetics that challenges our assumptions about human groups.

Thurs. May 8th 6:30-8:30pm Gumwood Rm (EMU)
EPISODE II - The Story We Tell

Hasn't race always been with us? Explore the roots of the race concept, the 19th century science that legitimized it, and how it gained such a hold over our minds.

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EPISODE III - The House We Live In

Race may be a biological myth, but racism still gives different groups vastly different life chances. Forty years after the Civil Rights movement, the playing field is still not level, and "colorblind" policies only perpetuate inequality.

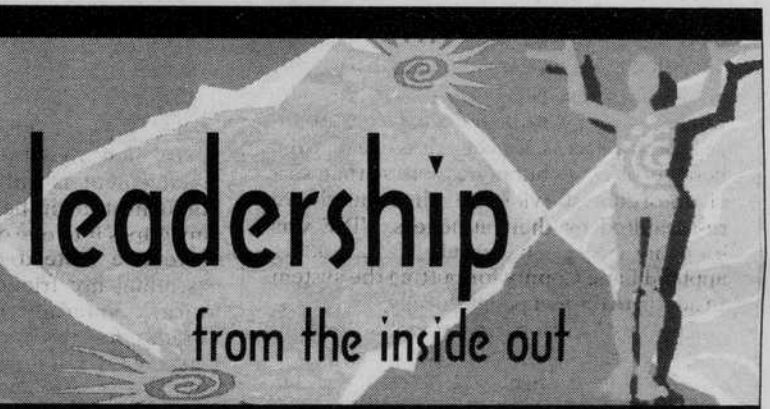
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For more information contact the BRT at 346-1139 or email kmoica@stetking.uoregon.edu



today • may 6th

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3-5PM • BEN LINDER ROOM • EMU

monday • may 12th

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During the first part of this workshop you will have the opportunity to take a self-score version of the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory. Then you'll learn how the way you operate in the world influences your definition of leadership, your expectations from a leader and how you think you should act when in a leadership position. We will discuss how differing views of leadership can lead to differing conclusions in each of these areas.

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