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In my opinion

SACK^{the} SACRED COWS

Goodness gracious me, it seems like there's a whole herd of sacred cows roaming around this campus. I'd like to take a look at several of them, and maybe make some sacred hamburger.

For one thing, it seems the word "corporate" has become a euphemism for "anything a company does that I don't like."

When someone describes something as "corporate," it's generally understood that this is a bad thing. I once had a philosophy instructor who said, "I don't believe in big corporations." The class nodded knowingly, some making grunting noises of vague agreement.

Now, surely this instructor would be willing to acknowledge the existence of big corporations. What, then, does it mean not to believe in big corporations? I don't want to speak for someone else, but I'm pretty sure she meant she doesn't agree with particular practices of certain corporations.

Rather than saying, "I disagree with and condemn those companies that engage in anti-competitive practices, predatory pricing, and the use of child labor," it has become hip to say something far more meaningless: "Corporations suck."

Never mind the fact that the mom-and-pop shops these anti-corporate heroes claim to love are probably corporations themselves.

A corporation is basically just a set of notarized documents sitting in a filing cabinet at the Secretary of State's office. Corporations are what encourage entrepreneurs to take risks knowing that if their



GABE BRADLEY
THE WRITING ON THE WALL

businesses fail, they won't lose everything they own. If not for the concept of the corporation, business in America would belong even more to the privileged elite because only those who could afford to take multimillion dollar risks could go into business for themselves.

If not for the corporation, mom-and-pop shops wouldn't be able to exist.

There are a lot of problems with big business in America. But if you want to start talking about these problems in any sort of meaningful way, you're going to have to think about what you're saying instead of falling back on the overused "corporate" cliché. Seriously, you sound like a jackass when you say it.

And another thing: "Patriarchal" apparently now means "anytime one discusses complicated diversity issues without drastically oversimplifying the issue, spouting politically correct positions and getting angry all at the same time."

As a man who wrote an award-winning series of columns on gender issues two years ago, I can't keep track of the times I have been called patriarchal. As best I could tell, this complaint arose mainly because the tone of my columns

was tongue-in-cheek instead of righteously indignant.

And just like that, another word in the English lexicon loses its meaning and becomes a buzzword for an angry demographic with a political agenda.

"Hate speech" is another term that has been overused to the point of being basically meaningless. No one has been able to supply me with a satisfactory definition of hate speech. But no one wants to be accused of it, that's for sure.

Taking words that once meant something and turning them into euphemisms for things we don't like is an affront to language and public discourse. Like those who used to (and sometimes still do) throw the word "communist" around until it really means nothing, those who propagate the use of such buzzwords keep their discussions painfully shallow.

As long as people boo whenever something is described as "corporate" and cower whenever they're accused of "hate speech," discussions about business ethics or diversity will never get past the rhetoric and to the heart of these issues.

In a country where most college students double-major in fermented beverage consumption and political correctness, with a minor in standardless mediocrity, it's not too surprising that most of the words coming out of their mouths have no meaning whatsoever. Surprising or not, though, it is a tragedy.

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INBOX

City shows different side of acceptance outside classes

Recently, I was refused service by a presumptuous bartender at the Indigo District, who took offense to my shirt that read, "Coloreds of Eugene Unite!" The quote that adorns these shirts derives from two sources: First, students of color are not well represented at the University School of Law, despite overwhelming attempts by the University to recruit them; second, a group of my friends and I were at Rennie's and noticed a startling lack of people of color.

After a round of pool, my turn came to buy drinks. At that time the bartender pulled me aside and notified me that he would not serve me because of the potentially inflammatory nature of my shirt. Though incensed, I had no real beef because as a private place of business he could refuse me service. However, his decision was troubling. The bartender's own shirt proudly displayed a large middle finger.

My experience at the Indigo District only belies the perceived liberal attitude of Eugene. I cannot say that the whole of Eugene is as myopic and pathetic as Mr. Middle Finger bartender. I can say, after my law school experience and after facilitating discussions on the topic of race for the undergraduate campus, that Eugene is less accommodating than it would have you believe. My position is that most individuals in this

city have never had to encounter real issues of race.

In my experience, such individuals take a paternal approach on the subject of race. Such individuals are open to discussing the topic of race when it is controlled in a classroom setting and subject to a closed universe of reading. However, when the issue of race comes in a real social setting, this liberal bastion becomes nothing more than a vagabond searching for a comfortable place to hide.

Comfortable means denying me service without seeking the meaning of my shirt. Comfortable means assuming my intent without asking me why I wear certain clothing. Comfortable is why there is a race problem in this city, in this state, and in this country. This state is only two generations removed from miscegenation laws that outlawed marriage between a white person and a black person.

I enjoy the Indigo District, but I will never again patronize it because its employees presume to be the harbingers of political correctness. From now on, the Indigo District will be nothing more than a place of oppression. The irony is that the person who in effect censored me was himself trying to project an image of non-conformity with his shirt and his other attending clothing, no doubt secured on a shopping spree at Urban Outfitters.

Robert Romero
Lodi, CA

'Vagina' column trivializes play's powerful message

The uneducated, over-stated, oppressive comments Gabe Bradley makes in his column regarding the ASUO's production of "The Vagina Monologues" ("Vagina Monologues Misspeaks," ODE, Feb. 15) were not worth the ink it took to print them. His anti-feminist rhetoric is neither enlightening nor original. His remarks are an unimaginative addition to the patriarchal foundation of our society.

Anyone who has bothered to intelligently consider the content of "The Vagina Monologues" knows that it is an assertion of feminine power, a recognition of years of female oppression and abuse and a celebration of new life.

While it is unfortunate that Bradley was unable to share this experience, it is not his place to trivialize something so profound. Furthermore, anyone who saw the production realizes the value in the diversity of the cast that Bradley dismisses as a victory of the political correctness militia. As a white man, it is interesting that Bradley should feel so strongly about what the appropriate cast of "The Vagina Monologues" should look like. The fact he claims, "The horse is dead, yet (feminists) just keep beating it," is testament in itself that the horse is very much alive.

Theya McCown
Eugene

Editorial

Offering the ATU the aid and respect it deserves

The Emerald has fully supported the Amalgamated Transit Union Division 757 from the very beginning of its struggles with Lane Transit District leadership. Now that the union has voted to strike, the Emerald would like to reaffirm our unconditional support.

The workers did everything they could to avert a strike, enduring mediation after mediation in the outside hope that they could spare Eugene from this commotion.

They have shown just how much they truly care about the community they serve, something we cannot say about LTD management. They should be commended for their efforts.

The main issue in the dispute involves health-care coverage: Union employees want to keep the benefits they currently enjoy, while LTD insists it cannot afford to do so.

The strike has already caused huge headaches for members of the public dependent on bus service, including University students.

According to an Emerald report ("Eugeneans back LTD drivers at demonstration," ODE, Jan. 14), LTD gets more than a half-million dollars in student fees to provide students with free, unlimited rides. Nearly 3,000 University students and employees use the bus to get to and from campus. We expect LTD will refund student fees for every day that bus service is shut down.

There are a few options for students struggling to get to school. Drivers can park for free at the Autzen Stadium parking lot from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Car-poolers can obtain free permits for certain spots around campus from the Department of Public Safety. University students and employees can also use a Laidlaw bus shuttle that leaves the Lane County Fairgrounds and arrives at Sacred Heart Medical Center. And the Assault Prevention Shuttle will operate as usual.

The ASUO really dropped the ball by refusing to act early and implement proactive measures to help students during the strike, such as helping to organize and publicize carpooling lists.

Despite these problems, we hope the strike will continue for as long as it takes until the workers achieve what they deserve: a fair contract.

We've said it once and we will say it again: As a community we must stand in solidarity with the union as it fights for the rights that all workers deserve — a family wage, health benefits and respect.

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