

Point

Counterpoint

Students debate *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue

In the day of "women's lib," where do we draw the line? High paid models and celebrities are willing to exploit their own bodies and be a catalyst in the degradation of women world-wide. Unless we are willing to put moral principles above money, women will continue to be looked upon as sex objects. Some people would argue that women have a right to choose to be sex objects if they want to, and I agree with that argument, but I do not agree with what this type of activity does, and has done to damage the image of women around the world.

Perhaps no publication has done more damage to the image of women than *Sports Illustrated's* swimsuit edition which insults the intelligence of women and proves that sex sells. This type of advertising undermines the intelligence of women around the world because women are ranked for their measurements, not their academic abilities, or professional goals. Dr. Linnea Smith, wife of Coach Dean Smith, recently made a statement about the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit edition that verifies my point. She said, "For 51 weeks they show some commitment to a level playing field for men and women. Then they put out the swimsuit issue that says we're just babes after all." As long as women are viewed as "just babes," women will continue to rank second to men in society and in the workplace.

Furthermore, as long as the exploitation of women remains a billion dollar industry, some women will find it easier to use their bodies than their minds to make a living. *Sports Illustrated* is not unlike any other magazine, T.V. show, or any other form of advertisement for that matter because they all use sex, they know that sex sells, and they are using women to make the money. Some of the best examples are some of the name brands that have become household words. For example Calvin Klein's Obsession commercials do not hesitate to feature women in explicit positions with only the barest of essentials out of public view, and there is usually some handsome man all over the woman. Supposedly if you wear Obsession then men will become obsessed with you, NOT! It is even getting so bad that the Hanes underwear commercials are not suitable for family viewing. It is abundantly clear that nude bodies sell products; a little skin definitely goes a long way, all the way from the national to the local levels of entertainment and advertising.

The exploitation of women has had such an overwhelming effect on society that it has trickled down to some of the smallest towns in the U.S. This can be seen in the multitudes of clubs like The Doll House and The Crazy Horse which feature topless women dancers. For a mere fifty dollars you can even get a woman to dance privately for you on your own table. Come on ladies, are we not worth more than this? I am proud to be a woman, and I wish women everywhere would share my feelings.

It is time to stop the exploitation of women, and start a new image that portrays women in a more professional and intelligent light. Can you imagine the condemnation that Hillary Clinton would have endured if she had done

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One woman is a model for *Sports Illustrated's* swimsuit issue; the other is a corporate lawyer and a feminist who would never pose in a swimsuit. The lawyer has every right not to pose, and not look at the photos of those who do. But does she have the right to say that posing is not only wrong for her, but is wrong for every woman. I firmly believe every woman has the right to choose her own career. I also believe she should not be criticized for her decision by anyone. Women not only have the right to freedom of expression, but they also

have the right to make their own choices regardless of how others perceive it. For this reason I feel the recent article applauding the toning down of the swimsuit issue, lead by Linnea Smith is wrong.

The constitution grants every person in the United States the right to freedom of expression. Everyone does what she feels is morally correct and what she can live with. No one has the right

to push her views and beliefs on others. That would be an outright infringement of others' rights and may be considered censorship. Such self-anointed censors are Dean Smith's wife, Linnea Smith, and columnist John Leo who applaud *Sports Illustrated's* toning down of the swimsuit issue. The swimsuit issue has been a tradition for years, and both men and women look forward to it and enjoy it. Now, I understand some women find models in seductive poses disgusting and would never want any part of it. But because some feel that way, do they have the right to say no one can be a part of it. The right that they should be exercising is not to buy the magazine or not to look at it. No one has the right to force what you don't want to see on you. My point is if a model wants to wear next to nothing and stick her rump in the air for a picture, then that is her prerogative. Who will stand in judgment for all women? A feminist or a model?

Feminists feel that the swimsuit issue and stripping is degrading to all women. Well obviously they haven't spoken to the models or the dancers because they don't feel the same way and they are a part of the population of women. An example of this is when the Dollhouse opened in Raleigh. Many feminists were outraged. I know a girl that works there and does not feel degraded and loves her job because of the money she makes. Personally I could never take off my clothes in front of a group of men, but that is my choice. Because I would not do it and I feel it is wrong does not give me the right to say it is degrading and wrong for all. Don't get me wrong; I am grateful for all changes feminists have brought about and we have come a long way thanks to them. I just feel feminists like Linnea Smith have gone too far in taking on the task of deciding how all women feel or should feel. Feminists have too many stereotypes of what a nineties woman should do and should not do. Whether a housewife, a lawyer, or a stripper we are all women with personal choices to make. We may not all agree with other women's choices, but we need to learn to respect others and not stand in judgment of one another.

Isn't it wonderful that we live in a country where we are allowed to choose our own careers? I would hate it if someone pushed her views on me or if she criticizes the choices I made. I may not agree with every woman's choices, but I will always respect her right to freedom of self-expression and her right to choose.

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