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# The Daily Tar Heel

92nd year of editorial freedom

## A grudging no to smut ban

A symposium held at Duke University last week again raised the question of whether pornography can be legally banned because it violates the civil rights of women. Our answer is a grudging no.

While we are disgusted at the thought of further enriching the merchants of smut, banning pornographic material might weaken the foundations of the First Amendment — the freedom of the press is at stake here. While we also acknowledge that pornography condones the stereotype of women as sexual objects, it is debatable that pornographic materials promote sexual violence, as opponents of pornography suggest.

The main problem concerning pornography is society's ignorance of what pornography entails. If pornography is the presentation of women as sexual objects, then the battle is not just with *Hustler* or magazines of that ilk. The battle, then, is with Maidenform underwear, whose ads present a woman running off to her Wall Street office wearing a slinky bra and panties. The battle is with the Nuance perfume ad depicting a woman donning a negligee and dabbing perfume, and with the words underneath stating: "Nuance says yes, but you can always say no." If pornography is the presentation of women as sexual objects, then fighting Larry Flynt and Bob Guccione isn't even going to scratch the surface.

The correlation between sexual violence and pornography hasn't been proved, although many point to this as the main reason pornography should be

## It's not history yet

Most of us celebrated, or at least acknowledged, January 1 as the first day of 1985. But those, if any, who waited until today to mark the passing of 1984 did it right. You see, after the 1st there were still two remnants of '84 that weren't officially — and, as it turns out, anticlimactically — taken care of until Monday: the race for the Super Bowl (played on the inappropriately named Super Sunday) and the race for the White House (played out at yesterday's Inauguration).

The first was anticlimactic because it failed to live up to its hype — the outcome decided before the second half. The second was anticlimactic because it did live up to its hype — the outcome decided before the coin flip. Reagan's second term didn't begin yesterday, but over a year ago when he decided to run.

Well, lest you think life is over until next fall, when we see if the 49ers can do it again, try to content yourself in the meantime with the same question about our new president. Can Reagan do it again? Namely, can he get even more popular at the end of another term? And by popular we mean and assume people will be judging on accomplishments at least as much as style.

The inescapable fact, much to the chagrin of his opponents, is that Reagan enters his second term a very popular man. A recent *Washington Post-ABC* News poll found that nearly 70 percent of the country approves of Reagan's handling of the presidency.

Of course, no one is happier about this than Reagan, but he wants more. Specifically, he wants to leave a more lasting imprint on American government and history than just a record of high approval ratings. He knows that if he

banned. Studies show that people who watch acts of violence with any regularity grow accustomed, and desensitized, to the violence. A good example of this is the notorious movie *Deep Throat*. Opponents of pornography say that the number of rapes, especially oral rape, have increased dramatically since the movie first came out. But, at the same time, have the number of chainsaw murders increased since *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*? How many citizens have been blown away by the likes of a Dirty Harry, another example of glorified violence? Again, it is not a question of whether pornography is the cause of violence, sexual or otherwise; the attitudes of society in general are the cause of both violence and the exploitation of women. And making pornography illegal is not going to stop the sexual stereotyping of women, nor will it stop violence.

We cannot censor a constitutionally guaranteed right. Just as we cannot tell people who are of a legal age not to drink, we cannot tell people not to purchase or see sexually explicit material. More can be done to increase public awareness that the exploitation of women is not just in skin flicks and magazines, but everywhere. If more people see the sexual stereotyping of women as wrong, and as a contributing factor to pornography, perhaps more people will grow angry enough to stop buying the trash. But as far as its legality goes, pornography can't be touched.

fails to do anything substantial about the deficit and the arms race, history will soon forget that he was "a popular guy."

With these two major problems on his agenda, along with the chance to simplify and reform the federal tax laws and appoint Supreme Court justices (as many as five), Reagan does have at least the opportunity to be one of the most influential presidents of the 20th century. But unless this opportunity is realized, and to a significant extent, Reagan might only go down as a phenomenon of political charm and luck. In a *Washington Post* article, William E. Leuchtenburg, a professor of history at UNC, lists a number of liabilities Reagan carries into his second term and his fight for a prominent place in history. Most notably, Leuchtenburg claims Reagan has no memorable international accomplishments. "You could write the diplomatic history of the 20th century and leave Reagan out at this point," he said.

Leuchtenburg also mentions the budget deficits, saying, "We'll pay a price for them eventually." While Reagan cannot be entirely blamed for a problem that has gone on for years, given his commitment to government spending reductions he just might turn deficits around. Indeed, such success might do serious damage to the notion that the government can and should do it all, regardless of the costs.

Of course, this is all speculation. The next four years could erase all this public approval and make Reagan the scapegoat for years to come, or things could click and Reagan could go down in the manner of FDR. Whatever happens, Reagan can hardly complain about a lack of challenges.

## The Bottom Line

Remember the high school establishment — how certain clubs were the "in" organizations to belong to? Whether coalitions of jocks, such as the Key Club, or of tomorrow's sorority sisters, such as the Civinettes, invitations to join were prized possessions — and not always easy to come by.

In this sense, 14-year-old Neela Thakur of Longmeadow, Mass., is no different than other girls her age. It's just that she wants to join the jocks.

Hindered in her efforts to join the all-male Key Club on the grounds of femininity, Thakur has filed sex discrimination complaints with the Massachusetts Department of Education and the Boston branch of the U.S. Office of Civil Rights.

A woman's place, school officials say, is in the Keyette Club, that separate-but-equal service organization. Not so, says Neela: "I don't believe the clubs are equal in opportunity, and I feel the Key Club is much

stronger.

Stronger, perhaps, but worthy of a fight? Chances are all she's missing out on is a meal with some overweight Kiwanians, a car wash or two, and maybe a club sponsorship in the homecoming parade.

It could be that Thakur, her sights set on college, is looking for name value instead. "I don't like the name Keyette," she says. "It's demeaning. It reminds me of Smurfette."

If she wants to protest until she's blue in the face, fine. But it appears her crusade is turning heads. "To deny admittance to (Thakur) on the basis that she is a female is a violation of state discrimination laws," said DeLois F. Swan, assistant regional director of the state Department of Education.

Whether this move will mobilize opposition forces nationwide is uncertain. Alfalfa Switzer, charter president of the He-Man Woman Haters Club, was unavailable for comment.

And that's the bottom line.

## Television, profits and moral progress

By LAURENCE THOMAS

Like most intellectual snobs who own a TV, I never ever watch mine; though, to be sure, I turn it on upon occasion just to appreciate the growth in technology that it represents. When for that purpose I turned my set on this past Saturday morning, I was struck by the fact that the advertising cast of the commercial that came on was all black, for I don't recall ever having seen blacks advertise the product in question.

Immediately I thought to myself: "We are making moral progress much faster than I had thought we would or the TV program *Soul Train* must be on." It was the latter.

The relevance of all this is that, in a very profound way, TV commercials are not only a sign of the times, but they can affect considerable social change.

It is no accident that 10 years ago, say, the only time blacks went to McDonalds or used deodorant soaps, for instance, is when there was a black show on television. For the point of commercials is, among other things, to legitimize the use of products, and 10 years ago one did not do that by having a black face associated with one's products.

Now, you will note that to date there have been no commercials that show the members of different ethnic groups interacting in an intimate way. White men never watch black women in sheer panty hose, nor black men white women. Similarly, you never see only one white, visibly enjoying her or himself, amongst a crowd of blacks.

None of this is innocuous. The message is clear that inter-ethnic dating is still not tolerated by members of our society, and most whites would really rather not be the only white amongst a crowd of blacks.

Now, if companies wanted to, they could change all of this virtually overnight. When the person at the other end of that seductive telephone conversation for the Harvey's sherry commercial is a member of a different ethnic group, people would find themselves entering into intimate relationships with members of



different ethnic groups more easily. And when we see commercials where one white person seeks out and enjoys the company of a crowd of blacks, then the uneasiness that now characterizes so much inter-ethnic social interaction will no doubt dissipate just that much faster. After all integration should not mean, as it has come dangerously close to meaning these days, black folks seeking out and enjoying the company of white folks, but never the other way around.

All of this seems so obvious to me that I wonder why changes of the sort suggested have not been made.

One answer, of course, is that companies are out to make money and not to make the world a better place to live in. If, for the moment, we should allow ourselves to think this way, the response is a satisfactory one only if one supposes that profits will not increase with greater inter-ethnic social interaction. But the truth of this proposition is hardly given.

In fact, it strikes me as resoundingly false. Surely, spending among college students would

increase if inter-ethnic social interaction was not a problem. With dating, for instance, each person would have a greater pool to draw upon. In general there would be more people to do things for and with, something that invariably means more spending, hence, an increase in profits.

So, let me ask again: Why haven't changes of the sort suggested been made? Well, the answer that comes to mind is rather frightening. Companies, I fear, have abnegated one important aspect of their moral responsibility.

Without regard for profits as such, we should be moved to make the world a better place to live in — if not for our sake, then perhaps for the sake of our children. That these major companies should fail so to act, even when an increase in profits is waiting in the wings, makes their inaction with regard to the issue at hand morally opprobrious.

Laurence Thomas is an associate professor of philosophy at UNC.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Bruce not just 'dancin' in the dark'

To the editor:

I experienced a Bruce Springsteen concert last week in Charlotte and felt compelled to write this letter. I have never been a Springsteen fanatic, but I have enjoyed his music for quite a few years. After seeing him in person, and listening to what he had to say, I feel that Bruce could become the most influential performer of the '80s.

I give him such a high regard for many reasons. His show is incredible! I am an avid concertgoer and can say without a doubt that Springsteen and the E Street Band put on the greatest show I have ever seen. Their energy level was incredible, their rapport with the audience was truly superior, the length of time

they played was outstanding, but, best of all, they made the concert feel like a huge party of people who were gathered together not only to have a great time, but also to get together and discuss some important issues. That is what impresses me most about Springsteen; he is using his power and prestige as one of the premier rock stars to promote good will and understanding.

For example, throughout the concert Bruce mentioned and endorsed a local Charlotte food bank for the needy that had people set up in the lobby taking donations. Through his help, the Metrolina Food Bank raised a large sum of money for the poor in that area.

Another issue Springsteen brought up was Vietnam. A couple of times during the concert, Bruce got serious and spoke about such things as friends being killed in Vietnam and other bad experiences he has had connected with the conflict. He was not bitter about the issue, but simply trying to increase awareness about Vietnam to younger people, such as myself, who can only guess what it was like during that time period.

Springsteen is carrying on the tradition of rock 'n' roll groups in the 1960s whose songs not only sounded great but also had deep underlying meanings. In the tradition of Bob Dylan, John Lennon and the Beatles, and Crosby, Stills,

Nash and Young, Bruce is carrying this means of communication and enlightenment into the 1980s.

Bruce also breaks racial boundaries with his close friendship with his saxophonist, Clarence Clemmons. They make a great team of sax and guitar and display that blacks and whites can work together to create something great.

I like what the man stands for. He has good values, he cares for the people in this country, and he is not afraid of stating his views. He is an outstanding example of how people can use their position to help their fellow man.

Charles Rowe Coley Jr.  
Chapel Hill



### Carting disaster?

To the editor:

Friday our lovely sunny campus was transformed into not a beach (too cold), not a ski resort (too warm), but that playground of the privileged — a golf course. I wish they'd have let me know, I could have shown up in my argyle sweater and Hogan cap — just the thing for the links when there's a nip in the air. Instead, I was caught unawares by a golf cart parading around the Pit and other campus walks, its passengers waving royally to us thrill-seeking onlookers.

But I must pause and ask. Have we had a student referendum to allow golf carts on campus (the latest alternative to mopeds?), and, of course, do we have to join the club to play?

Melanie Groce  
Susan McCracken  
Cobb

## Thorns don't justify killing rose

By DAVE FAZIO

Probably the poorest American is living better than the standard in Ethiopia. We consider the Ethiopians as important; we believe their lives contain value. If we did not, we would not send donations to combat starvation.

Here in America, we use the term "unwanted" to rationalize abortion. Many believe that it is wrong to raise a child in a world where he would be uncared for and "unwanted." Obviously the U.S. Supreme Court felt the same way. Jan. 22 is the 12th anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* decision that legalized abortion in 1973. Some of us regret the Supreme Court decision while others champion it as a milestone for women's rights. I believe *Roe vs. Wade* was one of the most tragic mistakes in America's history.

I have compassion for the woman who is faced with an unexpected pregnancy, and I pity the woman who believes abortion is her best choice. But my heart grieves for the unborn child who is denied life. Maybe I am wrong and abortion is the best option. After all, the child will never experience the everyday pains and frustrations we suffer in this wretched condition called life. He will never learn to hate, nor will he be bound

*I cannot guarantee that this child will have a good life if his mother decides against abortion. . . . I know it will be better than life in Ethiopia. . . . Within our borders we have a different standard. Convenience is the law we keep and our generation has become a wash-and-wear, instant breakfast, throw-away-the-child-he-isn't-wanted people.*

in the chambers of depression, sorrow and anger. He will not know the meaning of a broken heart or the sad emotion when a loved one dies. He will never have to say goodbye to a close, close friend. Maybe pro-abortionists are right.

On the other hand, this child will never know the petty things that make life worthwhile — like what it means to love. This is a very sad thing. He will not experience the twin joys — laughter and friendship. He will never experience the simple things like sleeping under a freshly laundered sheet or touching a velvet red rose — minute particulars that bring happiness to our otherwise miserable condition.

I cannot guarantee that this child will have a good life if his mother decides against abortion. But few of us have what the Romans called *la vita dolce*, the soft life. I know it will be better than life in Ethiopia. But we still consider them to be valuable, don't we? Within our borders we have a different standard. Convenience is the

law we keep and our generation has become a wash-and-wear, instant breakfast, throw-away-the-child-he-isn't-wanted people.

Perhaps an aborted child will return to his Creator and things will be better. Even then, he still will never experience a deeper love for God that only occurs by knowing the pain of separation and the joy of redemption.

On Jan. 22, whether you support abortion or oppose it, take a few minutes from your busy day and re-examine your values towards the quality of life vs. the sanctity of life. Not only consider your family, friends and everyone making above \$20,000 a year, but also the poor, the sick, the bedridden and the unborn.

Everyone knows a rose is beautiful flower. It would be absurd to destroy it because its stalk has thorns.

Dave Fazio is a senior English major from Hembry Bridge.