

LISA PYTLIK

Abortion battles miss point

I felt like a second grader. Last week, as I passed by the union, I saw a display sponsored by "Students for Life." As I gazed at the graphic images of aborted fetuses, I began to feel like a small child: confused, powerless and sort of sick to my stomach.

Swirling visions of militant Pro-Life marches, demanding petitions and anti-abortion laws filled my head until it ached.

Then I noticed that someone had scribbled on the glass display case with bright red lipstick. I couldn't read the smeared words, but the red streaks looked violently angry. I pictured enraged Pro-Choice members marching and petitioning against Pro-Life efforts, unsheathing their many legitimate points in war-like retaliation.

"What is the answer?" I wondered. "Who's right? Who will win this war?" Questions spun through my head, making me increasingly dizzy with confusion, until I felt as if I were floating.

"Follow me," a strange voice said. Blinking my eyes and shaking my head, I realized that the cement plaza I previously stood upon had been replaced by clouds. An old man with deep brown eyes and a white beard was dragging me by the hand down a long white hallway. At the end of the hallway was a single door that, to my surprise, opened to reveal a huge playground furnished with toys plated with gold.

"I'd like you to meet someone," the old man said. "This is one of the children you saw pictured in the display in front of the union."

He waved to a little boy with jet black hair and almond-shaped eyes who was busily playing with a red rubber ball. Dropping his ball, the boy ran to meet us.

"Hi!" He said with a grin. I immediately noticed that he had large scars running like patchwork across his face.

"I was aborted," he said in response to my stare. "It was done legally, but it was still a hard choice for my parents. If I would have been born, my mother would have died and left my father alone to try to care for me and my three young sisters. The choice was between depriving me of life or my sisters of a mother. I think my parents made the best decision they could. As it turns out, I would have been stillborn anyway."

Just then, a little girl with bright orange pigtails came running towards us with her arms waving.

"Is she new here?" she asked, pointing at me.

"No," the old man answered. "She's



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just visiting." "Oh." The little girl looked disappointed. "I'm waiting for my sister. I'm really looking forward to meeting her."

"Your sister?" I asked. The girl nodded.

"Yes. My mother is planning to abort her like she did me. Mom didn't know that I would have been a doctor when I grew up and that I was going to find the cure for cancer someday. She just didn't think about what her choice might mean. In fact, I don't even think she knew what all her options were."

The sad, thoughtful look on the little girl's face broke through my second grade emotional state, and I felt myself growing up again into a rationalizing, intellectualizing college student.

"I must do something," I said, turning to the old man. "I must take a stand. But with whom? Pro-Life? Pro-Choice? What should I do?"

The old man didn't answer me. I felt a tugging at my sleeve. It was the children.

"Tell my mom I love her," said the little boy with the almond-shaped eyes. "Mine too," said the little girl with the orange pigtails.

And then I understood. The answer to the questions posed by advanced technologies such as abortion were not to be found in extreme activist groups. I didn't need to be Pro-Life or Pro-Choice. I needed to be Pro-Love.

Love is a uniting force; war is not. The whole Pro-Life vs. Pro-Choice war must stop.

A "war" between two parties implies that the two sides do not share common interests. But Pro-Life and Pro-Choice activists should share two major concerns: the life of a child and the life of a mother.

Activists on both sides would be much more effective if they stopped fighting and started uniting to help both mothers and children without excluding or emphasizing one group over the other.

Each side could start by acknowledging the strengths of the other. "Life" and "Choice" are not antonyms or separate entities. They are simply two sides of the same coin.

Life is important and should be respected, not taken for granted or treated lightly. Most Pro-Choice activists are also "for life."

Choices are also important and must be respected. Without the ability to choose, we are not fully alive.

Pro-Life activists exercise a "choice" every time they choose to "not" have an abortion. And they would not like that choice to be taken from them.

Once united, the groups could pool their resources to find ways to educate women who don't know what their choices are, or what their choices could mean in terms of emotional and physical health. Then they could work together to help the women deal with whatever difficult choice they make.

Instead of faithfully writing to senators, an activist on either side could write caring notes of encouragement to an individual mother who needs support. Instead of marching to the Capitol, a person could march to the grocery store and buy food for a mother who thinks she can't afford to have another mouth to feed. Instead of delivering elaborate speeches on the evils of abortion, one could lend a listening and understanding ear to a mother struggling with serious decisions concerning her unborn child.

If, instead of donating time and money to propagate the war between activist groups, people would offer their caring support directly to the individuals who are considering abortion, maybe more of these individuals would make the "Life" "Choice."

The apparent war between Pro-Life and Pro-Choice activists is a futile one centered on legalities. Legal or not, abortions will continue because the final decisions in these matters are made by individuals, not the government. The government makes laws, but individuals decide whether to abide by them.

We can never entirely take a person's choice away, but we can let that person know we care and are willing to help.

Pytlík is a senior art and psychology major and a Daily Nebraskan staff artist and columnist.

hope I get to read more of him soon. Diversions isn't quite the same without Linden.

Carol Ann Becker junior art history

Diversions not the same without Linden

Where's Linden? He was hard to find without a headline the first two weeks of school — but now he's not even in Diversions at all? Why? And will he be back?

I used to look forward to Jim

Hanna's weekly entertainment articles, and I find Linden to be just as enjoyable. It's nice to plan on seeing an article you know you'll enjoy each Thursday.

Linden is different and fun, and I

Rap singer's message condemning, divisive

I am very disturbed by what I read about Sister Souljah's speech in the article by Sean Green in the Daily Nebraskan ("Rapper Sister Souljah speaks on racial issues," DN, Feb. 6).

Imagine what the response would be if a white pop singer spoke on campus, denouncing interracial marriage, proclaiming black social values to be "fake," and that blacks should not be trusted because they come from "a long line of lying, stealing cheats," and then implied that whites who didn't agree with her were somehow very unhip and did not belong in the presence of her enlightened audience. I would hope to see a riot of protestation at the least.

We know about and we are attracted to Sister Souljah because of her presence in the pop music media. She herself represents media values. And what does she offer us?

Opposing interracial marriage is fine for Souljah personally — she is free to marry anyone she can talk into it — but I can't see where Souljah gets satisfaction from condemning interracial relationships for others. There are many happy couples who

will find her repressive intolerance to be nothing more than a heartless form of puritanical racism.

Sister Souljah implies that a black man or woman should go through life angrily rejecting white culture or else risk being labeled an Oreo. I say that, if a woman or man adopts cultural influences that lead to a productive and compassionate life, who are any of us to condemn the source of those influences?

Clearly, the perpetration of slavery upon black Africans is a grievous and abhorrent fact that haunts the past and present of Africans and Americans. (It is important to remember that Africans enslaved Africans long before and after Americans and Europeans got involved in muddling up Africa. In fact, it was only in the 1980s that Mauritania abolished slavery and even then a slave's freedom was contingent upon being bought out of slavery.)

After recent travels in West Africa, I think it is safe to say that the descendants of slaves in North America have far more in common with the cultures of this country than they do

with African cultures. I believe African Americans, like all Americans, sometimes look wistfully at their roots, but they do it from an American perspective.

As time passes, all of the branches of the human species are commingling with greater and greater frequency. If we humans should be fortunate enough to enjoy a long future of many more generations, most of us will be kind of light brown in complexion. The ranting and raving from various corners about the purity of this or that race will cease to annoy and bore future generations.

In the meantime, it is 1992 and the social and economic chasm between rich and poor is increasing, with blacks occupying a disproportionately large number of the growing underclass. It is an ugly situation and it must change. To address these inequities we will need to look a lot deeper and do a lot better than is possible with the simplistic and divisive perspectives offered by Sister Souljah.

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