



Elvis

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Elvis is exaggerated and made humorous, a Mock-Elvis. But the charisma of Elvis also embodied by mocking Him.
In a great capitalistic exploitation of democracy, the post office held a buy-your-vote election over which Elvis should be on His stamp: the young and devilishly handsome Elvis, or the old and bloated Elvis.

The majority in this quasi-election opted for the young, dream-like Elvis over the old, sorry reality. We continue to mythologize Elvis and skip lightly over the full truth. Perhaps Elvis would have wanted it that way.
I will talk to Elvis about that today when I meet Him for lunch. Imagine that, the King and me, Mr. Burger, eating lunch at Burger King. Remember, you read it in this tabloid first.

— Todd K. Burger is a philosophy major and Diversions contributor.

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Graphic vocabulary stirs artistic debate

When I was younger, I learned my first swear words from my friends. I learned about sex from my friends. And, of course, my friends and I shared the same taste in music.

As Perry Farrell wrote on the inside cover of Jane's Addiction's "Ritual de lo Habitual," which in some places became "The White Album" when some found the original cover offensive: "We have more influence over your children than you do."

Just as our parents hit the roof when they heard us singing Madonna, and just as our grandparents were shocked to hear our parents singing Elvis, today's parents are in a tizzy over the shockingly graphic lyrics in today's music.

So our elders decided that albums with graphic lyrics shall be labeled with a parental advisory warning and shall not be sold to anyone under age 18.

Youth, being rebellious, will flock to what adults don't like. And many narrow-minded adults despise anything that runs opposite to their view of the status quo.

"Obscene" lyrics have been around for years in underground music. Only when these lyrics hit the mainstream did many begin to fear that their children would be corrupted by sordid depictions of sex and violence in music.

Each generation defines itself through separation from the old. We have been brought up on sex education, violence on the screen, Geraldo, graffiti and the notion that ignorance is not bliss. We expect nothing less shocking from our music.

But the core values passed from one generation to another will not fall apart because the youth listen to 2 Live Crew. Or Madonna. Or Elvis.

These overreacting record-labeling zealots really need to find something better to do with their time than inflicting their morals on the rest of society.

One man's obscenity is another man's art.

— Michelle Paulman is not necessarily a Left-Wing nut but is a Diversions contributor

At one time, when Phil and Don Everly could shock morals with "Wake Up, Little Susie," a song about an accidental night spent together. A couple of years later, The Glimmer Twins, aka Mick and Keith and the Rolling Stones, could throw parents into a tizzy with "Let's Spend the Night Together." That was 1966.

In 1992, it is not uncommon for youth to be pelted with "music" that graphically describes such things as the violent rape of women and anal sex with corpses.

Other "artists" advocate killing police, and one album cover (later pulled) depicted a black gang member waiting to assassinate President Bush. In ordinary times, things like this would get one arrested and thrown in jail.

But now, of course, this garbage is defended in the name of "artistic freedom." The line from trash-mongers like Time-Warner is that these are "legitimate expressions of rage

from an oppressed community that we, as oppressors, cannot feel, and should not try to censor. It's a cultural outlook that we need to be exposed to."

It's not. It's not music and it's not responsible. It is obscenity, defined by the Supreme Court as "utterly without redeeming social value."

If you put any of the sexual acts described by Ice-T or N.W.A. on paper or film, they would be declared obscene, and off-limits to young children. Merely putting such lyrics to a thumping, neo-disco beat doesn't make them any less so.

Theoretically, they are off-limits to young children. But as Omaha Councilman Steve Exon demonstrated this summer, it's a ban that is not enforced.

It should be enforced, rigidly, and punishment handed out for violations. Efforts should be made to ban the sale of such materials — period. It would prevent unscrupulous operators such as Time-Warner from profiting from the degeneration of our youth and our society.

— Sam Kepfield is an archconservative, a Rolling Stones fan and a Diversions contributor.

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