

Exposure

Women urinating common in sexual movies

One scene in "Leaving Las Vegas" struck me, both because it was unusual and because it apparently had nothing to do with the plot. It was made in a very careful and discrete way, but still: Elizabeth Shue had a pee. And the scene was just there.

You don't often see actresses urinating on the big screen, but "Leaving Las Vegas" was not a unique case. Melanie Griffith did the same in "Something Wild." So did Demi Moore in "Indecent Proposal" and Jessica Lange in "Rob Roy." Are these just coincidences, random choices made by writers and directors? Probably not.

We all know about hidden meanings of actions, signs and customs that symbolize something that our subconscious responds to. If these scenes were made on purpose, what do they have in common? Could they tell us about the role of women in particular in movies and in society in general?

What all these movies deal with, among other themes, is sex. More originally, they deal with sexually active women and discuss women's rights to their own bodies and decisions concerning their sexuality. Both "Leaving Las Vegas" and "Indecent Proposal," for example, tell a story of a woman who either mustn't or, objectively thinking, shouldn't have sexual feelings for a man with whom she becomes involved. Can Demi Moore spend a night with a strange but sexually attractive man for a million dollars, or can Elizabeth Shue fall in love with her self-destructive customer without her pimp's permission and against her own better judgment? And, for that matter, should Jessica Lange tell her husband that she was raped by his worst enemy?

The central role of sexuality is most obvious in "Something Wild," where Melanie Griffith aggressively makes love to a helpless handcuffed



Veera Supinen

"Is urinating a symbol of a bad woman? It could be, but the analogy is not likely that simple."

man — and in the very next scene, we see her taking a pee.

So what does this tell us? Is urinating a symbol of a bad woman? It could be, but the analogy is probably not that simple. Does it symbolize a "modern," independent woman who is not ashamed of her body, thoughts and emotions, and in this sense resembles men who have openly relieved themselves in movies for decades? Or is it maybe that writers and directors are confused with the concept of strong and independent women, and, not knowing exactly what to do with the characters, they make them sit on the toilet seat? Or do the filmmakers want to hint that independent women are as common nowadays as our daily visits to the bathroom? Or do strong women scare both the filmmakers and the audience so much that it feels safer to associate them with concrete actions that our society considers somehow inappropriate for women to do publicly?

Woman's sexuality, even in its active forms, is widely accepted in the movies and real life, as far as it's controlled by men or the norms of society. These four ladies, however,

rebel against the norms or are outside the society themselves. It's the combination of rebelliousness, sexuality and strength that makes these women so dangerous and bewildering.

A woman surely can be an active and independent decision-maker in other fields besides sexuality. This has long been realized — that's why movies describing strong women in their traditional and best-accepted roles, for instance as mothers, don't need to emphasize their point by showing the actresses in unconventional situations. It could even be unwise considering the audience's reactions. The scenes in the above-mentioned movies draw our attention, but they don't insult us. We accept seeing sexually autonomous Demi Moore and Melanie Griffith in the bathroom because in their characters, there is something questionable that justifies the sight.

A true and rare exception of Hollywood's way to treat sexually active and less-normative women is Ridley Scott's "Thelma and Louise," widely known as "that feminist movie." Otherwise, rebellious women are tolerated only if their rebellion has nothing to do with sexuality. An extreme example of this is Sally Field, who in her latest movie "Eye for an Eye" shoots the murderer of her daughter and is praised more than criticized for doing so. But then again, who could imagine a more motherly and therefore asexual being than Sally Field in her recent movies? It would be rather disturbing to see her either making love or having a pee.

Hollywood has reserved these actions for strong, independent and sexual females, knowing that they exist, but having an ambivalent attitude toward the fact.

Supinen is a junior history and American studies major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Social issues shape Republican nominees

Mona Charen

"Bob Dole, feeling Pat Buchanan's breath on his back in New Hampshire, decided that Buchanan's populist, anti-business message must be the silver bullet and promptly imitated it."

"We are cursed." That's how a leading Reaganite writer summed up the state of conservative politics in America. Pat Buchanan's victory in New Hampshire has engendered quite as much dismay and despair among Republicans as Buchanan himself predicted — though he would perhaps be surprised to learn that some of those who are most distressed are his former colleagues and comrades in arms from the Reagan administration.

How, after the glorious victory of 1994, did the Republican party arrive at the point where the choice for nominee comes down to a lackluster legislator, a faux conservative former governor or a neo-protectionist with more political/intellectual baggage than Imelda Marcos has shoes?

The answer is simple, the social issues. First, Phil Gramm backed away from the social issues, protesting that he was not a "preacher." His campaign never got to first base. Next, Steve Forbes, with the most Reaganite message in the field, surged in the polls. But his pollster, John McLaughlin, and campaign advisers (one of whom had a personal feud with Pat Robertson) convinced him that he could win without appealing to religious conservatives. Forbes needlessly and self-destructively attacked the Christian Coalition and saw his poll numbers sink like a stone in the days before the Iowa caucuses. Finally, Bob Dole, feeling Pat Buchanan's breath on his back in New Hampshire, decided that Buchanan's populist, anti-business message must be the silver bullet and promptly imitated it, decrying "corporate greed." He finished an ignominious second.

Alan Keyes, a virtual unknown with no organization and no money, was able, purely on the strength of his stirring speeches about the centrality of the "marriage-based, two-parent family," to get more votes than established senators and congressmen. A candidate who spoke for both economic and cultural conservatism — a blend of Forbes and Keyes — would have swept all before him. There was no such candidate in the field. Accordingly, in Iowa, with its strong representation of pro-life voters, Pat Buchanan was catapulted to the top of the pack.

In New Hampshire, with its history of economic distress, the mix was different. There, the Buchanan message of muscular nationalism and protectionism did resonate, though only 6 percent of voters named "foreign trade" an important reason for their vote.

Many conservatives blanch at the idea of a Buchananized Republican party because his economic message is hardly distinguishable from David Bonior's (D-Mich.). But, in light of his strong showing, it becomes a delicate matter to express that without alienating the Buchanan

voters — who are among the most energized and passionate in the Republican party. Lamar Alexander struck the right note on the morning after the primary, congratulating Buchanan on his victory but saying that Buchanan has the wrong answers. Bob Dole did not congratulate him, labeling Buchanan an "extremist." It is the Democrats who tend to substitute name-calling for argument. Vice president Al Gore never ventures out in public without denouncing every Republican in sight as an "extremist." Buchanan's rivals should spell out their reasons for rejecting protectionism and industrial planning — if they can.

Gary Bauer, head of the Family Research Council, hints that the rift between the religious right and the rest of the party may be serious, particularly if leading Republicans frame the issue as Dole did. The religious right has nursed angry feelings about the party establishment for some time. "I sometimes think my people have been played for fools," warns Bauer.

Paul Weyrich, founder of National Empowerment Television, believes that Buchanan cannot get the Republican nomination. "The party is broadly conservative," he explains, "but Buchanan is narrowly conservative and, in some ways, not conservative at all." Even if both Lamar Alexander and Robert Dole remain in the race throughout the primaries, thus splitting the non-Buchanan vote, they could still broker an arrangement at the convention that would keep the nomination away from Buchanan.

The test for the Republican party in the weeks and months to come is not to stop Buchanan — but to prevent Buchananism from creating a damaging rift between social and economic conservatives. If Dole wants to be the nominee, he must stop parroting Buchanan about corporate greed, start defending free trade and free markets, and bone up on Alan Keyes' speeches in his spare time.

(C) 1996, Creators Syndicate, Inc.

Naked redemption

TV, food, weights — the many deterrents of jail

You people may not know this, but there used to be two Steve Willeys.

There was and is the often sober Steve, who loves life and is quite content with all the belongings he now owns.

But there used to be the severely impaired Steve. This Steve also loved life, but unlike the first one, the second Steve desperately needed to confiscate everything that was not his.

The old Steve never would take things of value, mind you, only things that no one other than the owner would miss. Things such as fire-bells from the Schramm Residence Hall and a total of three chairs from Big Red Keno before it was ravaged by flames.

I guess what I'm getting at is that the Lancaster Correctional Facility is not a hard place at which to spend nine days.

For those of you who never have been to jail and have no desire to frequent one, I can attest firsthand that it is really just an "odd experience."

Perhaps the most unusual part of being incarcerated is that the guards apparently have some unwritten dogma that requires them to see you naked at least 39 times per hour.

(Editor's note: Easy stomach)

You are constantly reminded to "remove the britches" or show the guard your "Wompy," which apparently is some slang word the inmates made up that ALWAYS makes the warden blush.

While I was there, I couldn't quite grasp the concept of shedding your clothes every couple of minutes. I later learned that the guards strip-search the inmates because they often "smuggle" in contraband by hiding it in an orifice that is not their mouth.

I don't know about you folks, but if I were to sneak something in using



Steve Willey

"Perhaps the most unusual part of being incarcerated is that the guards apparently have some unwritten dogma that requires them to see you naked at least 39 times per hour."

this method, chances are, I'd probably want nothing to do with it after "ejection."

Many inmates, however, were more than willing to practice this method and oftentimes, were successful. Needless to say, drugs, particularly marijuana, were prevalent in the Lancaster Correctional Facility.

I often felt like reminding fellow inmates where their joint had been only a short hour ago, but opted not to because I was what the guards called "a scared little weenie boy."

Happily, I can report that I never was approached for intercourse, although twice a man asked me to play "backgammon" with him.

Ordinarily, one would be hard-pressed to misconstrue that statement, but because we both had just exited the same shower, I was a tad concerned.

Probably the worst part of jail, especially for a person who usually has three meals between breakfast and brunch, is the food.

The portions were small, the taste was wretched and the damn portions were SMALL! I didn't expect an 18-course feast by any means, but by God, I expected decent-sized portions.

"Here's yo' bean fat boy!" Perhaps the only benefit jail can provide is the atmosphere and quality of people it produces. Before I was bused to the Correctional Facility, I was waiting downtown exposing my "Wompy" to a very red-faced guard.

I noticed, in a separate cell, an older white-haired man pacing back and forth like a caged lion. I asked one of the guards why he was arrested. I was told (check the records if you think I'm lying) that he was found downtown wearing only a Nebraska football helmet and a blanket.

Just for the record, it was NOT Bill Byrne, but no doubt a disgruntled former student.

The truly upsetting thing for me is that jail was not a deterrent, and I can only assume it is not for others. The severely impaired Steve lost a long and arduous battle to maturity, and that was the only reason he stopped his ways.

(Editor's Note: How can you sit there, in all your fatness, and claim to be mature when the word "Wompy" appears in your column?) As an inmate, I was released for work and school. I basically just slept there.

I had access to weights and all the TV and movies I could handle. I hardly call that severe punishment.

I suppose jail could have been easier, though. They could have let us cover our "Wompies."

Willey is a junior ag-journalism major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

