

**Money makes the world go wrong**

Sometimes it takes drinking a beer in Scotland to realize that capitalism isn't for everybody. At least that's what it took for me — along with a little dose of Marxist theory.

This past summer I spent a month in the United Kingdom, and although a free market

exists in these countries, the desire for removal from the United States enabled me to take a different look at our country.

While in Scotland, I enjoyed a freshly drawn Guinness Stout and a copy of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* in a small pub. To be honest, I felt a little guilty and American purchasing the beer. Being raised in today's society means having an innate fear and distrust of communist and socialist ideals. Just mentioning the former Soviet Union stirs images of huddled masses anxiously waiting in line for one-ply paper guaranteed to tear in the first wipe.

Compared to these horrific images, capitalistic America seems great. The range of economic and individual freedom of agriculture, said to be limitless. But values in America have shifted. The biggest concern in American society is no longer peace or religious freedom. The one that Americans have placed above all else is the freedom to make a dollar.

One might argue that there is something wrong with economic freedom and that government regulates corporate America through to prevent capitalism from crushing small business. I agree to an extent.

However, there is a distinction



between realizing economic freedom and valuing the pursuit of the dollar over anything else.

The media is being adversely affected by capitalism. Huge conglomerates own multifaceted media ventures so a good portion of the American media is being defined by a few people. Those in control of the media (newspapers, television, radio and magazines) are not motivated primarily by truth or what might be considered good old American family values, but instead by what brings in the most cash.

As a result, a large segment of American culture is defined entirely by the possibility of produc-

ing more capital.

The art world is also suffering from the effects of capitalism. Good art is not necessarily defined by its aesthetic or creative value (whether it be visual, literary or musical arts). Instead, the market that exists for the art decides.

Some argue the market naturally selects which art is good because the public will only buy what it likes, and whatever the public likes is good art. Although there is some truth to this populist argument, it is a hard pill to swallow when shows like *Beavis and Butthead* and *Melrose Place* are so popular.

And, at the same time, fund-

ing for the National Endowment for the Arts is being decreased.

Something is wrong with America today. Some say race relations is the most difficult dilemma facing the country. Others say a lack of family values takes the cake.

But another crisis exists as a fundamental aspect of being American — our capitalistic society.

If Americans don't start realizing that earning more money cannot be the highest value in any utopian society, this great democratic social experiment will not work.

But that's all right — the beer is good in Scotland, my passport hasn't expired yet and the Atlantic Ocean flows both ways.

**Free food available for students who lobby**

Texas A&M's own aristocracy will make high-powered decisions this week in its lair. The festivities begin tonight at 6 p.m. during the Board of Regents' official Open House Forum Discussion of Student Related Issues. It sounds boring. It sounds drab. It sounds like too many words for just one agenda item. But every student should attend the open house for three reasons: art and power.

Who can resist free food? There will be copious buckets of gourmet delights — maybe just cookies and cokes, but it's free.

The art isn't free, but it is paid for. When the MSC/Rudder complex was being built in 1973, 6 percent of the \$24 million budget was set aside for an Olympic-worthy dormitory building. Now, the Regent's Quarters hides beautiful and interesting artwork in the corner of the MSC like a decadent museum. The regents don't want to enter their luxury alone, though. Students are invited to strut around the conference room with "Miles and Miles of Bluebonnets," a 21 oil painting by Onderdonk.

The Foyer offers two 18th century "Caesars Horseback" flanking an antique Cloisonné. In the Corridor, a six-foot tall 450-year-old

blind Chinese luck goddess stands amid some bizarre Indian glass paintings. Don't miss the \$600,000 bronze dog, Ludwig, on his stand in the reception room. This lavish lair is accessible to everyone at A&M. Students can easily arrange free tours, and student organizations can even use the dining room to host a club meeting.

Thelma Eisenhart, assistant secretary to the Board of Regents' secretary, has noticed the two disparate worlds of A&M students and regents with some sadness. Only 30 students attended the Pre-Board Meeting Open House last May. They ate all the free food and revealed a truly apathetic student body.

No doubt the other 41,861 Aggies were too busy picking their noses to care. None of them wanted to visit with a bunch of old regents. What would they talk about? The future of A&M? New admission requirements? Building projects and curriculum changes?

Maybe the A&M student body is too stupid to realize the inherent power of capturing the regent's ears. If the food and art won't lure students, perhaps this power will.

The Open House is a chance to meet the big honchos, shake their hands and influence their decisions. Students can present the nobility with

the peasant perspective.

Chairman of the Board Mary Nan West will be there. Tell her how a student at A&M feels. Allow her and her fellow aristocrats to empathize with their subjects.

This Thursday the Board will be considering a proposed fine arts music degree. A&M needs more fine arts programs — the closest thing to a fine arts degree right now is theater.

The regents should approve this new degree program and open the door to other artistic disciplines. Tell them.

Point out the uncanny resemblance between this semester's consideration of an Ergonomics Center and the Humanities Center rejected in May. If more students had attended last spring's Open House, the center might not have been turned down.

Rejecting the Humanities Center was wrong. The regents should be chastised for this foolish mistake and warned that students will not accept a continued disregard for academic research.

Tomorrow, students should address West and the other regents about the Center for Ergonomics — go and tell them. The regents are busy people. They don't normally hang out and chat with students on a Wednesday night.

They have lives to live. They have a university to lead. Tonight at 6 p.m. the students can tell them how to lead it.

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school and went to work for six years as a carpenter until I decided to get my GED and return to college. Ever since, I have worked hard to be admitted to Texas A&M.

With hard work and perseverance, anyone from any background or any academic disadvantage can get into this University as a qualified student.

I think the provisional program, in contrast to Weston's opinion, is significant in that it allows students to exhibit their ability and demonstrate what they can do given the opportunity.

Weston claims the provisional program is a "waste of money." That offends me because I know how important it is to other stu-

dents to be given the opportunity and show what they are capable of academically.

The University is not going to hand it to you. You have to earn it, and I am thankful and proud for the chance to be here. Personally, I feel Texas A&M is a university for opportunity, and I will argue that it already is a world class institution by proof of the top fifty ranking it recently received.

Tim Martin  
 Class of '97

**Admission policy provides equality**

Regarding Hank Bullinger's Sept. 23 Mail Call, "Government keeps real marriage intact."

In response to Bullinger's letter, all I can say is, "What are you afraid of?"

Statistics show that your "sacred institution of marriage" is much more likely to fail than same sex marriages because it eliminates

many of the problems associated with heterosexual marriage.

Take the age old argument of the toilet seat — not a problem anymore. Likewise, "that time of the month" syndrome is either not there or it can be sympathized with.

To say that homosexuals have a right to live normally in this country, and then say that the marriage of homosexuals should be denied because it is immoral, is contradictory.

Bullinger should be a little more open-minded. The small minority isn't so small anymore because many have begun to stand up for the rights of others. The pressure is on, so why don't we all join the '90s?

Chandra R. McKee  
 Class of '00

**Smokers can take care of themselves**

In regards to Patrick Smiley's Sept. 18 column, "Butting heads

**Infamous by death**

Double standard exists for artists

Any needless death should be viewed as tragic. Unfortunately, if it involves a star who has not been embraced in the bosom of mainstream America, the person is not shrouded in sympathy, but rather in harsh judgment.

Tupac Shakur's death has brought forth a disturbing double standard.

Apparently, some stars can't even rest in peace without criticism, while others are mourned and worshiped for decades no matter how despicably they lived their lives.

Take Elvis Presley, for example. Just recently, there were masses of people who wanted him to be portrayed on a postage stamp, not as the fat slob he became, but rather as a svelte god that supposedly existed before the drugs and booze took their visual toll. None of these Elvis fans were accused of up-lifting some evil lifestyle, but Tupac's fans are.



Aja Henderson  
 Senior political science major

that everyone in America does not spring from the middle class when artists are lamenting through their music that this is not the truth.

The fans who mourned (and still mourn) the deaths of those such as Marilyn Monroe and Kurt Cobain are seen in a sympathetic light. These high profile stars may not have been rappers and led the so-called gangsta lifestyle, but they went in the worst way.

Suicide is the greatest act of cowardice and selfishness. But of Kurt was portrayed as a victim.

What is especially troubling is the label that arises from the double standard. It seems like a strong white man is a glamorous "tough guy" who occasionally whips someone's butt, while the black equivalent is automatically crowned an "evil gangster." Something is wrong.

So, why has the death of Tupac been viewed as only inevitable?

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And why in the world are the fans who enjoyed his music and movies seen as reacting stupidly because they feel a loss from his death?

Maybe because a lot of people in this country go to Blockbuster, check out *Boyz in the Hood*, and pronounce themselves "Experts on Hoodness" by the time the final credits roll.

Or they look at the evening news — whose portrayal of black men exploits them — and think that every black man walking is lucky to have survived a drive-by shooting.

From the Beatles to the Grateful Dead, there are many examples of rock celebrities who lived grotesque lives right out in the open and were perfectly comfortable to let their dirty laundry flap in the wind, but they got and still get respect.

Tupac, on the other hand, had the audacity to be a rapper. It is sad that another black man is dead, but what is even sadder is that many feel that he had it coming.

And don't forget Miss "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" herself, Marilyn Monroe. She bloated up and died over a glassful of liquor and drugs, yet her image has not been tainted. Even though she constantly abused every drug known to mankind and was a sexual hotpot, she is still seen as the cute blond symbol of womanhood.

The difference between the death of someone like Tupac and others like Elvis and Marilyn Monroe is that Tupac was portrayed as the angry black man with boxing gloves faced to the world.

Never mind that some of his music was positive, such as his ode to black women that inspires them to "keep their heads up."

The bottom line is that he was a rapper, and many Americans are scared of rap because the lyrics tell a story that is not a fairy tale.

You cannot ignore the fact



2000:  
 New Student  
 Involved?  
 25  
 University provides opportunity for all  
 Regarding Christina Weston's 10 Mail Call, "Lower standards hurt the University."  
 I would like to respond to Weston's Mail Call from the other end of the spectrum. Weston claims the University has a "practically open admission policy." With all due respect to Weston, I think the University has done a fair job of enforcing the admissions policy. I am a testament to that as I know firsthand how difficult it is to gain admission into this University.  
 In 1987, I dropped out of high

Smokers who become ill or die from smoking are nothing more than citizens who made a decision. They must live, or possibly die, with it.

For those who feel they were duped into smoking by a fuzzy camel or concealed information... life is not always soft and cuddly.

Gabe Wootton  
 Class of '98

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

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