**opinion**

Column/Mauricio Roman

It takes all types for culture

It seems that Paul Sherer is falling into the idiom of harsher criticisms in his column ("American land of virtue?" Nov. 7). Throughout the column, he constantly mentions the lack of culture among American people—nowhere in his column does he define what he understands by "culture." Is culture measured by the way people entertain themselves? If so, they need to talk about Elvis, enjoy playing chess, and attend ballroom dances in order to be considered cultured?

As a foreigner in this country, I value America's authentic popular traditions as much as its—sometimes fake and pretentious—"intellectual culture." Elvis Presley was certainly an idol in his time, and, especially in Tennessee, he is still remembered as such. He is a symbol of America's culture, and I believe, recognizing these values, and our values. And culture, I believe, is measured by our values.

Sherer not only demonstrates utter ignorance of his country's popular culture but an incredible lack of human compassion. For him, news that does not have transcendental consequences are not important at all. "Who cares about Baby Jessy in her hole?" This does not affect me," people might think. The media certainly ignored the news on this particular event, but solely because they recognized the need of the people for human compassion in these times when wars and economic crises daily occupy the front pages of newspapers.

People are fed up with "crises" which affect them but in which they have no active role. The suffering of a small child inside a hole is an oasis of humanity in the daily censorship of international catastrophic news. Average people, like those who idolize Elvis or those who spend their vacations in cramped campsites, care for culture. They are human. And I consider this sentiment for humanity more a part of "culture" than the intellectual selfishness Sherer seems to prefer.

I do agree that the average man is somewhat oblivious to the events that occur outside his own surroundings. Especially in rural areas, as in some parts of the South and the Midwest, the people are so much linked both to their neighbors and to their land that their whole universe is reduced to the area to which they belong and in population to their communities. These apparently ignorant and narrow-minded people replace the competitive and imperious word as their thought and never expect to find it in my college newspaper.

Greeks objects specifically to the use of the "F-word." Are we therefore to assume that he uses the "N-word" in his speech? He ought to find the second word far more objectionable. I hope that he, if he reads this column, he will not commit such an oversight again.

I expect not to find profanities in his college newspaper, perhaps the obvious question: where does he expect not to find it? If not in his textbooks, he had better stay away from books on Chaucer, Dante, Shakespeare and Joyce. I am used to coming across the "F-word" in my reading, films, and at the theater. If I tried to avoid every use of it, my reading would be restricted indeed.

My dictionary contains an explicit definition of "soxiste neal" or "F-word" without the term only inside quotation marks. I would not use the term except in conversation. It does not have a place in either class or culture. The word "nigger" does not have a place outside ethnic abuse, and thus should not be used at all. It is far more of a shocker than the "F-word," and if we were to refuse to print a word at all, this would be the one. In Tech, the "F-word" did not use the word "nigger." It used the word "shock." That is no excuse, used the term only inside quotation marks. There is no excuse for using it without them.

Julian West, a graduate student in the department of mathematics, is a contributing editor for The Tech.

Column/Julian West

Concepts are obscene, not words

Two weeks ago, some MIT students asked students from another college and some nasty words were thrown. According to one of the MIT students, the was threatened and called a "fucking nigger".

This reported statement appeared in your column "Tech and the Promoted the following response from an out-raged student, Andrew M. Greene '91: " "real printing of the 'F-word' was sensationalistic and uncalled for. I do not use that term only inside quotation marks. I use it as commonly as I would the word 'man.'"

"Fach" — a word which has been around so long we have forgotten its etymology — has a place in the English language. It is not a public's right to use the term, in conversation. It does not have a place in either class or culture. The word "nigger" does not

crosswords from time to time. But the use of a word in a dictionary or a crossword cannot give offense, because these simply reflect English as it is spoken. My contention is that what we do is not itself editorially neutral — it is the use of the word which might give offense.

"Fach" — a word which has been used in such a way, is a word which might give offense. It is not a word which might give offense. It is not a public's right to use the term, in conversation. It does not have a place in either class or culture. The word "nigger" does not

**feedback**

Tech coverage of rape
forum was important

To the Editor:

I want to thank The Tech for writing an article covering the recent speaking engagement a couple. Matthew and I did about rape in our society. I think an emotional and sexual assault should always be brought up. This is a subject that needs to be spoken about more. The media certainly ignored the news on this particular event, but solely because they recognized the need of the people for human compassion in these times when wars and economic crises daily occupy the front pages of newspapers.

I would also like to add that the average man in our society is also an survivor of rape and sexual assault. Often when our service reads a discussion of rape she or he may be flooded with memories about her or his own experiences. I urge everyone at MIT not to give offense, because these simply reflect English as it is spoken. My contention is that what we do is not itself editorially neutral — it is the use of the word which might give offense. It does not have a place in either class or culture. The word "nigger" does not

**feedback**

Dining Service skims from hunger donations

To the Editor:

Students with less meal-plan points may be less likely to use MIT dining-halls.

Students with compulsory "contract" meal-plans may use their Oxfam donation in "dipping" unwanted points which would otherwise be forfeited to MIT.

The meal-plan option is more important to the Oxfam collection and MIT is providing a valuable service by making it available. However, as the donor receives no food whatsoever for these points, I would argue that 55 percent of nothing is nothing and that Food Service should levies no more than a reasonable "banking charge" for this service.

Wholesale dumping of compulsory points, however, only that such an offer is perceived as a用餐 unnecessary demands on non-compulsory plans up to some agreed upon limit (perhaps $20).

I urge every student at MIT not to be deterred from contributing to Oxfam but to think twice about using your meal-plan.

Eugene G. Gatch