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The smut stops here, Canada

From Prince Albert, Saskatchewan to Dildo, Newfoundland, Canadians need to take a long, hard look at their values



PAUL
KNOECHEL

Having all but given up hope on this Godless country and its total lack of moral decency, I got quite the pleasant shocker from Steven Harper when I heard the news of his plan to reopen the gay marriage debate in the House of Commons. I was so excited that I immediately put aside my steaming teakettle and prayed to God and Jesus, thanking them both for working via Mr Harper to abolish the smut they hate so much.

The reason I was so excited for this is because good moral issues have been being ignored in the news lately. I was saying to my attractive friend Mr Peters (usually I'm not so formal and simply call him Hot Karl) a short while ago that I was as furious as an angry dragon over these senseless news stories going around. Things like war in the Middle East, trade relations with the United States, and actions that can be taken in response to North Korea's alleged nuclear weapons test. Pssh. These "big news" stories concern me about as much as a Mexican avalanche.

I miss the good old days, like when people got up in arms (and rightly so) over the Janet Jackson nipple slip. I'll always remember where I was when I heard of her devious act: just sitting in the living room, enjoying a chili dog. But after saw that halftime debacle, I had to put that aside and storm off like an angry pirate to vent my moral outrage. Thanks to the obligatory 'round the clock media focus, an appropriate half-a-million-dollar fine was levied against the network. If only the media weren't as useless as a rusty trombone and had covered all the anti-gay-marriage demonstrations I took part in shoulder to shoulder with strangers, morality would have triumphed. The gay community, having lost and seen the error of their ways, would have faded

into memory like last week's hot lunch.

And to those that say violence on TV is a bigger concern—or that it's a matter of basic human rights that people who are the same as you and me other than their sexual preferences—should be able to marry, I say stop looking at the world as if through Arabian goggles (they're always so scratched up from the sand anyway). First of all, violence isn't caused by observing violence, it comes from immorality, and immorality comes from smut.

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In fact, just the other day I saw Tony Danza mercilessly beating an ass on TV. I tell you, it was the worst donkey punching I'd ever been witness to, and I can assure you this action was born of smut exposure—and not the fact that you can see someone tortured on 24. And secondly, everyone knows God loves gays as much as he loves a foul-smelling tea bag. It's expressly written in the Bible, next to that part about not touching women while they're menstruating and the guidelines for slave ownership.

So Mr Harper, I urge you, when the time comes to open this debate in the house, wear your finest Cincinnati bow tie, speak most unlike a dirty sailor, emulate ol' Abe Lincoln and make your mark on morality. You'll earn my eternal respect—and maybe a candy cane or two come the holiday season. But more importantly, you'll keep this country from degrading into one big alligator fuck house.

Today's article is brought to you by the letter E and the number 0



MARIA
KOTOVYCH

distribution of data. If the extremes were to become the most common instances, they wouldn't really be "extreme" anymore, would they?

There are additional logical fallacies with using the word "extreme." Think, for example, about Maybelline's Moisture Extreme lipstick. Is it possible to have extreme moisture? Can something that is already wet be even more wet? I understand going from damp to wet. That's possible. But from wet to extremely wet? I don't know about that one.

On 19 September, Mattel released TMX Elmo, a new doll commemorating the tenth anniversary of the obscenely popular Tickle Me Elmo doll. And while the "X" of "TMX" stands for "ten," it also for "Xtreme," because this doll is supposedly an extreme version of the original Elmo doll.

Now, I don't know about you, but the last time I looked up the word "extreme" in the dictionary (and that would be about two minutes ago), the word began with an E, not an X. I must warn you that I'm a language geek, and as such, I'm put off by stupid gimmicks such as "x-treme."

You see, the root of this word can be traced through Middle English and Middle French all the way back to the Latin word *extremus*. Marketers and marketing students, please note that Latin users didn't spell it *x-tremus*. Have some respect for the dead and spell the word in question with an E.

Why does the word "extreme" come up so often in marketing anyway? Sports. Food items. Makeup. It seems that anything and everything is "extreme" (or "x-treme") these days. If all of these products claim to be "farthest removed from the ordinary or average," then doesn't "being extreme" just end up becoming "the average?" Think about what you know about a normal

But going back to Elmo, what exactly is so extreme about the TMX version, anyway? When he's tickled, he laughs, slaps his leg, falls onto the ground, kicks his feet and pounds the floor. As someone who's very ticklish, I can tell you that Elmo's reaction to being tickled is pretty normal. And even as a toy, Elmo isn't particularly unusual either: there are some pretty sophisticated gizmos out there these days. Perhaps if Elmo lost bladder control from laughing so hard, peed all over the floor and yelled "stop tickling me, you sadistic bitch!"—now that would be extreme.

Part of being a University student involves developing and honing our critical thinking skills (and apparently, another part of being a student involves writing in-depth commentaries about toys intended for toddlers). Regardless, these critical thinking skills are crucial so that we can decipher the many messages we as consumers receive from media and advertisers. Whether the messages are about toys or more serious topics such as body image and self-esteem, it's important for us to evaluate all the messages that we receive so that we can choose what information to accept.