

Skaggs says, "The purpose here has not been to belittle Asians or animal rights organizations as has been widely reported. Let's look beyond the obvious. The purpose has been to bring to light issues of cultural bias and intolerance that we as a society perpetuate. I wanted to expose certain cultural values that we adhere to with a deadly vehemence, such as our biases against other peoples' customs when they conflict with our own. This performance pointed out a frightening contrast between peoples' behavior towards animals and those same peoples' behavior towards other people on the basis of cultural differences.

"Eating dog is an accepted cultural practice for many people around the world. In fact, this satirical performance would not have been possible without the consent and help of Koreans and other ethnic people who believed in and agreed with its message. As they see it, eating beef is abhorrent to certain religious sects who believe that cows are sacred, but we don't see many Americans exhibiting sensitivity in this arena!

"Unfortunately we all are guilty of creating social barriers out of fear, mistrust, misinformation or ignorance. We tend to refuse to examine or accept the values of other cultures. We not only force our beliefs on others, but we also attempt to destroy their beliefs and cultures -- such as with Native Americans, Hawaiians, African Americans, Hispanics and Asians. In some cases we even commit genocide. We perpetuate hatred and racism. We believe that we are right and can dictate the values of others. We try to be the cultural police of the world."

Skaggs believes that the media plays a very important role in the perpetuation of hatred and bias, of propaganda and the distortion of the truth, whether by accident or by design. The media helps to stereotype people and to enforce certain beliefs. The media can be reactionary, gullible, and irresponsible. He feels the reporting on this satirical piece has been just that. He feels that they have in many cases become the agents for his argument, that the media, can be (and is) used by government to create blame, hatred and fear. It can be (and is) used by business to exploit people. It can be (and is) used by individuals or self interest groups who wave their particular banners to get coverage.

The media can also be (and is) a platform for ideas, a forum for creativity, and a means for fostering understanding and harmony -- a means to educate and enlighten. We only have ourselves to blame for our limitations. Skaggs hopes in some small way to bring attention to these issues. At the same time, he reminds us that we need to be aware of the biting nature of satire and perhaps be reminded of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" wherein Swift proposed