

THE BRUNSWICKAN OPINION & EDITORIAL

Because everything is political

What I know now

by Tan-Nee Ng

Because everything is political, eh? Although I still fly by that rule, I realize there are a lot of limitations on trying to explain the political relevance in every article I write (where it is not overt.) Next year I would like to try and tackle more complex issues, maybe do some weekly series or parts on a certain topic because, frankly, there is only so much one can cover with a 500-word limit on your column. In the meantime though, I would like to do some thoughtful reflection on this school year, so without further adieu, here are the top two things I learnt this school year (and to find out the rest, just stay tuned next year!)

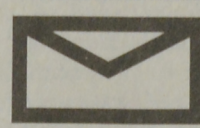
1. Guys are pigs. They really are. Well, ok, that's not a fair generalization, but what I learnt this year is to not be as trusting because being that way can get you into lots of trouble. After all, UNB isn't the safest campus around and rape happens. Statistics on sexual assaults are misleading because assaults against women go often unreported (only six per cent of assaults are ever reported to police in Canada), however, in order to show the prevalence of rape in Canada, I believe it is useful to bring up. In 1998, 85 per cent of all sexual assault victims were female, 78 per cent of all criminal harassment victims were female and 62 per cent of all victims of kidnapping and abduction were female. The Statistics Canada National Violence Against Women Survey (1993) reported that 51 per cent of all Canadian women have been a victim of rape or assault at least once in their lifetime.

2. Reality is a shared illusion. What we consider "real" is just what everyone's

agreed is real — and it could change at any time, depending on the circumstances. Howard Bloom gives a great example:

"... Solomon Asch published a classic series of experiments in which he and his colleagues showed cards with lines of different lengths to clusters of their students. Two lines were exactly the same size and two were clearly not — the dissimilar lines stuck out like a pair of basketball players at a Brotherhood of Munchkins brunch. During a typical experimental run, the researchers asked nine volunteers to claim that two badly mismatched lines were actually the same, and that the real twin was a misfit. Now came the nefarious part. The researchers ushered a naive student into the room filled with the collaborators and gave him the impression that the crowd already there knew just as little as he did about what was going on. Then a white-coated psychologist passed the cards around. One by one he asked the pre-drilled shills to announce out loud which lines were alike. Each dutifully declared that two terribly unlike lines were duplicates. By the time the scientist prodded the unsuspecting newcomer to pronounce judgment, he usually went along with the bogus consensus of the crowd. In fact, a full 75% of the clueless experimental subjects bleated in chorus with the herd. Asch ran the experiment over and over again. When he quizzed his victims of peer pressure after the ordeal was over, it turned out that many had done far more than simply going along to get along. They had actually seen the mis-matched lines as equal. Their senses had been swayed more by the views of the multitude than the actuality."

Interesting, huh?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Too much smoke in the old peace pipe

by Jason Stephen French

In past contributions to *The Brunswickan*, I have been careful not to "call out" fellow contributors because opinions, like me, are assholes and everybody has one. With war, there can never be a right answer or a wrong answer. However, I feel the need to ask for clarification from two of the columnists concerning their statements.

One columnist stated that there is an "illegal/immoral/genocidal US led war going on." Where are your foundations for such claims? Without any further explanation, this claim is as intelligent an argument as IRAQ SUCKS. Please provide me with some background research so I can follow your argument so I may consider your points as valid.

As for the alleged illegality of the war, there are existing UN Resolutions that provide for the use of force to disarm Iraq. The 1441 Resolution that everyone talks about was approved by the UN. Simply put 1441, states that Iraq has been in material breach of its obligations. Subsequently, the same legal logic employed by Bush and Blair to use military force in this instance was used by your Prime Minister to send Canadian troops to the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Fox in 1998. Where is the illegality?

As for your immoral/genocidal argument, again the proof is in the pudding. Amnesty International, one of the most active groups in pursuit of peace,

states that the Government of Iraq has committed "extremely grave violations of Human Rights and international humanitarian laws." In addition, many of the captured Iraqi's have reported that thousands of Iraqi civilians are being shot by the Baathists inside B a s r a . Furthermore,

more Iraqi civilians are being deliberately used as "human shields" and/or killed to make an example of what happens when its citizenry defies the Baathist regime. With disappearing activists and rape rooms for those Iraqi women whose husbands do not stand for the government of Iraq, I ask the simple question: Which country is committing genocide?

The author also stated, "I wonder what people in other places think of what Canada is doing?" I'll tell you what they think: They no longer care about what Canada thinks. The Canadian government has delegated its Foreign Policy to the UN. Canada has replaced its traditional allies of England and the United States and, depending on whom you speak with, have become isolationist or have aligned themselves with France, Russia and Germany. Like a lengthy relationship that has ended, the allies have moved on without Canada. Do not fret though, as my roommate so brilliantly put it, "The first breakup never takes."

As for the Wabanski Perspective article, I must say, it is commentary from elders like Mr. Ennis that make me weary of what is written in history texts. The author first compares the United States to Nazi Germany. This statement is so ridiculous and preposterous for so many reasons. The Nazi's executed millions of their own citizens and conquered countries in order to increase their land mass. Similarly, Iraq has executed millions of their own citizens and have attempted to conquer nations to increase their land mass. The only land the United States asks for in times of war was stated so eloquently by Colin Powell: "The only land we ask is enough to bury our brave men and women who fought on your soil." Mr. Ennis also states that the "Huge propaganda machine...continually churns out 'official' lies about the enemy." Again, where is the proof? Even those who hate the United States will admit to the grave Human Rights atrocities in Iraq.

Finally, as for Canada being next on the target of opportunity list, who knows? The United States does not import most of its oil from Saudi Arabia or Iraq. As a matter of fact, the US imports most of its oil from Canada. This is, in and of itself, the reason the US is currently at war, is it not?

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