

BLOOD AND THUNDER

Letters to the editor reflect the views of our readers and not necessarily those of the Brunswickan. Letters may be sent to Rm. 35 in the Student Union Building. Deadline: 1 pm on Tuesday. Usual maximum length: 300 words. Please include name, student number and phone number.

Reality is self-defined

Dear Editor,

I wish to extend my thanks to S.K. Arndt and John Valk for extending their viewpoints on the ongoing discussion on the "perils of individualism". I would like the liberty to respond to the arguments of both; due to space limitations, I will deal with the issues raised by Arndt herein, and postpone dealing with Valk's arguments until next week.

In writing my original letter on this topic, I became concerned that misunderstandings could arise out of certain aspects of my arguments which could not be properly explored in such a brief article. Indeed, this was the case, and I hope this further treatment will serve to clarify these matters.

First, it was never my intention to "demonstrate" that reality is "self-defined", "self-contained" and "all-inclusive". Arndt's contentions are confined to an empirical perspective; since this is the criteria he is using for validity determination, he wrongfully assumed the situation is mutual. I was (and am) merely playing with ideas, *outside* the framework of empiricism, to promote consideration and discussion among those who share an interest in these areas.

Therefore, it is understandable that my points of discussion be at odds with Arndt's sense of "realistic examination". By realistic, Arndt is referring to a system based exclusively on sensory agreement; questions which lie outside this narrow context do not lend themselves to such examination—i.e.—"God does not exist because He is unseen". The most we can derive from this argument is that He does not exist in these terms.

I in no way deny the reality of Arndt; I am certain it is as real to him as mine is to me. Although it is difficult to confine a metaphysical explanation such as mine to his terms, I nonetheless welcome the challenge.

Speaking of terms, let us clear up possible (and apparent) misconceptions of several that I used in my original article. By "all-inclusive" reality, it is meant that "anything is possible." This cannot be refuted; distinctions are *limited* to a particular frame of reference. "Self-contained" refers to this particular frame of reference, i.e.—if the light is green, from the perspective of the perceiver, in this context it cannot be said to be otherwise. "Self-defined" means that reality defines itself—it is not subject to terms and conditions.

From this, it can be derived that there is no "objective truth", as Arndt contends. Even sensually speaking, there is no way of knowing what is *really* "out there", we must rely on mutual subjective agreement to obtain a common perspective.

This, indeed, forms the basis of our "science", but it must be understood that while certain rules have to be followed in order to gain popular acceptance, it is limited to its

own domain, and can hardly be credited with anything more than pattern recognition within its sphere of measurement—hardly an all-pervasive determination of reality.

For instance, if a person has an extraterrestrial encounter, imposition by either science or common belief cannot change the nature of the experience. Similarly, if one sees an apparition of a person who is "dead", the experience is all-real to the perceiver, regardless of any lack of perception by others in proximity. Reality by consensus is superfluous; if it is real to me, it is surely reality.

We must understand the important distinction between perception and deception. Arndt's analogy to the person who mistakenly believes he has \$10,000 in his bank account, if no basis exists for this belief, is obviously engaging in self-deception. Arndt has taken my reference to reality being "self-defined" entirely out of context; it is my fault for not fully explaining its intended meaning.

Nonetheless, it can be said that one does indeed define one's experiences (which is what Arndt seems to be alluding to), but in this realm this task is, for the most part, relegated to "higher" forms of self; while it is surely possible, it is difficult to consciously manipulate physical reality to any great degree while maintaining the narrow focus necessary to operate within it. This is especially true of today, where our views are considerably more rigid than they were, say, in the time of Christ, where these "miracles" were more widely accepted and therefore more accessible.

From an empirical standpoint, we are quick to invalidate those perceptions which are not socially convenient. Therefore, as society becomes more structured, consciousness in turn is forced to become more rigid in keeping within this "sphere" there are many who hold an entirely distinct manner of perception, our dismissal of such "insanity" is only a measure of validity *within our own context*. To these people, it is *we* who are insane, and this example clearly elucidates the fact that reality is indeed subjective, even on this empirical level.

As for Arndt's rather odd assertion that I may have misinterpreted the meaning of community (I believe the term I used was "communal") rest assured that this was not the case. He is correct in stating that being a part of a community does not necessitate a loss of individuality. Of course, I was speaking of ideology—a collective ideology necessitates the subversion to some degree of individual perspective. Surely, if Arndt and I took it upon ourselves to limit our ideas of reality to mutual agreement, what would result would be nothing less than mutual deception. Even worse, if I commanded him to discard his views in favor of mine under the threat of eternal hell-fire, well, that would be unspeakable.

But, Arndt and I do agree on one point; in fact, it represents the foundation of my argument. Arndt states

that God "exists whether or not anyone believes in Him." This is to say—existence is unconditional—it does not depend on belief opinion, or agreement. While this seems to contradict Arndt's perspective on empirical reality, he seems to be making an ontological distinction between the sensory and non sensory domains which cannot exist. The same principle hold true with any measure of reality—it exists whether anyone chooses to believe it or not. It is real to me.

A.J. Carisse

Homosexuals not always innocent victims

Dear Editor,

The recent report of "gay bashing" on local T.V. has prompted me to write in, particularly as *the Brunswickan* often carries contributions in defence of homosexuality. Whilst I am against violence directed towards homosexuals because of their sexual orientation, my experiences suggest that they are not always the innocent victims of heterosexual prejudice. There are elements within this group of people whose behavior provokes attack.

Recently, I have had three experiences of negative homosexual behavior. The latter two were minor; consisting of wolf-whistling and staring at my crotch. What was disturbing was the behavior of a homosexual male who sexually assaulted me in Zellers store of Fredericton Mall. I shan't divulge details but I was unharmed physically. I reported the incident to the store manager. He said there was nothing he could do. He could have alerted Mall security, but he didn't. I felt he did not take me seriously, or perhaps, he thought I was homophobic. If I were female and had been assaulted by a heterosexual male, I suspect he would have been more understanding. The wimmins/wymins/wymmyns/wympersons room would, of course, have something else to complain about.

I was too shocked to retaliate against my assaulter at the time. However, I would have been justified in taking physical action against him, just as women have the right to self defense against assault by men (or women). I now think to myself, how many cases of sensationalised gay bashing result from reaction to 'aggressive' homosexual behavior? Name withheld by request

Lesson in article misleading

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article written by Karen Burgess, *Are Safe Walks Safe?*, in the March 12th issue of *the Brunswickan*.

The article, to provide a brief summary, discusses an alleged sexual assault that involved a male volunteer assaulting a female vol-

unteer in the "Walk-Safe" program offered at Centennial College. The article then goes on to "educate" us about the safe-walk program offered at UNB by the Knights of Neill. A lesson that I feel is misleading.

The article does raise some good points and no one can dispute the fact that incidents such as the alleged one at Centennial College do occur. These incidents do need attention and are of legitimate concern; however, I do not feel that it should be done in a comparative manner that belittles and casts doubt on the service the Knights have provided for two years, without incident. I do not feel that is appropriate to refer to the program as a "pick your rapist" service. If Ms. Kilfoil heard it as a joke then that is all it should be taken as, not something to base (in part) an argument on a subject such as this. It is sad that people would joke about a sensitive topic such as this.

Another point that the article stresses is that there is no formal screening process for the people who volunteer for the program. I fail to see how a group of volunteer students that have no funding or resources with which to initiate such procedures could do anything but what they have done in the past to ensure the integrity of those who are chosen as escorts. This is where the university should step in and provide funding for a program (and the necessary safeguards) of this nature.

The pride and commitment these gentlemen have shown to their house and to the students of this university to prompt them to offer a volunteer program of this nature is very rare. To see an article that refers to it as a haven for rapists must be very disturbing to those who put their efforts into the program. I have deep admiration and respect for the gentlemen of Neill House and for their safe-walk program. I only hope that this article has not tainted the reputation of the service (and the House).

Keep up the good work. A job well done!
Sean Daly
Past President - Harrison House
Past Chair - Residence Representative Board

Many inaccuracies in letter

Dear Editor

To Mr. Rolston;
Although I have been warned against entering into a battle of wits with someone who isn't armed, I feel there are just too many inaccuracies in your letter last week to go unanswered. First of all, it is beyond me how you could have interpreted my article as being in favour of reverse discrimination. The whole point of the article was to engage in a discussion as to whether it really existed—which I argued it does not.

Second, I did not state that "during the past five decades only men were hired." It strains my imagination to even begin to understand

how you came up with such a ridiculous, not to mention inaccurate, statement.

Third, I suggest you check your facts on the case of the women and minority firefighters. And, while you are at it, I suggest you check out some facts on the number of families that are headed by women who are just as much in need of a job as men. And you could also look at a few figures on the 35 cent wage gap between men and women and the gender segregation in the job market.

And for your information, I have experienced life "outside textbooks." I worked in a non-traditional field for eight years both in Canada and abroad. I suggest you might try and look at life through some of the perspectives of people who have had different experiences that you, rather than viewing everything from your own narrow little point of view.

Fourthly, I think you are just plain ridiculous when you ask "can you imagine the outcry if somebody said no more Asians need apply to the RCMP?" First of all, REALITY CHECK, that would never happen. If you look at who holds the power positions in society, I don't think there's any danger of white men being shut out of these positions in this lifetime. Also, if you look at men who have entered traditionally female dominated professions like teaching and nursing, you will see that men do very well and that they do not encounter the barriers that women who entered traditional male professions do. How else can you logically explain statistics like, why women make up 66 percent of teachers in New Brunswick, yet hold only a tiny fraction of administration positions. (And I mean an explanation that isn't full of stereotypes about women).

Also, if you re-read my article, (or maybe you should have someone re-read it to you), the whole point was that men and women do not get the same shot at a job. Due to the factors discussed in my article, factors which obviously were beyond your intellectual capacity to understand, I argued that affirmative action does not give special advantages to women and minorities. Affirmative Action and Equity Legislation is designed to give everyone a fair shot by removing barriers that give men the advantage.

And since you mentioned a few things that you are sick and tired of, I'll tell you what I'm sick and tired of. I'm sick and tired of men like you calling women "special interest groups" when we represent 52 percent of the population. I'm sick and tired of men like you and your whining about your persecution complexes. Maybe if you stopped whining long enough, you would understand what women's groups are really saying. It's obvious from your letter you don't have a fucking clue what's going on beyond your own little world.

And finally, the day women get "respect" for their differences from

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