

editorial

Lysistrata causes controversy

"Everyone has an opinion." This is a cliché that we probably have heard all of our lives. As long as we live in a free society we can express our opinions without fear of retaliation.

The editorial of Feb. 24, entitled "Risqué language offends students," was an article of opinion on the editorial page. We feel that everyone has the right to voice his opinion; however, in the process of expressing the opinion, we should not lessen the professional integrity or scholarship of a professor. This was not the intent of the Blalock article.

A lack of communication seems to be the problem in this case. The students in this particular class read an English translation of the play *Lysistrata*. According to the professor (discussed in the article) and other professors familiar with the play, the scenes contain very explicit sexual innuendoes in the original Greek version of the play that do not translate well in the English version.

When the students read only the English version of the play, it is understandable that the original Greek version explained by the professor may have seemed "twisted and fabricated" compared to the only version they had read.

The professor used the original Greek to explain points which in his professional academic opinion were valid points to discuss.

The students mentioned in the article were not aware that the descriptions and explanations were derived from the translation of the original Greek which the professor was qualified to make. He felt the students would miss valuable meanings in the play if he did not translate the points from the original Greek.

The Humanities curriculum includes the play *Lysistrata*. The professor was obligated as an instructor of this university to explain what, in his judgement, was relevant in the play.

The play, no matter how vulgar in content, does have merit as a piece of literature. Another instructor in his lecture introduction to *Lysistrata* explains, "It must be remembered that, although Aristophanes' pornographic portrayals belie a fiendishly clever wit, the blatant and open presentation of obscene matter was expected by the Greek audiences. Comic obscenity *per se* was traditional. The innovative aspect lay rather in the sophistication of his scurrility."

Today, however, such pornographic portrayals are not expected by some students in a classroom. The play needs to be explained in scholarly terms referring to the original Greek meaning, but we feel that it can be done with decorum. The instructor should exercise good taste when choosing words or phrases to explain sensitive and controversial subjects in a classroom.

We feel that if instructors exercise good taste in explaining obviously sensitive subjects they can maintain the respect of their students without compromising their positions or scholarly observations.

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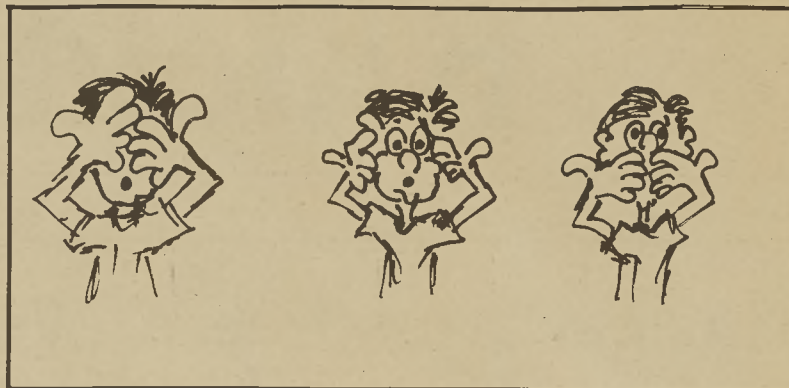
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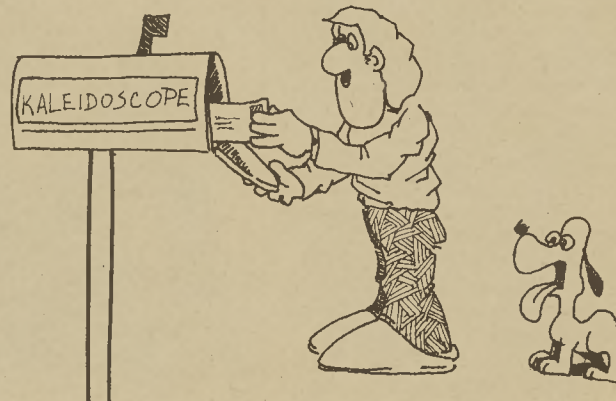
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letters



Language scholar disagrees

To the Editor:

As a student of languages at UNCA, I am quite dismayed by the absurdity of Jennifer Blalock's editorial of Feb. 24, "Risqué Language Offends Students." What troubles me is my fellow-student's evident ignorance of the play read in the Humanities course, and her straitened educational outlook.

Ms. Blalock apparently did not bother to investigate the play *Lysistrata* before she so stupidly attempted to gainsay a professor who, as I gather from Ms. Blalock's own description of the affair, has given an accurate representation of the force of the original language. I have been reading Greek for seven years and I know that the interpretation in question is sound. Still, even in translation, the intention of the passage can only be mistaken by a simpleton.

It seems to me that the professor,

whom Ms. Blalock is too cowardly to mention by name, was offering a knowledgeable and accurate interpretation of a play that is famous for its excellence as well as its humor. And if that professor is guilty of anything, it is that he lacks the mediocrity necessary to teach students of her mentality. I hope Ms. Blalock can refrain from making such ill-advised statements in public places in the future.

If Ms. Blalock, like her friend and her sister, is embarrassed by the excellent instruction in the Humanities program, perhaps she ought to try some remedial grammar, for it is not very becoming to the image of the student body at UNCA when she misspells in print. My advice to her is to avoid all occasion of absurdity like this while she is connected with *Kaleidoscope*.

Sincerely,
Mark C. Mueller

French club trip even better

Dear friends at *Kaleidoscope*:

The French Club would like to say "Merci beaucoup" for your lovely article on our planned trip to French Canada. One tiny error--the suggested spending money of \$150 is included in the estimated cost of \$335. Travel and lodging are \$185 with

\$150 for food and urban transportation. The total cost of the trip is \$335 including food making it a "tres bon marche." Merci again for a lovely article.

Michelle Vaden
La Presidente
Club Francais