

OPINION

Blue Banner Editorials 324 lecture inappropriate

Have you ever considered what the term "axis of evil" really means? When I ask this I am not talking about what Bush says it means, but instead the meaning of the words themselves, and their intention to dehumanize.

Bush uses the term to describe Iraq, Iran and North Korea, grouping them together as if they are allies. They are not.

The term "axis of evil" comes from the "axis powers" of World War II. Bush, or rather the backroom speechwriters, are trying to conjure up images of fascist Germany, Italy and imperialist Japan, and compare them to Iraq, Iran and North Korea to justify the impending invasion of Iraq, and god knows who else in the not too distant future.

The problem with "axis of evil" is that it dehumanizes. To dehumanize is to deprive of human qualities such as individuality, compassion or civility.

The image of evil in our culture is a strong one, and labelling another human being as evil dehumanizes that human and dehumanizes us. This removes the possibility for a peaceful resolution because how do you bargain with evil? What is left to do but wipe out the evil by attacking it, repeating the cycle of violence. Why dehumanize?

The more successful a government is at dehumanizing its enemies, the more its citizens are ready to accept the use of a military attack.

Not only do these countries comprise the so-called "axis of evil", they also possess "weapons of mass destruction", another example of Bush's dehumanizing tactics. Every state has weapons and every state's weapons have the ability to destroy large numbers of people. The implication of calling them "weapons of mass destruction" is much worse than just calling them bombs, missiles or weapons.

Has the Bush administration forgotten that the US is the leading military power and possess more "weapons of mass destruction" than any other nation? Strange!

OK, you're probably asking "what does this have to do with the humanities program, specifically humanities 324?" I'm getting to that. The first humanities 324 lecture of 2003 explored the Enlightenment. It began with a discussion of what we perceive as good vs. evil, and showed a video clip of Bush's state of the union address from a year ago - if you don't recall, this speech was infamous for the new terms "axis of evil" and "weapons of mass destruction."

To use this propaganda and rhetoric to demonstrate our society's view of good vs. evil is inappropriate in a course such as humanities 324, and has no place in the humanities program at all. Humanities teaches us that there are no right or wrong answers, as long as you justify your opinion sufficiently. Yet to be told what is right and wrong by Bush contradicts this.

Ironically the Tuesday before this lecture was held, the arts 310 lecture was also held. This lecture explored, among other things, the ways in which this country is dehumanizing people of other nations to make it "easier on the conscience to kill them," or more morally sound if you will. One of the main examples cited was Bush's use of "axis of evil."

To use this specific clip could be viewed as a political statement, but either way, using such propaganda to teach or to make a point about good vs. evil in our society has no place in the humanities 324 lectures.

This semester we challenge all of you to use through Bush's rhetoric, form your own opinions about world events based on facts, and avoid using dehumanizing catch phrases whenever possible. All the best!

Check your values at the door

Consumed with the jargon of terrorism, war, nuclear weapons and human rights abuse, it seems the United States has forgotten its responsibility to set a positive example for the rest of the world. To argue whether the US deserves this responsibility misses the point.

Our nation's government has taken it upon itself to set the precedents for "proper behavior" in the global community. However, as of late, our government seems to have its hands full playing global policeman, and have failed to notice, with any amount of seriousness, the state of our own nation.

While our nation buses itself accusing Saddam Hussein of human rights abuse, US companies maintain factories in foreign countries where children work for 18 or more hours a day for mere pennies. These same companies ruin the environment, steal money from their employees and drain our nation's coffers through corporate welfare.

Our government, since Sept. 11, has denied prisoners from the war in Afghanistan basic rights allowed to them by the Geneva Conventions. Non-citizen men of Middle Eastern descent residing in the US must now register with the INS, and many that have complied have been detained indefinitely.

How can we, as Americans and a nation, dare to point our fingers at others when our nation and government are guilty of many of the same "sins"? How can we justify demanding these high, moral standards of other nations when our own nation does not even abide by them?

Our nation commits grievances in our names on a daily basis and we do nothing. We should be in the streets protesting, yet we shrug it off because "it's not affecting our daily lives." But all these things affect not only us, but people worldwide. It may not be immediate, but someday, possibly soon, your life will be affected.

It is our responsibility as citizens of a nation that touts the ideology of freedom and moral responsibility, and currently demands accountability from Iraq, to begin to demand the same accountability from our own nation.

It is in our self-interest to take into consideration the self-interests of others. We must act now, here in our own country, before we can demand perfection of others.

Nothing in the Opinions section necessarily reflects the opinion of the entire *The Blue Banner* staff, advisor or the university faculty, administration or staff. Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of a majority of *The Blue Banner* editorial board.

Plenty to write about

Stuart Gaines
Editor in Chief



Editor's Notes

I was so ready to hit-the-ground biching about bad snow day calls, campus diversity or required, college level P.E. classes. But then I thought that I could dig deeper, go for something really original, and whine about parking problems, Arts 310 or wasting money on roundabouts.

All of these and other vital UNCA was occurred to me as I sat down to write for the first *Blue Banner* of 2003.

But after a brief pause and a deep breath, I started to feel silly for wanting to talk about those things first.

I thought about the shuttle closing over the weekend, and it made me very sad. I have avoided turning on the television news lately as I'm tired of watching things blow up on instant replay for the evening news.

I thought about the shuttle, then my thoughts then spilled back to 1986, to Signal Mountain, Tennessee and Bachman Elementary School, back to Ms. Ryder's classroom where we watched *The Challenger*. Her room was the one with the TV, where we all crowded together to see the teacher go into space.

But instead of going into space, we watched her blow up instead. Then nobody knew what to say, especially the teachers, and we all

went home early instead. I don't watch shuttle launches anymore, and I'm sure now that there's more important things to talk about than snow days.

But then my thoughts turned away from sad, and headed towards worry instead.

"Worry, all about my worries," sings John Bell of Widespread Panic. "Lately all I seem to do."

I hear that. Worry about serious worries. There's lots of those going around these days.

Worry about war. Worry about terrorism and racism. Worry about the way our President pronounces the word, "America."

I still can't believe that a non-majority of Americans elected Bush, an admitted cocaine user, over potsmoking-Deadhead, Al Gore.

What Al would have a better clue what to do right now. He'd probably be wondering what Jerry would do, or making out in the Oval Office with Tipper.

But I do prefer sweet Al's Droopy the Dog approach, to W's blazing, Yosemite Sam routine. The world might just be a safer place in Droopy's hands. At least he's cooler.

Worry. Worry about abortion rights.

After 30 years of Roe vs. Wade, a woman's right to choose has never been more in danger than it is today.

Amazingly, three Supreme Court justices are very close to retirement, and Bush is not afraid to put some squeaky-clean, misguided, pro-life jackass on the court, one who could

Say What?

"Well, I went home with a waitress, the way I always do. How was I to know, she was with the Russians too? I was gambling in Havana, I took a little risk. Send lawyers, guns and money. Dad, get me out of this."

-Warren Zevon

overturn a law essential to the safety and freedom of all American women.

Then there's more worry. The usual state of environmental worries come to mind: holes in the ozone layer, sustainable living, clean water, destruction of the rain forest, SUVs, litter bugs and clean air.

But then I realized a crucial detail in my quest to write the perfect opinion piece.

Nobody reads to the end of newspaper articles anyway, so I can say anything I want now.

Saying some nice things, instead of whiny, sad or worrisome things couldn't possibly do any good at this point.

I'll go for it.

A small group of UNCA students protested the impending war with Iraq in Washington D.C. recently, becoming part of the largest, peaceful protest since Vietnam in the process. You kids rule. Thank you for caring for me.

Then, the other day on Edgewood, there were actually lots of people walking to and from school from their nearby North Asheville neighborhood.

Even in the cold, they were saving our air by not driving the half-mile to class. Thank you walking students. Please try not to get run over.

And then finally I thought of the First Amendment and *The Blue Banner*, and I got all warm and fuzzy inside again.

It's a beautiful thing that we as a campus community have a place like *The Banner* to explore issues confronting and affecting us all.

Your student fees are what makes this newspaper possible. Thank you all for that.

I invite you, the UNCA community that we work hard to serve, to see *The Blue Banner* as a place where your voice is heard.

Submit letters to the editor if you think that long-hairs shouldn't be allowed to run newspapers, or if you think that snow days should be everyday, or if you think that the sky is falling, and nobody else will listen.

Submit letters if you think at all. The new editorial board this semester, as well as the writers whose work makes the whole thing possible, cannot be thanked enough for their hard work, dedication and all-around good looks.

We will try our best each week to give our community the best newspaper possible, exploring news and issues important to our campus.

I will leave you with peace and love because those thoughts are always best.

Letter to the Editor

Imagine if you will, a place where free thinking is discouraged; freedom of speech is silenced; organizing a protest is considered rebellious; and debating controversial issues is frowned upon by the authorities.

What may come to mind is a place such as North Korea, Cuba or perhaps China. Though that is true for these countries, I'm thinking of a place much closer; a place that claims to be "open-minded" and a marketplace for ideas.

The place I'm speaking of is this college campus, especially if you happen to proclaim that you are a Christian or a conservative. Before you get angry and throw the paper down, which would prove my point, I urge you to keep reading.

On campus, names like Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin or Fidel Castro can be spoken of highly, although their policies resulted directly in the deaths of tens of millions of people. Just try mentioning the name Rush Limbaugh or Pat Robertson and get ready for the jabs from the "open-minded" liberals.

When asked what these men have said that so terrifies them, most admit they have never even heard them; only the negative media stereotyping.

After listening to Rush Limbaugh for years, I've never heard a bigoted, homophobic or chauvinist statement from his mouth. He holds all people, regardless of who they are, accountable for their actions and lives as a responsible, civilized and productive citizen.

What's so scary about that? After years of our tax dollars supporting news organizations like NPR, which leans heavily to one political view, why are liberals now blaming conservative talk radio, which is not tax-supported, for their heavy losses in the election?

Could it be that for the first time, another point of view has emerged, that conflicts with their preconceived notions?

For instance, consider the notion that if only given the right opportunity, communism could succeed. Just try to point out that it has failed in every nation on earth that it has ever been tried, and get ready

to be laughed at.

Argue this point if you like, but witness desperate Cuban and Haitian people on inner tubes in shark infested waters, risking everything to arrive on a communist-free shore. Remember the shipping containers arriving in San Francisco with hundreds of desperate, dying Chinese people attempting to escape from their "workers paradise."

Funny you don't see the world's free people risking their lives to sneak into communist countries. Until Ronald Reagan stood up to the communists, they were still shooting unarmed men and women that were trying to escape over the Berlin Wall.

It's very easy to sit in an ivory tower and write about theories which seem to work on paper, but when tried in the real world, end in utter failure, usually including the death of those it's foisted on.

The ironic issue here is that if the policies promoted by liberal academia were actually imposed on this nation, these professors would lose their right to speak against their government, and witness the communists take over of any previously free society.

Should a class curriculum preach the "benefits" of communism with such a religious fervor that were it Christianity being preached, the ACLU would run to the courts to silence that voice?

The desire to preach communism in such a way is astonishing considering the effects it has had on countries like Cuba, China or North Korea.

The "happy" people of those countries are now eating trees to survive, while their communist leaders build weapons of mass destruction. How does a narrow-minded view of a destructive form of government benefit my education?

Could it be that the "benefits" of

communism have to be made up? I have no problem learning the facts of communism or any other form of government, but it's taught in such a way that there would be no alternative thinking accepted.

Be careful what you preach or we might find ourselves waiting in line for our little red arm bands to be passed out.

I have found that courses presented in a fair and balanced manner are more beneficial to the educational experience.

Another example of the bias that occurs on campus is the fact that some professors feel the need to incorporate vulgarity and sexual content into the courses.

I understand that we are all adults here at UNCA, but it seems very unprofessional and

offensive for these professors to include such curricula into their courses.

But just let a student mention the Bible or Christianity positively and you'll see a new Olympic record set to insert "ear plugs" in case some of these young, conformable minds might be indoctrinated.

Would someone please explain to me how it benefits an educational institution to

silence a well-reasoned, well-articulated point of view, though it may differ from theirs?

Do you believe great thinkers of our past like Kepler, Einstein, Newton or Copernicus, whose revolutionary ideas were held in contempt and in some cases their very lives threatened, would be shocked were they to see this treatment of alternative ideas continues in the 21st century?

Whenever a student enters both their time and money to a professor to learn a subject, the instructor should treat that privilege with honor by presenting the class in a manner that encourages learning.

These professors should not take advantage of a captive audience with personal philosophies that have nothing to do with the course material.

I want to challenge all UNCA students to be open-minded enough to look into other points of view that are sometimes frowned upon at this university.

I encourage you to seek the truth and not accept everything that is spoon fed to you.

And to those who sneer when they hear the names of Rush Limbaugh and the like, I dare you to actually listen to them and try to prove them wrong.

Why don't we stop blaming Christians and conservatives for everything and get the facts straight before we debate on an "open-minded" campus?

Carla Bonanno
former UNCA student

Call for letters

The Blue Banner welcomes submissions of letters and articles for publication.

Letters should not exceed 300 words. Letters should also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA. Sorry, we will not accept submissions of anonymous letters to the editor.

The deadline for letters is noon on Tuesday. Send letters to *The Blue Banner*, Karpen 244, or email to banner@unca.edu. Format letters in Microsoft Word and send them as an attachment on an email.

All submissions will be subject to editing for style and grammar.

"Be careful what you preach or we might find ourselves waiting in line for our little red arm bands to be passed out."