

## Sexual confusion

In the season premiere of "Seinfeld", Elaine revealed to Jerry that she'd faked her orgasms during their relationship years ago. That night, George, who himself was in a perfectly good relationship (for once), finds himself unable to, um, stand at attention for his girlfriend. We see the couple in bed: she, looking very bored, and George, looking down at himself, distraught. "It's all Elaine and Jerry's fault! All I ever hear is 'orgasm this' and 'orgasm that', all day long, orgasm orgasm orgasm!"

A few weeks ago I heard about Antioch College's guidelines for sexual contact — the male must have verbal consent for every action including holding hands, kissing, any use of the tongue anywhere, removal of each article of clothing and so on. Then *Newsweek* ran a cover story on "sexual correctness". Then the UNB professor's controversial date rape article broke.

Over and over George's anguish has been replayed in my mind, paraphrased thus: "All I ever hear is 'sexual this' and 'sexual that', all day long, sex sex sex!" This is not to say that sexual attitudes, practices and abuses should not be debated. I'm just realizing how central a role sex occupies in our lives. My conversations with female friends invariably lead to discussions relating to sexual politics. Men no longer think about *having* sex, they worry about what they're allowed to do over the course of a relationship, from the initial meeting to the first date to the first kiss and beyond. If they eventually have sex, when, how, how often, who undresses who, who does what and what does it mean?

It's not a bad thing for men to be much less sure of their sexual attractiveness and prowess, but overestimating sexual licence has never been a problem for *all* men. Like I said in mixed company the other day, "If the man is on top, it's only because the woman lets him." If true, what does that mean? If not, what does that mean? Do the man and the woman define their individual roles, or is one partner influencing the other, or asserting themselves too forcefully, or (say it ain't so!) *imposing their will* on their partner? Could good sex still result from the latter without a loss of respect or self-respect? As one male friend said to me, "Maybe the man should just lay there and if she wants to have sex, she can decide when and how and why." (Sexual this,)

A friend of mine was talking to a colleague about The Article, and he speculated that perhaps the prof's views on a field unrelated to his own would not affect his ability to teach. SLAM. My friend turned to find that a female colleague had shut her office door. Was it wrong for him to say what he did, or was it wrong for him to have even *thought* it, or neither or both? Do his comments reflect ignorance or hidden discriminatory beliefs? (Sexual that.)

I chastise my roommate because he bids farewell to female friends by saying, "Bye, girls." Do they consider the term offensive, are they angry or disappointed in him, do they consider it a harmless colloquialism or do they think he's sexist? (Sex sex sex!)

When it comes to sexual conduct, there seem to be absolutes in terms of right and wrong, although I don't always know what they are. Nevertheless, I'm pretty sure absolutes exist. But I'm not a hundred percent certain. Maybe I shouldn't have said that or even thought it. My words and the thoughts they stem from might be sexually incorrect, and I should change them. I'm not sure.

I'm getting performance anxiety just writing this editorial. Sex again.

Richard Lim

## Universities forced to compete in corporate arena Liberal arts under fire

There used to be a myth that universities are insulated from politics and business. This bit of revisionist fiction who took a closer look at who holds power in educational institutions and how groups outside the status quo are silenced in the classroom and administration. But, like other myths, the belief in the sanctity of the university did contain at least a grain of truth, and it did serve a purpose. When it worked, it gave faculty and students some latitude to pursue fields of study that did not simply stick to the few areas of research that are defined as useful by government and business.

To the current generation of students, this image of the university as the 'ivory tower' seems to belong to an older, more idealistic era. Universities are now caught up in the most fundamental political changes in Canada. Cutbacks to government assistance programs for students has meant that few people can now afford a post-secondary education. Universities are cutting staff and services, and of course academic programs are next on the chopping block. Like other institutions that are supposed to serve the public good, such as hospitals and public schools, universities are being told by the government that they must compete with each other in a kind of institutional Darwinism, and scramble to find private sector funding if they want to continue their operations.

The big problem with this kind of competition is that it does not produce a better education, and in fact it jeopardizes a lot of valuable academic programs, most of them in the liberal arts, that do not attract money from business. Federal government policy has actively encouraged the gradual destruction of liberal arts programs by

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diverting funds from general university financing to strategic scientific and technical fields. While less and less money is going to universities through Established Programs Financing — the funding mechanism that is supposed to help the provinces cover the costs of public institutions — more government money is being channelled to faculty to carry out commercially relevant research and to megaprojects such as the Centres for Excellence Program that is linking high-tech university departments to large corporations that can buy their research. In effect, the money that used to keep liberal arts programs afloat is now being used to subsidize research for corporations.

The future doesn't look great for the

liberal arts at universities, but it certainly would help matters if university administrators challenged these destructive trends instead of toeing the corporate education line. Some are, but the majority aren't, and the balance is unlikely to shift while a good number of the governors of universities are corporate leaders themselves. It is left up to the faculty and students who are directly threatened to raise the issues. The proposed elimination of the Departments of Theatre and Costume Studies, Public Administration, and Library Sciences is simply one step in a process that is affecting the whole university body. President Clark has argued that these academic programs must be sacrificed in order to save funds to preserve the liberal arts core of the university. His statement rings rather hollow when it is quite evident that the liberal arts are clearly not a priority. The budgets of arts departments will continue to be eroded, and more academic programs will likely be sacrificed.

We are going through some of the most drastic changes to hit universities in a long time, and everyone on campus should be able to put the decisions that are being made by the administration into the big picture. More students and faculty need to speak out strongly against the proposed cuts if we hope to stop the trends that are destroying the breadth and integrity of university education.

Eleanor Russell

## Date rape not academic

The recent controversy surrounding Martin Yaqzan's article on date rape in the UNB student paper, *The Brunswickan*, has sparked debate around the issue of academic freedom. Although we do not feel that this is, or should be, the issue that is being discussed, the focus has been placed here and we wish to present an alternative viewpoint or a broader definition of what academic freedom entails. The basic argument for academic freedom is that Mr. Yaqzan's position as a tenured professor enables him to say anything on any issue, whether it lies outside his field of expertise or whether he has any supporting research. The emphasis has been placed on his rights to voice an opinion, his career, and his freedom of speech. We feel that this emphasis clouds the real issue by 1) not recognizing the responsibilities that accompany these rights, 2) not addressing academic freedom in the context of student rights, and 3) denying the consequences of his comments in the classroom environment.

Canadian society extends many rights and freedoms to its citizens, but in no cases are they absolute or without limits. If Mr. Yaqzan's academic freedom is unlimited, what is to stop it from infringing on the rights of the students in the classroom? When exercising our rights, there are always corresponding responsibilities. These ensure the dig-

nity, respect and integrity of all individuals. In an academic community diverse opinions must be encouraged and debated but when these opinions harass, intimidate or create a hostile work or study environment for others, they in fact discourage constructive academic discourse.

We believe the definition of academic freedom needs to be expanded

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to include students and to address their position in the university community. In the case of Mr. Yaqzan's opinions on date rape it is women in his classroom who face restricted academic freedom. It becomes a case where it is not only his career that is on the line, but also the careers of women who are pursuing careers in non-traditional fields, such as mathematics. Mr. Yaqzan's article seems to say that women have no right to control their bodies or express moral outrage over the violation of that control. If a professor does not respect my right to autonomy over my body, will I feel comfortable approaching him with my academic work? The last place I

would want to be is alone with him in his office asking for help. The prospect of working closely in tutorials or labs would be intimidating and discouraging. The relative power imbalance between Mr. Yaqzan's tenured position at UNB and his students' need and desire for good academic standing creates a situation where students will feel afraid and silenced in the classroom. Furthermore, in his article, Mr. Yaqzan divides the experience of women who have experienced rape into two categories: the virgin who can express moral outrage, and the "promiscuous" woman who should only expect monetary compensation for her inconvenience. This denies the experience of sexual assault survivors, and restricts their ability to speak out and seek support.

The current debate has taken the focus from Mr. Yaqzan's comments and their consequences and shifted it to his academic freedom and right to freedom of speech. The consequences are a negative classroom environment for both men and women. An expanded definition of academic freedom that includes student concerns will ensure that the quality of education is not diminished, and that all participants in the university community may find a forum to express their views that is free from harassment or intimidation.

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## the Gazette

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