

Change abortion laws

The acquittal of Dr. Henry Morgentaler on abortion charges in Ontario will hopefully be the last legal challenge he will have to face. After four attempts at prosecuting the pro-choice doctor, the federal government should have the political courage to amend the laws on abortion and recognize the reproductive rights of women.

The NDP government now has no reason to press on with the charges they laid after the 1983 raid on Morgentaler's Winnipeg clinic. After four acquittals, it seems ridic-

ulous that the Manitoba government would waste time and money on a fifth. It makes mockery of the legal system to see the constant legal harassment of the doctor and his colleagues.

The Manitoba NDP are undoubtedly in a tough political situation. If they drop the charges they risk some wrath from the vocal anti-abortion lobby. If they don't, they risk alienating their own party membership. We hope they choose to follow their principles and rise above the grubby political considerations. □

Moncton a case for academic freedom

A preliminary report leaked to the *Globe and Mail* recently confirmed what many of us have known for a long time—that the Université de Moncton is no fun place for politically active students.

In fact, the administration there expels more students per capita than any other university in Canada.

In the coming months it will be interesting to watch the reaction of

administrators and students throughout the region to the report when it is released in December.

We hope that steps will be taken to ensure that students' fundamental rights will be honoured by that university and others. We hope that all organizations that believe in academic freedoms speak out.

We hope that the report will not be ignored or fall on deaf ears—Moncton is too close to Halifax to let that happen. □

Text is sexist

By now, most students should be able to define sexism. It appears, though, that the university community disagrees on how to identify it.

Part of the confusion lies in the different packaging sexism comes in. Whether it is disguised in a glossy ad that uses a woman's anatomy to sell cars or 'generic' words like 'mankind' that have excluded women from language. Both examples perpetuate sexual discrimination against women and leave lasting images in people's minds.

The images are damaging in that they underlie and form attitudes about women and conversely behavior toward women.

Frighteningly enough, we have been so bombarded with these kinds of images of women that often people accept them unquestioned.

Sexism becomes even more difficult to identify when it's closer to home.

A Spanish textbook, written by a Dalhousie professor, has come under charges of sexism by some students.

Looking at the exercises it is clear that they reflect a sexist society. Women are described as egocentric like cats and opportunists by one character in the book.

Although the author says the chauvinist character was created on purpose to stimulate discussion in class, one must ask the question, "At whose expense?"

If the character is not to be taken seriously, as the author has suggested, this is not made clear enough within the context of the dialogues. If the author's intent was to make this character look foolish, the text fails to do this. Instead it glorifies the male bravado image while stereotyping women.

So and so is pretty but she is fat.

These women who object to the text's use of sexism to invite discussion have valid complaints.

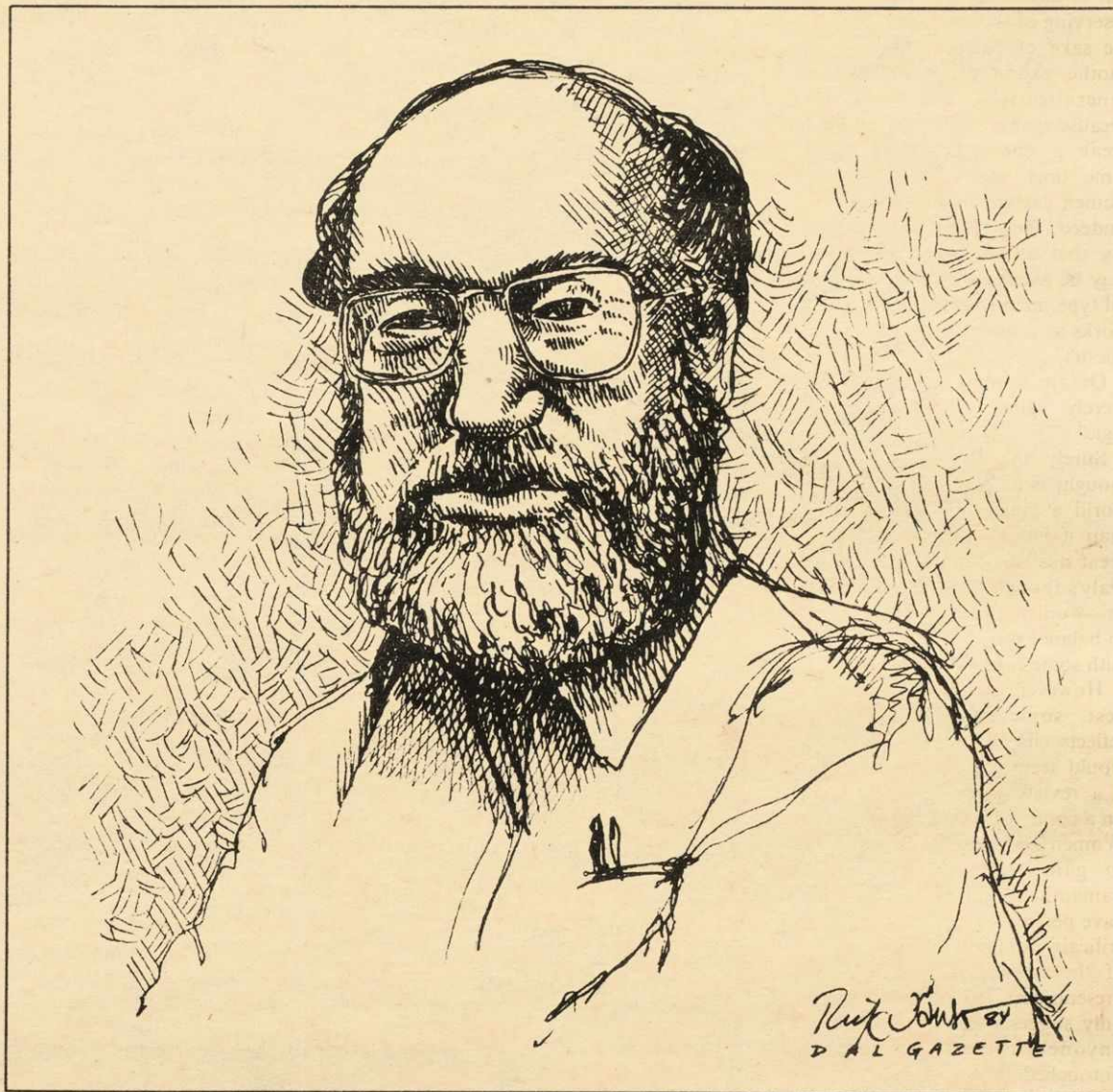
Learning a language requires repetition and role playing. Using these dialogues as a learning tool may reinforce negative images of women.

It is surprising that in an academic community that a book that portrays women as inferior is tolerated. □

Letters

The deadline for letters to the editor is noon, Monday before publication. Letters must be signed and include a telephone number where the author can be reached (although telephone numbers will not be printed with the letters). Let-

ters are subject to editing for style, brevity, grammar, spelling, and libel. Letters can be dropped at the SUB enquiry desk, mailed to our address (on page 2), or brought up to the *Gazette* offices, third floor, SUB.



Impressed

To the editors,

In my eleven years as a professor at this University, I cannot remember being more impressed than I am this year with the *Dalhousie Gazette*. I particularly wish to commend you on your wide range of issues you have chosen to cover and the quality of your reporting on those issues.

An excellent example was the coverage of the Killam Lecture Series, "Feminist Visions", and especially your insightful and prominent front page article on Mary Daly. In fact, that whole issue was a contribution of student journalism at its best.

Another fine example was the Supplement dealing with Gay and Lesbian concerns. This was both responsible and courageous since it is essential that members of any academic community be informed about the realities of existing life styles, no matter how uncomfortable these may be for some.

More please, more.

Sincerely
J. Manos
Education dept.
Dalhousie

Daly satire?

To the editors,

I would like to commend Samantha Brennan on her fine piece of satire which served as a front cover of last week's *Gazette*. She showed us that sexism, regardless of the gender discriminated against, is obnoxious, rude, and shows the intellectual frailty of those who practise it.

Mary Daly's joke about the microphone was as juvenile and tasteless as the Zeta Psi boys giggling about depilated felines.

In addition, her refusal to speak

to anyone other than glassy-eyed sheep clearly reveals her own insecurity in the validity of her message and her ability to deliver it to an audience that just may have a few neurons buzzing. This is a clever, but not admirable tactic. By reserving her didactic sophistry exclusively for the already converted (and now sometimes mindlessly fanatical) she need little fear ever losing an argument (or even having a real serious discussion).

Samantha, you have shown us that this loutish behaviour is not restricted to any particular group and only serves to drive people further apart. I hope your readers recognized your article as satire since, if they took it at face value, they would undoubtedly have felt alienated and betrayed. The unaware may construe that the *Gazette* is no longer a rational representative of campus interests, an open forum where all sides may express their thoughts, but is now merely an organ of a select interest group of heterophobes. I have heard that many students no longer read the *Gazette* because they do not understand the sophistication of your satirical technique. This is a great pity. What good is a voice if no one is listening?

Overall the paper has a great new look. The Arts and Sports section are top-rate (although I think there should be more intramural coverage). Rick Janson's column gives the paper a real professional touch. I am sorry that I am no longer an active *Gazette* staff member and can claim no responsibility for its content and direction. Keep up the good work. Caveat Lector.

Sincerely
Bryan D. Fantie, Ph. D. (c)
Gazette Arts Editor,
1982-83, 1983-84

Daly feature not balanced

To the editors,

I am writing this letter hoping to represent (re-present) what I thought was valuable about Mary Daly's Killam lecture after finding myself unable to defend the Mary Daly that Samantha Brennan presented.

Balance, I think, is a word that needs emphasis. Daly's lecture seemed to display balance within a certain context: she is acknowledged to be a radical thinker and lectures merit a polemical stance, balancing insight with entertainment. Daly's musings over the ideology within words were both entertaining and insightful (e.g. dyke - keeping out what is unwanted). The same may be said for her journey towards a new woman, whether the emphasis be on the wild woman, the cosmic woman, or the Amazon.

There may even be a certain balance within Daly's post-lecture stance against taking questions from men in conjunction with her academic policy of woman-only classes. A great deal of Daly's activity seems to be a reaction against the imbalance of the institution of the Catholic Church. If the Church may exclude women from the pulpit, so may Daly exclude men from her classes; if the Church's truth is gendered in the Father and the Son, so may Daly gender her truth in Woman. There is perhaps even some wonderful humility in Daly's refusal to talk about heterosexual relationships.

These are not easy valuations, however. And the question is, how far should any of us go in coming to terms with certain critical stan-