

Stereotypes have the ring of truth

While we endeavour to avoid racial and sexist stereotypes (see the letter below, however), members of our staff are susceptible to categorizing people another in way-by faculty.

We cannot contemplate a B. Comm. student without a pocket calculator in his (seldom her) hand, without the polyester pants and the serious countenance, without the awe of mysterious laws of the stock market and the unquestioning deference to the balance sheet.

English students are always a bit airheaded, brimming with big words, cute expressions, disrespect and avantgarde which but thinly disguises a deep fear and ignorance of the scientific and technological fields cloistered inside the Life Science and Dunn Buildings.

Physics majors for us are timid little men and women trembling behind their steelrimmed glasses.

We view law students as the eager beaver careerists on campus, springboarding out of a political science department which filled them with stereoscopic dreams of wealth, power and conservative-righteousness.

As for engineers, well, that's another story . . .

Contorted though these stereotypes may be, they carry on past the confines of the university.

What, for example, is your impression the cultural awareness of the members of the Halifax Board of Trade? Is the unpublished novelist scrounging off Canada Council grants still off the wall when she or he talks about the "bankruptcy of analytic thought"? What kind of people do we think are technicians in nuclear power plants?

These stereotypes which so abundantly populate all of our minds are a little more destructive than one might initially think. They alienate and isolate us from our fellow human being.

But the stereotype is really only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath our compartmentalized little visions of one another there is a good deal of truth. All of us are becoming too specialized, too swamped within an exclusive little department of interest.

The crunch really comes when we have to make decisions in our lives which affect others. Few of us have enough education and experience to take all of the scientific, environmental, economical and humanistic criteria into account to act well.

One of the roots of our oneness rests right here at Dalhousie in the education we are getting. While the quality of our individual classes will come under scrutiny in later Gazettes, one major flaw in the system to be immediately pointed to is the lack of any requirements for students to take courses in different faculties. Currently the only restriction is that all students must take a writing course.

Language, Humanities, Social Science and Science students, then, may theoretically stay huddled in their own faculty for their whole stay in Dalhousie. And many do. No wonder the isolation and alienation around here. No wonder we get the doctors, lawyers, politicians, insurance sales people, engineers, and media people we deserve.

The lack of any kind of interfaculty course requirements in the face of a growing trend to specialization is currently a non-issue around here, but it will have to be addressed. The university has to be concerned about the kind of citizens its is producing.

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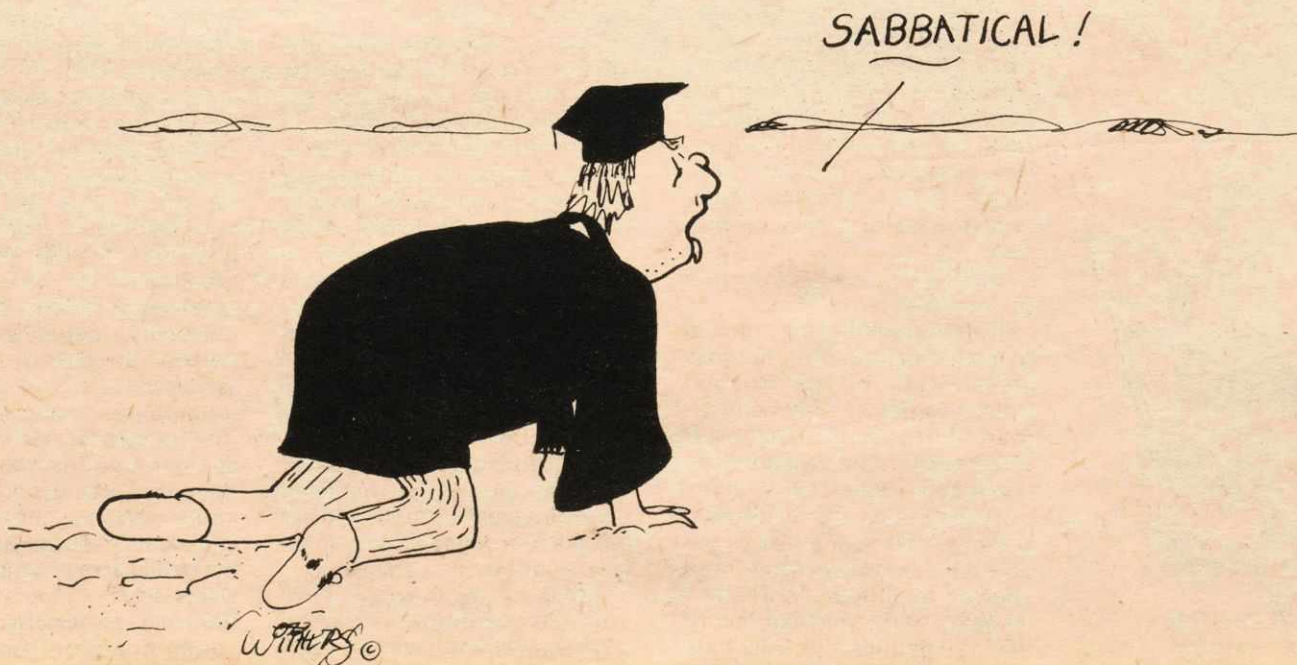
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Cartoonist's slip

Dear Sir:

I refer to your entertainment article entitled "How much for a man's life?" of September 25, a criticism of the movie "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie". While I have no comments on the review of Mr. McCarthy, the caricature included did raise my eyebrows. I can understand that showing a person with slanted eyes and buck teeth was one of the easy ways of conveying the intended ethnical origin of the person in the cartoon. However, in doing so, wasn't the **Gazette** also helping the promotion and endorsement of a century-old stereotyped image—a contradiction to the policy and belief of the **Gazette**?

Yours sincerely,
Michael Siu