

Dance of the seven veils

Am I the only one who gets utterly bewildered by what society seems to want from women's lives?

This question popped into my head yet again as I stood in line in the grocery store and caught a glance of *Redbook's* September cover: "Paulina: 'the other woman' to devoted wife", read the headline next to the famous model's photo. Seduction was used to attain what is supposedly the most important goal of every woman: a settled commitment by a successful man. The message was especially disturbing in that it seems to condone competition among women in order to win a man. Thus, women are portrayed as manipulative. It is one thing to get the man, it is another to keep him.

Movies are infamous for sending confusing messages about the dynamics between women and men. Usually, the woman is chased by a man, the main character, and she finally shows how much she likes to be chased by falling in love with the man. The man will snag the woman as long as he tries hard enough—women are not supposed to know what they really want. If the woman makes the first move, she is a sophisticated seductress, entrancing her suitor with beauty and wit. Either way, it is his personality which is developed and emphasized, not hers.

I was flattered when someone once told me I reminded her of Geena Davis's character in *Accidental Tourist*. I liked this lanky eccentric woman, not only because she wore wonderfully outlandish clothes, but more for her sense of self-worth. She did not sit at home and sob when her lover left her to go back to his wife, she followed him to Paris. "What am I? A bottle of something you throw away once you start feeling better?"

Most frustrating is the overload of movies where men end up saving the woman from dire circumstances. The most blatant examples are *Batman* and *Superman*, whereby the superheroes come in the nick of time to save "fiesty" lady reporters from evil supervillians. Women who are originally introduced as competent professionals are reduced to helplessness in the face of danger. How can women be taken seriously when they are so often portrayed as flimsy side-kicks and damsels in distress?

Modern society is getting better at encouraging women to be strong, intelligent, creative human beings, but still discourages them from being too strong, intelligent, creative, lest they overshadow their male counterparts. Indeed, I know a woman who was once told, "you have too much personality".

Popular culture tells women that if they want mates of the opposite sex, the passive way works best. Thus, a dilemma develops for many women who desire male partners, but are unwilling to compromise their values for this companionship.

In the end, what really matters is that a woman knows what she really wants from her own life, a feat which can only be achieved by recognizing the influences which prevent her from determining this, let alone getting it. Perhaps, we will one day live in a world where women can express themselves fully, unhindered by society's contradictory expectations. For now, we'll just have to continue to plod on, with heads high as our hearts and minds do the best we can.

Miriam Korn

Volunteers for hire

Times are tough. There are over-qualified people for every job. And you need experience to get a job.

Opportunity is out there, it just isn't knocking. These days, you have to be ingenious, artful, crafty and stubborn to find opportunities to get some work experience. But it can be done.

Take the Public Relations department, for example. After a half hour conversation with Director Marilyn MacDonald, several 'experience' opportunities emerged.

How about hosting a magazine-style television program about Dalhousie? Marilyn is in the preliminary stages of putting together a regular Dalhousie report on cable television. Her goal is to keep the public informed about the interesting projects going on at Dalhousie, like the 'frogs in space' program.

"If there are students interested in volunteering for the project, I'd certainly like to hear from them," said Marilyn.

The Public Relations office organizes special events and produces several publications like the Dalhousie News newspaper, information materials for the registrar's office like the undergraduate guide, and special brochures. These activities develop organizational, communication, graphics, writing, layout, and marketing skills.

What about volunteers? "It certainly would be nice to have students more involved in the work of the office," said Marilyn.

Henry Eberhardt, VP External in charge of Development, Public Relations and Alumni Relations, said the same thing.

"We can use all the volunteers we can get. I would love to have an intern in my office here helping with the management of the whole department." Wouldn't that look good on the resume of a business grad?

An hour a day, a few hours a week, even a couple of months in the spring. Students have a tremendous asset that businesses everywhere are crying out for — free, intelligent labour.

Michelle Aitken needs to find a four-week internship placement as part of her journalism program at King's. She heard about a three-month internship the Canadian Embassy is offering in Washington. "Maybe I could do four weeks in November, and the other two months in the spring," she says wistfully.

No one wants to work for free. But when you are going to school, you are working for free anyway. What's another couple of months on top of four years?

Almost everyone in the working world was once a student, and most of them in these budget-conscious times have the same attitude as Marilyn.

"We are always open to ideas and proposals from students."

It's out there for the taking.

Jennifer Stephenson

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Letters

The Dalhousie Gazette welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed. The deadline for letters is Friday noon before publication. Optimally letters can be submitted on Mac 3.5" disk.

Access blocked

To the editor:

A number of classes last year were disturbed with the noise of machines outside the LSC. A small price to pay when the result was a ramp. After construction was complete, it appeared less than accessible as the approaches to it were bumpy and not well surfaced. At least the administration was making some attempt to give fair access to the building. The first day of classes this year was hectic and crazy as usual but something else jolted my sensibility. The ramps in question are quite small but more than that is the hideous use of them as bicycle stands. It is such a blatant act of uncaring, selfish students. With handle bars and pedals poking through the ramp it was difficult to even walk down it.

I am not physically challenged but I am ashamed of my able-bodied peers whose awareness is not alive on this campus. Are we being educated? I think not if this is an example of what

we are learning. It's not a matter of a few either as I personally counted eight bikes on one ramp alone. I hope the campus police will help ease this problem by catching some offenders. A little co-operation can go a long way and if you see someone locking up to the ramp — please speak-up!!

Dominica M. Gardner

DAGS debate

To the editor:

As with many issues, there are two sides to a story. I would like to take this opportunity to explain the "other side" of the issue of honoraria for the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS), the side of the so-called "money grubbers" and "witch-hunters".

Graduate Students were, no doubt, shocked that DAGS allowed 25% of their budget to go to honoraria for their

council members. The first point I would like to make is that the 1990-91 Council gave \$10,150 in honoraria to 19 council members, out of an operating budget of over \$55,000. By my calculations, this comes to just over 18%, not 25% as stated in the article "It's a DAG eat DAG World" in the September 23, 1992 edition of the *Gazette*.

Council members do believe that they should have been given the common courtesy of being informed in advance of this meeting. The Honorary Committee began meeting prior to the March, 1992 meeting where the reduced amounts were voted upon. The Honorary Committee had an opportunity to give reports at DAGS meetings regarding the reduction in honoraria every two weeks, but neglected to. According to the DAGS Constitution, the President of the organization is an "ex officio" member of every DAGS committee, however she

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ALL ARE WELCOME REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

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Contributors:

Ryan Stanley
Rob Currie
Pat Ginn
Peter Edwards
Jennifer Abriel
Satish Punna
Shannan MacAuley
Adam Neuman
Mike Graham
Michael Sean Morris
Joanne Fry
Angel Figueroa

Editors:

Jennifer Beck
Miriam Korn

News:

Chantal Saxe
Marie McPherson

Arts:

Geoff Ineson
Bruce Gilchrist

CUP:

Leslie Poirier
Peter Angione

Sports:

Wendy Williams

Women's Liasons:

Judy Reid
Mary Jane Hamilton

Typesetter

Rochelle Owen

Ad/Business Manager

Gonnia Clarke
Ph: 494-6532

Production Manager

Mika Zelle

Student Union Building, Dalhousie University
6136 University Ave., Halifax, N.S., B3H 4J2
(494-2507)

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