

Dumping crap and eating organisms

You would not believe how long I have spent trying to come up with a way to use this editorial to speak out about what I think is wrong — here at Dalhousie, in Canada, in the world, with humans. Obviously therein lies my problem; there are too many issues to possibly draw attention to all of them.

Yet, how could I ever pick one idea, one problem, which is more important than any others?

I can go on for days about injustices against animals, crimes against the earth, and problems with our government, education, health and social systems. I think many of us could. And there are so many issues right here that don't seem to be raising enough of a ruckus.

If I am paying nearly 5000 dollars for eight months of mostly meagre, uninspired and completely orthodox education, why is it that I also have to stare at ads telling me I'll finally have something to shout about if I can only rid myself of facial blemishes, or that I can find everything I'm looking for, and even more if I hook myself up to the internet — *while I am using the toilet!* I could also complain about actually paying fees which support the 'perks of office' student council executives enjoy — how did that piece of animal flesh on a bun go down? — while council itself can be viewed as little more than a right-wing think tank. Thanks for representing my rights, DSU council; has anyone else heard of a student council who repeatedly retains neutrality in the face of national student protest against rising tuition and funding cuts? But I guess we're with CASA; the protest was endorsed by the CFS — it's good practice for budding young politicians to segregate themselves according to party affiliation.

I digress. The issue of student rights, and even of democratic representation are mere drops in the bucket, or ocean, of problems needing attention.

We live in a city that literally dumps its shit directly into its own harbour, and furthermore we live in a world that we are pumping full of

human wastes while we also destroy its resources and casually annihilate its other inhabitants. Even though people all around the world realize this, including members of govern-

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ment, corporate employees and even the general public, there is a general air of our hands being tied. Everything is going to shit, injustice is everywhere, but it doesn't seem like there's a lot we can do.

The ridiculousness of this statement is obvious to me — I hope it is to you as well. But the sad truth is that most people don't catch the irony of our apparent inability to stop ourselves from destroying the world, ourselves and other life. It is not surprising; consider the fact that no uproar was to be heard when institutes of 'higher learning' such as Dalhousie started resembling more a glorified vehicle for marketing to students. People pretty much don't seem to have too much of a problem with it.

On a grander scale, consider the fact that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have been a part of our food supply for a number of years — without most people either knowing or caring. It has not been until recently that more people have been moved to consider the concerns of the few scientists and activists who have been warning us since they found out. And yet despite a great deal of public outcry, the relatively recent convention in Montreal of what will be called the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol (which was the focus of much activist attention) dealt with the issue of handling, labelling and transporting GMOs, rather than questioning their existence in the first place. In other words, it presupposes that the genetic manipulation of other life should continue — and in our food supply no less. It appears that we can barely accomplish the regulation of biotechnology; the consideration of banning it outright is somehow unreasonable.

So, what am I getting at? I

guess the source of my frustrations with the world has a lot to do with the prevalent human perspective, especially in our society. The attitude, first of all, that what we're fed (literally and figuratively) is what is good, necessary, or even inevitable, severely undermines both the questioning of the status quo, and any possibility for constructive change.

If we don't examine our society, lifestyles, attitudes and constructs, then there's no point in asking why we aren't making changes. But the problem is not only one of the apathy and ignorance of people — it is what encourages these attitudes. Why is it that people roll over again and again to the claims of government, corporations, media... whoever, that economic and technological progress are ends in themselves, and that silly concerns over quality of life and culture, environmental integrity, and the interests of the other millions of species on earth are insignificant or impossible to address. And why, in particular at this supposed place for the pursuit of knowledge, are we still fed these same lies rather than encouraged and indeed required to question, and catalyze the world towards a sustainable, balanced existence.

As I see it, the answer is that the dominant human paradigm is one which gives power to the concentration of wealth, and thus perpetuates the ideology that to concentrate wealth is what it means to be successful and happy. Once again: corporations own the world, and it is because we say they do. We say they do because we've been taught that they do, and so on it goes...

Those who do not accidentally gain some authentic knowledge about the true state of affairs of the world will waste their life and energy on fuelling this system of consumerism, global marketing and technological worship. They'll do it because the meaning of life is not only hidden from them — but coopted and manipulated by the global economic market. Will they be happy?

Who knows. I would hope that any rational, conscious indi-

viduals would grow dissatisfied with the corporate economic model of progress and success, and would perhaps also have some notion of responsibility for the impacts of human actions.

Yet when I step out of my bubble, beyond the activists, vegetarians and good sisters and brothers — I see people working, making money, consuming, wasting and mindlessly taking part in the earth's destruction. What is truly mind-boggling is that this Western consumerist paradigm is also destroying our culture, our health and our sanity! Our culture is culture of consumerism; advertising (both in its direct and more subtle forms) is our education; and both our minds and bodies suffer as a result. This culture is now consuming the world, as we export our notions of material 'progress' to nations which al-

ready disproportionately suffer the effects of our industrialized, market driven society.

And even those people within my idealistic bubble have to struggle every day to try to live authentically in a society and world which doesn't seem so designed anymore. It can be done, but trying to live an alternative life, sustainably existing with the world is a very difficult and sometimes alienating experience. It has come to the point now where if you want to live right, you must hermit yourself away from all the influences of our technologically advanced world.

I've ranted long enough. I'll try to make my final point a positive one; though the world is literally riddled with problems, don't let this discourage you. All that needs to truly be changed is one simple thing: humanity's ego.

NAOMI FLESCHHUT

On a finer note in cuisine we present you this recipe...

AMY'S CHICK PEA PASTA

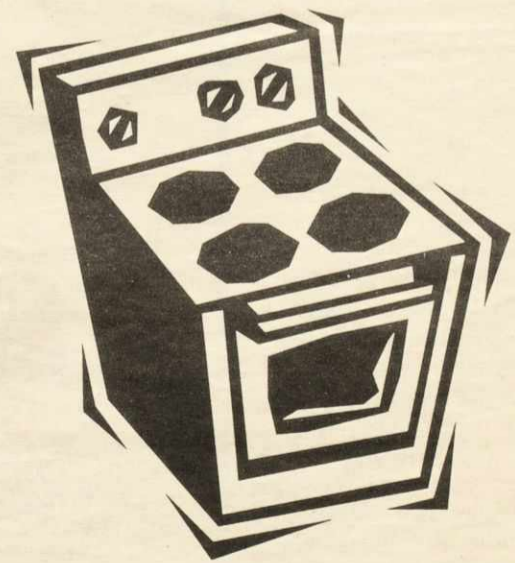
(serves 4)

- 4 handfuls of pasta (room temperature)
- 1 large can chick peas
- 1 teaspoon diced garlic
- 2.5 teaspoons olive oil

First you should boil your pasta (to preferred consistency). Spiral pasta is recommended, but feel free to experiment.

Then cover a separate pot with the olive oil and add your garlic. Allow garlic to sauté in olive oil for a minute on a medium heat. Then add the can of chick peas (remove can first). Heat for a couple of minutes allowing the chick peas to take on the savour of the garlic. Then remove half of the chick peas from the pot and purée in a blender (or mash with fist where blender is unavailable). Return purée of chick pea to pot with other ingredients and add pasta. Toss and enjoy.

A garden salad is an excellent companion dish along with a bottle of fine white wine.



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Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, 6136 University Ave, rm 312, Halifax, NS, B3H 4J2.
 editorial tel. 902 494-2507, facsimile 902 494-8890, e-mail. GAZETTE@is2.dal.ca

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