

# Students rise to defence of their text

By ELIZABETH DONOVAN

Dalhousie students are rising to the defence of professor Sonia Jones and her textbook *Spanish One*. They disagree with women who have accused the text of sexism.

Members of the Spanish society say critics of the book have taken its dialogues out of context.

Twenty students including the president of the society signed a letter to the *Gazette* stating that charges of sexism did not reflect the majority of students' views.

"If you take the words in the text at face value you will get a false impression," says Veronica Klein. She says there is a difference between a sexist text and a text that portrays a sexist character.

"It is obvious from the context of the book that Javier is a sexist character," says Stuart Rechnitzer. "The whole manner in which it was written is light-hearted. Javier should not be taken seriously."

Klein says that by exposing students to sexism the book can motivate discussion and change.

Mavis Dixon disagrees. She says that after looking closely at the text she is not persuaded that the use of sexism is right.

"Using these dialogues as a teaching tool is not appropriate in a modern textbook," says Dixon.

Jim Hollaway, acting chair of the Spanish department, says that although he had heard of a student in another class who thought the text was sexist, he is surprised the issue has come up.

He says that the character Javier is such an extreme that no one should find him offensive.

"There are occasions in conversations about older men that jar me a

little bit," he says. Hollaway is convinced though that by the time you get to the end of the book and see some of the changes in Javier and the older men that you get a "pretty balanced view."

Peter Edwards, a third-year Spanish student, agrees that the book must be looked on as a whole.

"The views of women in the beginning are stereotyped," says Edwards. "But later on women are taking a more active role which I don't find sexist at all." He says stereotypes are unavoidable in a beginning language text that is forced to use simple language and ideas.

Another defence of *Spanish One* is that it represents a realistic view of sexism in Latin American society.

"In Latin America there is a wanton amount of sexism," says Rechnitzer.

Rosanne Bicchieri says the book could represent these values by also showing the women who are struggling against Latin American "machismo". □

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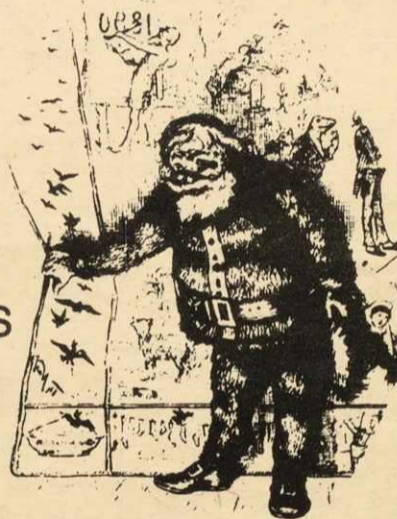
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