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Presented by: "York Ukrainian Association"

South 872 Ross (8th floor)

Wednesday Oct, 27, 1976

4:00 p.m. = ?

Men in Greek mythology were 'scared witless' of women

By DENISE BEATTIE

The second lecture in the Woman: the Past series given last Wednesday, October 13, on Women in Ancient Greece, was presented by Margaret Visser, a York lecturer, and looked at the male's view of women as expressed by the ancient writings and mythology of ancient Greece. She said that it is useful to listen to men's view of women and ask "why?" for it is necessary during change, to understand what one is changing.

Visser considers it practically meaningful to look at Greece because one can, through the distance of time, avoid getting angry. However, one's findings are still relevant as Greek thought is the source of our culture. We are "still attempting to answer the questions they posed," she says.

The lecture focused on two interconnected aspects of ancient Greece. First, Greek abstract thought was discussed and then, related to that, Visser outlined some Greek mythology with one Greek tragedy in particular exemplifying men's basic concerns and fears of women. In Visser's

words, "men are scared of women — scared witless."

The Greek's practiced the art of abstract thought, thought as abstracted from emotion. They did not think, stresses Visser, in moral terms but in aesthetics. For example, the Greek male did not consider himself more highly regarded because he innately deserved it but because it contributed to a more orderly and beautiful city.

The ancient Greeks believed reality was made up of the tension between opposites and this included men and women. Visser concentrated on the dynamics of the concepts of men as moving and women as stationary. The God Hermes personified the male with winged sandals and helmet and a scarf of snakes. He was the God of doorways, boundaries, outside walls and circumference. Hestia, the goddess of the hearth represented women. She was the interior, private and stationary. These opposites were both serious and equally important.

The ancient Greek male, especially in the face of the

necessity of marriage, sees himself as defenseless to the influence of women.

The inevitable situation made up the dynamics of the Greek tragedy based on the story of Medea and Jason. Medea, the heroine, is a very smart and active witch-woman who comes from the wilderness into a city and for a variety of reasons proceeds to ruin the city and then leaves. This is the direct opposite of the hero's usual role which is to leave the city, which is orderly and clear but lacks the ability to generate energy, and go out into the wilderness, which although messy and chaotic, is pure energy, and after killing a dragon or something similar, goes back into the city bringing new energy with him.

Medea, in reaction to her husband Jason's actions, ruins him in a variety of ways, one of which is by telling him she has murdered their children and is leaving him in his ruined situation. Visser says this is representative because women have control of children, the equivalent of life after death, the symbol of permanency. "Women don't murder people," elaborates Visser, "they just remove the point of existence." The point, she says, is the terror of the weakness of the male revealed.

The ancient Greek male, especially in the face of the necessity of marriage, sees himself as defenseless to the influence of women. The male desires to find the safety of permanence in the female but her activity and basic ability to render his existence meaningless scares him "witless".

Thus the Ancient Greek writings, all written by men, deal very much with the roles and functions of women.

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The RCMP
It could be for you

York grad runs for city council

By SUSAN GRANT

Michael Foster, a recent graduate of York University's Political Science department will be running for alderman in North Yorks Ward 5, which includes the York campus.

As a graduate of York, Michael Foster realizes that "for many students, the link between themselves and local government may be unclear". Living in residence or local apartments for only eight months at a time, "one is not constantly plugged into the politics of the area on a municipal level."

As a brief example, Foster cited the issue of transportation. "Every year it seems that there is a real need for better service to and from the campus by public transit. This is an issue that directly concerns everyone in the York community and it is an issue that can be resolved at the municipal level."

Over the next eight weeks, Michael Foster's campaign will be focussing on the issue of rent control, property tax and community services.

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