

# OPINION

## Spanish One: Women Zero

"Come here, little girl! I want to give you some chocolates." The image of a leering pervert hovering by the swingset at the children's playground leaps to mind. Could the unsavory offender be Professor Moreno, reputed by his students to be a dirty old man, or the sexually-charged Javier, in eternal pursuit of the ideal woman?

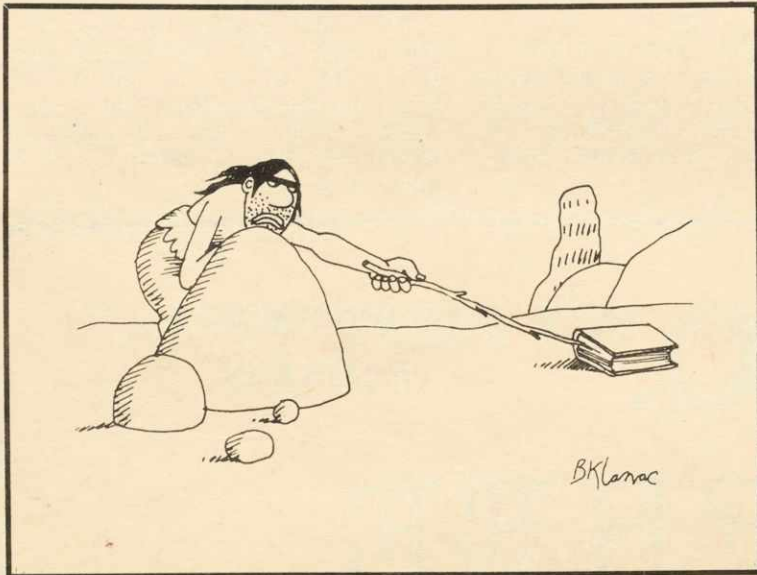
First-year Spanish students are being entertained by the trials and excitements of the cast of characters in Spanish One — 2nd Edition, created by Sonia Jones and Ruiz Salvador.

Readers were introduced to the blatantly sexist material of their textbook from the first lesson, in a dialogue entitled "Men and Women". In this insightful, inspirational piece, Frank has written a poem listing the criteria for the perfect woman. He describes her as a good soul; generous, intelligent and sincere. It is here that readers become

madre de Sara), consoles Elena, despondent because her husband is having an affair with his secretary. "It's the oldest story in the world!" Rosa blames herself, claiming that her man has lost interest because she is, "fat and old, and always busy".

The ridiculous content of these dialogues goes largely unnoticed by students trying to grasp the vocabulary, and not the meaning of the text. But as the nature of the material becomes progressively more sexist, the problem becomes hard to ignore.

The first sentence of this article can actually be found on page 134 of Spanish One: "Ven aqui nina. Quiero darte unos chocolates." Hearing this growled in a professor's best "lecherous old coot" impersonation, one is torn between the desire to laugh hysterically or sacrifice the offending page to a convenient air current.



acquainted with Javier, a veritable Adonis (or words to that effect) who strongly disagrees: "Women are bad, hypocritical, insincere, opportunists as ego-centric as cats." Whew! And the men? "The men are the victims, the eternal victims," replies the stud.

During the next dialogue between "the boys", Javier enlightens Frank on "how to have phenomenal success with women." He cautions Frank, "never fear women, and never pay attention to them either." Words to live by.

Javier is clearly never at a loss for dates, as is demonstrated in Lesson 5. Javier boasts that he has four dates within the next 24 hours, and that he went out with no less than ten women the previous week. The female characters of the book are not so fortunately blessed with active ove lives.

In one dialogue, Rosa (la

The fact that the textbook was co-authored by a woman is a source of wonder to students having reached Lesson 11. The piece, entitled "An Example of Chauvanism", could be more accurately called "An Example of Masochism." Maribel and Javier are arguing over their weekend plans. Javier plans to go out with his aunt, a "pretty and elegant" woman of 33. Naturally, Maribel is insanely jealous, and the argument rages until she begs to make peace. Javier replies, "I would prefer for you to make my dinner." The argument continues until Javier orders Maribel out of his house. When Maribel refuses to leave, Javier threatens: "?Quieres que te pegue?" ("Do you want me hit you?")

The Dalhousie Spanish Department should have its wrists slapped for allowing a textbook of a sexist and demeaning nature on the course curriculum.

Erin Goodman

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