

The Letters/Opinions section of the Gazette is meant as a campus forum for all Dalhousie students. The opinions expressed within may not necessarily be those of the Gazette staff or editorial board. We welcome all submissions, but reserve the right to edit for style and content. It is the Gazette's mandate not to print racist, sexist or homophobic material.

Defending my constitutional right to read *Playboy*

In response to the article "Forum brings *Playboy* out from behind closed doors", there are a few things I would like to say in support of *Playboy*.

Playboy is a well respected magazine all over the continent — you read it, I read it, a lot of your parents read it and a lot of your children read it as well. Hey, I know a heck of a lot of grandparents read it too.

The first thing we have to get over is nudity. What is so bad about nudity? You are born into this world naked and innocent. Seeing a naked child is no big deal. Nobody ever yelled at a child who was running around naked in the back yard, so just because we sprout a little pubic hair, and for women a set of breasts, does not mean that we have to start treating nudity as something evil or disgusting.

People's bodies are things of beauty. Have the people condemning the magazine ever picked one up and flipped through it? These women are not portraying themselves grotesquely or in bad taste, they are simply showing off the beauty of their bodies. No one ever condemned Carl Lewis for running so fast, so why should we condemn any given playmate for looking so good? Oh yeah, just in case nobody told you yet, there are pornographic magazines that

portray men, and I don't think it takes a genius to tell you that, yes, people do buy them.



Dr. Marjorie Stone states that *Playboy* promotes violence against women and children, and it does not promote equality between the sexes. Dr. Stone, I know I don't have a PhD. in anything and am not some kind of expert, but I have seen a lot of *Playboy* magazines and not once have I ever seen any pictures or mention of children, let alone the promotion of violence against children. Regarding violence against women, there is no reason

that a nude picture of a woman would cause anyone to become violent against women. Many women in fact read *Playboy* and enjoy it.

The problem is not the publication of nudity, it is the view people hold on nudity. If we could just learn to accept and be proud of the bodies we have instead of being embarrassed, maybe we could make some ground. But by continually condemning them you are only taking society backwards. If we all walked around naked, who would have a problem with it? Nudity is only indecent because we want it to be.

During the *Playboy* forum one woman stood up and stated, "the only similarity between my body and those in *Playboy* is that we're both female. Shave my pubic hair, pump up my tits and

stamp a bar code on my ass and I'm a *Playboy* model, too."

Well miss, if you think that is what you want to do, then do it. Athletes train their whole lives to be the best in their respective sports. Endless hours in the weight room along with vigorous training build up the muscles and discipline of the athlete in order to make her/him a competitor in the sport. If we view modelling in the same way, we will realize that it follows the same rules. If a woman chooses to become a model she must be able to compete in the business. The way she goes about this is none of our business — if she wants to pump up her breasts and shave her pubic hair then that is her decision. Who are we to pass judgement on others for the lifestyle and career path they choose?

The final person mentioned who spoke out against *Playboy* at the forum was a man who stated that "*Playboy* to me means masturbation and misogyny".

I really want to know what is

wrong with masturbation. It is a way in which a person can satisfy his or her sexual urges on their own. And in case you didn't know, a very large percentage of people, if not most, do masturbate. Also, sir, if *Playboy* to you means misogyny then I really suggest you don't read it.

Playboy to me means beauty, love and freedom. These three characteristics are some of the basic principles that make up our society today. If you choose to deny these principles and fight against them, you are infringing upon my right as a Canadian to experience them, and are in the wrong. Our charter of rights clearly states that we as people have the right to freely express ourselves as long as it does not infringe upon any laws. Pornography is legal in Canada and if these two men, Bruce Yip and B.W. Wildsmith, choose to represent it, they have the right to do so.

MATTHEW EISSES

Our age, our stereotype

Perhaps the one common element of humanity which we share is age. Sure we might be different ages but we're all still here and still at some stage in our life.

But for some reason you're never the right age. You're little. You ask what *that* is (you know what I mean) and your parents say, nervously, "when you're older." Makeup? Too young. Parties and dances? Plenty of time to do those things... later. Voting? As if. The list goes on and on. You turn 16 and you can drive, but you still can't do anything else. You turn 18 and you can vote, but you still need that fake ID for the bars. And when you finally turn 19 and you think you have it all, you hit university.

Now university is a place of perpetual ageism. If you're a first year, or a "frosh" as the intelligentsia say, then you are completely ignorant, even innocent, because you are too young to "know". By second year you can turn the tables on those now beneath you but you still have to deal with the third and fourth year "geniuses", many of whom parade around as those they are God's gift to graduate schools. But even those third and fourth years are made to feel "too young" next to graduate students, who feel inferior to doctoral students... and so it goes.

Ok, so when are you "old enough"? On the one hand the inner world of university talks of knowledge and experience related to age and respect, while the world outside university (yes there is one, so I've been told) says you have to

be in the "real world" to get some aged respect. Well what the hell do I live in, some sort of strange fantasy land? In reality, many students have larger debt loads in four years than many "adults" will accumulate in their entire lifetimes. Too many students are so stressed it causes serious health problems simply from trying to juggle school, work, bill payments and some attempt at a dignified social life in an effort to make it into the "real world". The real world is in here too — it's just that those on the outside would like to believe they're in charge.

But I'd like to believe I'm an adult. I try to act like one at least (some might tell you differently but so be it).

Anyway, to continue through evolution... now you're out in the world and you get a job somewhere. Ok, now you start at the bottom of the ladder again. I think they warned me of this sort of life back in high school. You struggle on and on and on until you gradually get some respect for your knowledge and experience and age, and then you get bootied out because you're finally too old. And the definition of "too old" keeps moving — I think a senior citizen is not 50-55 (mind you, any elementary school child will say a parent of 30 is a senior citizen).

Well, now you're actually old enough, in fact you're *sooooo* old, well, you know. Seniors try to hold onto their dignity in the face of overwhelming media odds which trash at the point that a senior is

"past his or her prime" (please take note of Grampa Simpson). The respect you earned for your age and experience starts to trickle away as those around you talk of you going "off your rocker" as though you can't hear them. And just before they truck you off to a home, and your money to a bank, you die.

Well, that's just great, now you're dead. *Now* the bereaved relatives start wailing that you were cut down in the "prime of life" and "to young to die"; or sometimes "it was his time" or "now Toto (whatever) is in a better place." You strive your whole life for respect for your age and you get it in death. Perfect.

But I don't think there's anything one can do about this — I'm sure it will always be this way. With the noticeable exception of alcohol, which seems to effectively transcend aged lines and division, the ages are more and more split. When we now talk of generations, the word refers to product evolution or buzzword imagery rather than family evolutions. You try to make seniors look cool and teenagers look cool — even business men. Even a year's difference in age can spell division when technology advances faster than babies fly out of the womb. One age can no longer understand another as we once might have.

The moral of this story? Don't push little kids or old ladies off the sidewalk. You were once them and will be so again.

TRISTAN STEWART-ROBERTSON

Witch trials in Europe

In response to Gregory Hanlon's article on "Courts, Society and Witchcraft", specifically his comment that most accused were examined by and convicted by legally appointed courts under strict rules of jurisprudence, *The History of Witchcraft* (Montague Summers), on page 70, says "The Devil's Mark to which allusion is here made, or the Witch's Mark, as it is sometimes called, was regarded as perhaps the most important point in the identification of a witch, it was the very sign and seal of Satan upon the actual flesh of his servant, and any person who bore such a mark was considered to have been convicted and proven beyond all manner of doubt of being in league with and devoted to the service of the fiend. This mark was said to be entirely insensible to pain, and when pricked, however deeply, it did not bleed."

On page 73, "In as much as the discovery of the Devil-mark was regarded as one of the most convincing indications, if not indeed an infallible proof that the accused was guilty since he bore indelibly branded upon his flesh Satan's own sign-manual, it is easy to see how the searching for, the recognition and probing of, such marks actually grew to be a profession in which not a few ingenious persons came to be recognized as experts and practical authorities. In Scotland, especially, the "prickers" as they were called, formed a regular guild. They received a good fee for every witch they discovered and as might be expected, they did not fail to reap a golden harvest."

There are numerous people in Scotland from the 1500s to the 1700s cited by Summers and many

others, including actual trial manuscripts, which list the condemning of people to death, usually by burning (this is Scotland), on the evidence of such well-known "prickers". In England, the "witch-finder" Matthew Hopkins came to fame with his expertise in finding witch-marks or the so-called witch-tit or pap. This was regarded in all of Europe from approximately 1300 AD as definite proof of devil worship.

It is true that if one was lucky enough to occupy a position where learned judges would examine an accusation of witchcraft, a person who could deny such charges under torture or was too important to be tortured first had a chance of refuting the claim. Most people accused of heresy or witchcraft did not have that luxury. An accusation was proof enough.

For references, see any record of numbers of condemned in England, Spain, or Italy. It is admitted that many of the outbreaks of witch burning were in times of political unrest, and most "Christians" did believe in witchcraft and that it was association with the Devil. In fact, there are two papal remonstrances stating that not believing in the existence of witches was heresy.

Throughout history, it has been believed by many Christians that the Jews were responsible for the killing of Jesus Christ. Does that then justify pogroms throughout European history, as well as the Holocaust? Any comparison of most of the witch or heresy trials conducted in European countries and modern judicial proceedings should be examined in that light.

MICHAEL BOULTON

Ageist attitudes could deny this individual equal employment opportunities.

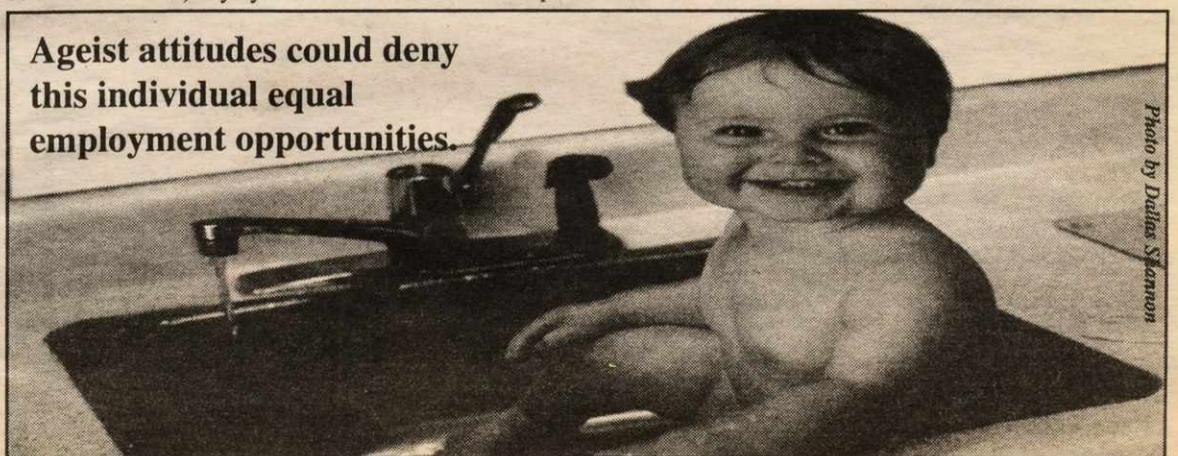


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