

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

Knowing 'real' from 'fake' often requires a second look or feel

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive."
— Sir Walter Scott



FRANK STANFORD
COLUMNIST

Without a doubt, we all know what Sir Walter meant when he wrote this famous verse. At one time or another, every one of us has lied our ass off and left in our wake a "tangled web" large enough to require a turtle excluder device.

We've lied to our roommates, lovers, friends, bosses, resident advisors, pissheads, cops and especially those we first practiced on, our parents. In fact, deception is such an integral part of society, it's become a commodity. We buy and sell lies in the form of many products.

For example, automobiles are so full of lies we don't even think of them as lies anymore. Plastic "wood" trim is commonplace in many cars today.

It looks like wood, but it holds up better and costs less. The only reason manufacturers use plastic wood is because the most expensive cars use real wood.

If your 1974 Monte Carlo has plastic wood trim it may catch the eye of that classy girl you're trying to impress.

"My goodness, wood trim! Is this a Jaguar?" she might say.

An even more ridiculous automobile lie is the "carriage top" option available on Lincolns, Cadillacs and the like. It is a fake convertible roof with heavy stitching, fake snaps and even artificial creases where the top would fold down if it wasn't permanently welded to the car's body.

On beautiful, sunny days, "carriage top" owners must get tired of telling people, "I would put the top down, but I don't have a

blowtorch handy."

Deodorizer spray with "new car" scent is probably the cheapest automobile lie on the market. A couple of quick squirts is all you need. A car that's 5 years old once again will have the bouquet of curing polyvinyl glue vapor and carpet chemicals that waft into your waiting nostrils. You can get the same olfactory effect by sticking your nose into a bottle of rubber cement.

By far the cheesiest deceptive car accessory is the fake car phone and antenna. The purpose is to fool passing motorists into thinking the car owner is important enough to make million-dollar business deals in rush hour traffic. If you see one of these fakers stopped somewhere, offer them 20 bucks to use the phone for an emergency; their expression is priceless.

The only thing Americans love more than faking their car's appearance is faking their own appearance. As a result, the cosmetic, fashion and medical industries have risen to the occasion.

Ironically, makeup for women is such an enormous part of our culture that we don't even think of it as fake. But it is. Makeup is just expensive grease paint to make women appear like they don't really appear.

Did I say women? Cosmetics are equally capable of faking the appearance of men as well. One night in New Orleans, a heavily made up, but quite attractive woman took an obvious interest in me. She had a face like a porcelain doll and a body like Dolly's.

My pickled brain told me, "Damn, I must be a stud."

Then my pickled friends arrived and pulled me away from "The All New Drag Revue." In disbelief, I realized much more than just eyelashes could be faked. Which brings me to the ridiculous world of cosmetic prostheses.

Buttocks, lips, hips, breasts and thighs are vacuumed, injected, carved and implanted. And for what reason? To attract a mate?

If a silicon-laden or foam-rubber body does its job and lures a lover, the lies soon will be uncovered anyway. The same fate will likely befall women who don heavily padded bras and men who wear the newly marketed padded underwear.

Some plastic surgeons have even started placing implants in men's bodies.

Firmer fannies, protruding pectorals and bulging biceps can all be had at the end of a knife. Instead of working out, guys can pay for muscles and prompt gushy responses from females.

"Oh hi, Dirk. May I feel your bicep? Oooh, it feels like ... like, my new breasts."

In addition to artificial body parts, Americans are prone to purchase many other fake items. Imitation Rolex or Gucci watches, plastic plants, clip-on ties, "leatherette" wallets and fake fur are parts of everyday life.

The jewelry sold on television is even more ridiculous. Necklaces made with "genuine diamelles," "real ruby-red crystals" and the faux pearl "Ukrainian sno-ball ring," all are classic examples of an economy laced with lies.

There's nothing innately wrong with fake diamonds, makeup or "carriage tops." They merely blur the line between the authentic and the counterfeit.

We will either learn to know the difference ... or learn to assume deception.

Frank Stanford is a philosophy graduate student

Many women owe it all to surgeons and makeup, not natural beauty

"Honey, do I look fat in this dress?" "I hate my nose!" "If only I were a C-cup."

Does any of this sound familiar? Since most American women are dissatisfied in some way with their bodies, it should.

The standards of beauty have changed over the past centuries, and while some changes are for the better, some are not.

Corsets, which were worn by 19th Century women to bound their waists, are thankfully out of fashion. These tools of beauty bordered on dangerous, as many women passed out from lack of air.

Unfortunately, body modification and dieting are in fashion. It's not uncommon to meet women who have undergone liposuction, have had breast implants or worship Richard Simmons and SlimFast.

While some men have problems with their self-esteem because of their appearance, poor body image overwhelmingly plagues women.

The problem begins early, and the difference in the sexes is apparent in children's first toys: Barbie vs. GI Joe. Children can't buy designer evening wear for Joe or a new armed fighter plane for Barbie.

Young girls usually can't wait to begin altering their appearance by playing with Mommy's makeup. Mothers and daughters often watch beauty pageants together, dreaming that the young girl might one day become a beauty queen.

Young boys don't grow up believing the best they



MARGARET GORDON
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can be is beautiful. They want to be big and strong and feared, not worshiped as an object of beauty.

They only begin to understand the concept of their own appearance when they become interested in girls. And whether they are good looking or not, most accept it fairly quickly and move on.

The difference is understandable and can even be labeled "biological."

Men should be big and strong to protect women and children. Women should have full figures for bearing and nurturing healthy children – the goal being to propagate the species.

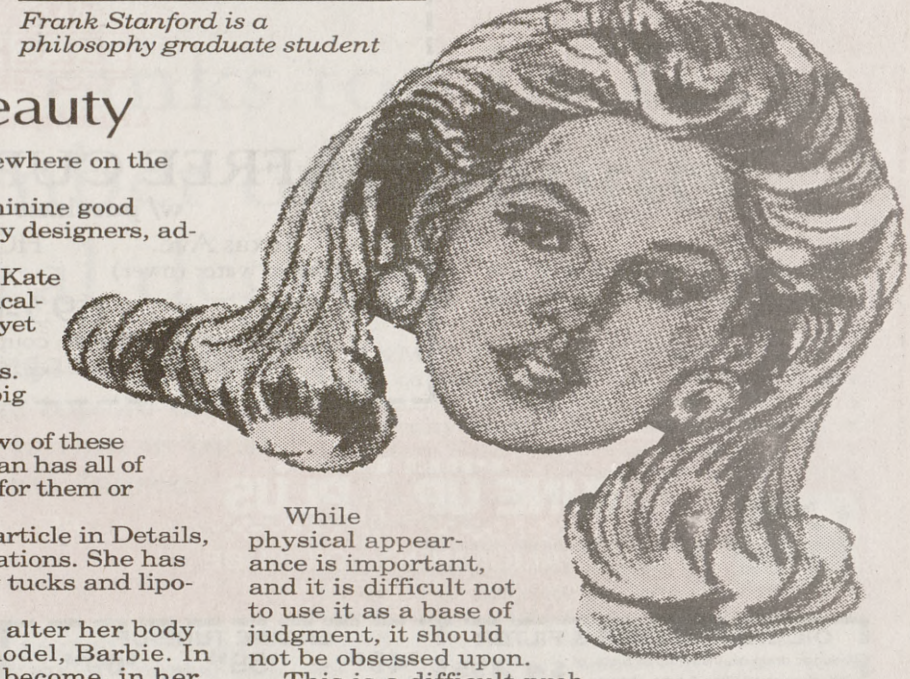
However, humans should be above all of this biological muck. Because of our advanced minds, our lives hold more meaning for us than just to avoid the extinction of our species.

It's true that physical appearance usually initiates attraction, which sometimes initiates relationships. But relationships remain strong only by means of compatibility and love, not physical attraction.

Most men realize there is more to a woman than her physical appearance. Ask the average man what he wants in a woman, and while he might list certain physical features at first, he will get around to personality characteristics eventually.

So why are women obsessed with how they look? It's a pretty simple answer.

Grab the nearest magazine. Unless you've picked up Field and Stream, there's probably a



Margaret Gordon is a junior genetics major

MAIL CALL

Affirmative action outlives welcome

Ending affirmative action is not a step backward, but a step in the right direction.

For example, Texas A&M's black population does not represent that of the state because they choose to attend other schools or do not meet requirements.

The only way to increase it is to lower standards or force them to come here. Most universities are unique in some way, and affirmative action seeks to destroy those variations.

What about affirmative action in the work place? More blacks fall into the middle class than any time before. Indians own an even higher percentage of motels. Gay men are over represented in the fashion industry. Two-thirds of NFL players are black, as are 90 percent of the NBA.

Is this because of affirmative action or initiative?

Clinton first said affirmative action was no longer needed, and then changed his mind when he realized he needed the black vote. It is time the liberals

give people credit and stop helping those who don't need help

Shea Snyder
Class of '95

Drinking column filled with errors

Elizabeth Preston did an admirable job of distorting facts in her July 25 column on drinking at Texas A&M.

She states that 87 percent of Aggies spend "every weekend in a drunken stupor" and implied that 29.5 percent of Aggies had sex with people they had never met.

She also overstates the effects of drinking dramatically. 87 percent of Aggies drink. This does not mean that 87 percent of all Aggies are fall down, pass out, toilet hugging alcoholics.

The lucky 29.5 percent of people who had unplanned sex may or may not have previously known their partners. The statistics didn't say.

Also, a vast majority of drinkers rarely pass out, puke, act like idiots or black out. Preston obviously is not a drinker.

Good for her. But her writing is overly biased, unfounded, irresponsible and ignorant.

She has no personal experience and no credible source for her information. The only statistics she does cite, she mis-states.

She also left out that the same study indicates Aggies are less likely to miss class because of alcohol.

Chuck Berend
Class of '96

'Net' should not be tampered with

This letter is in response to Jeremy Valdez's guest column on July 19 calling for censorship of the Internet. Valdez states the Internet goes unpoliced because of a lack of knowledge on the part of legislators and the general public.

Censoring television and print is a much simpler task than censoring the Internet.

Try to regulate digital traffic in the United States, and pornographers just move overseas very quickly and you will have wasted both time and money, as well as done absolutely nothing in the way of eliminating objectionable material.

The majority of sites connected with pornographic publications or organizations require registration and some sort of fee, along with a password.

This problem that Valdez and Sen. Exon seem to think exists in the world of computers is one that is largely a product of paranoia and just plain ignorance.

Valdez also mentions the risk of "electronic death threats" and the "impersonality" of the web as potential problems. Can't I just as easily call someone I don't know, not give my name and leave a message threatening to kill them on their answering machine?

Another area of concern is that of child molesters prowling the Net looking for victims. First of all, these people are going to exist no matter how much you try to police or regulate.

If you don't want your children to become victims or see something on the Net, don't let them. Turn off the computer. The power button works just as well as it does on a TV.

The Internet is a global form of communication and any attempt to regulate it by this country is both doomed to failure and just plain stupid.

The Net does a good job of policing itself, and no control is needed. If we give the government the right to censor the Net and its contents, the government has the power to control the flow of information, which is a freedom we should protect a lot better than we, as a people, currently do.

Just because the Internet has suddenly been embraced by American society is no reason to censor it. Leave it the way it was meant to be, both good and bad, like communication should be.

Ryan Hensley
Class of '96

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EDITORIAL

FEE INCREASE

A&M's new proposal still is too much.

On the totem pole of public education, the students constantly find themselves shoved underground as a support piece rather than at the top, where they belong.

Yesterday, in a meeting with student senators, A&M President Ray Bowen announced changes in the proposed general use fee increase. The new proposal, which calls for a \$10 increase each year for two years, is the result of cooperation between the administration and the students. However, this proposal increases fees too drastically. That's a \$30 increase per 3-hour course.

Earlier this year, the Texas Legislature cut A&M's budget by \$6.7 million, leaving it up to the University to find funds elsewhere.

The University decided to make up for part of the budget cuts by raising the general use fee.

The original proposal would have increased the general use fee by \$14 per semester hour the first year, and an additional \$6 the next.

The students should not have to pay for the irresponsibility of the Texas Legislature. The Legislature should ensure that the cost of a public education remains reasonable.

While all the rhetoric lingers, the fact remains that the University needs more money.

Money for an overdue pay raise for a faculty and staff that has been called the "best in the world" by A&M students.

Money for a bolstering of the floundering liberal arts program that supports the core curriculum courses all students must take.

Both of these monetary needs are crucial to Texas A&M's establishment as a "world-class University."

Last week, the Student Senate released an alternative plan to the administration's original proposal.

Its solution would be to taper the increase of tuition by \$6 a semester hour per year for four years.

The Student Senate's plan is a more reasonable solution. The slower increase would assure that the students who pay the most – future freshmen – would receive most of the benefit of the extra money.

Those who will be leaving A&M soon would not have to pay for improvements at a University they no longer attended. The slow addition to income would force A&M to practice fiscal responsibility and prudent planning.

And the fact that the original proposal would have increased the fees to the highest possible level would ensure that further fee increases would not be possible.

The Student Senate should be commended for its prudent, well-constructed proposal. And the University also deserves credit for its cooperation and willingness to decrease the adverse effects the fee increase will have on students.

However, students still will have to take on a severe added cost burden.

The University administration and the Board of Regents should investigate every option to remedy the Legislature's failure. Only as a last resort should they squeeze the money out of A&M students.