

SPECTRUM

IN THE PINK EQUALITY?

by James Gill

One focus of the lesbian and gay movement is the amendment of Human Rights Codes to extend protection on the basis of sexual orientation. As vital as this is, I have to wonder whether it will achieve what we think it will.

From bitter experience I have come to realize that there are some people in society who just do not like gay men and lesbians. This is hardly surprising, after all there are still racists; anti-semites; male chauvinists and misogynists; and all variety of bigoted people out there in the big, bad world. I am pleased to say that most studies would indicate that they are a small minority in this country. Homophobes and heterosexists of a subtly different type still abound.

I had a very interesting conversation with some fellow delegates to the Canadian Federation of Students meeting last week in Ottawa. What was interesting was that the group consisted of four women and four men; three were gay or lesbian, one was Jewish, one was black, one was disabled, one was a francophone, and one was a native Canadian. What we all had in common was the fact that society continues to oppress us, sometimes in invidious ways.

We were discussing the debate that had been going on over the Federation adopting an abortion policy. Among the findings that we agreed upon was that four of us had no business making assertions on the subject of abortion because we could never become pregnant. This stemmed from the realization that each of us had, that the others could not understand our oppression without experiencing it. A man cannot understand that disempowerment of women until he is put in a situation in which he is excluded, or deliberately given a clearly lesser and powerless status. So too, heterosexuals cannot understand the oppression of lesbians and gay men until they are in a situation where expression of their sexuality is proscribed or forbidden. What we all could understand about each other was that we each knew we could not understand the other's oppression.

This conversation made it clear to me that it is vital that those of us who are oppressed in society must band together to fight our oppressors. The gay and lesbian community must support the women's movement. Women must support the struggle for racial equality. Racial and ethnic minorities must join in the fight for the right of the indigenous people. And so too, the indigenous community must support the struggle for lesbian and gay rights.

What we are all looking for is empowerment. This is very different from the establishment's view of equality. The problem is, essentially, that the Canadian system is still biased towards white, anglo-saxon, heterosexual men. It is all very well to talk of equal access to the system, but the number of openly gay and lesbian people in positions of power is still minimal. So too with women, racial, linguistic and ethnic minorities; and indigenous Canadians.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty is that tokenism works for the establishment. It becomes very easy to point at a few examples of successful people who are members of oppressed minorities and to assert that we have reached a degree of equality. One might well argue that things are better, but this is cosmetic change at best. At the root of the system lies an inherent racism, sexism, and heterosexism which must be purged.

Affirmative action is one tool which has attempted, with very limited success, because of the establishment's refusal to implement it, to address the problem. Some argue that affirmative action runs counter to selection on merit. One should note, though, that these people are, to a man (and I choose the gender exclusive term deliberately) already in the system. The real problem they have with affirmative action is that it breaks the hold on power which they enjoy.

Lesbians and gay men, and all oppressed minorities, must take the power which is due to them. This sounds like a rather left wing radical statement, and in some ways it is. I do not advocate violent revolution, but what I advocate is revolution nonetheless.

Next GALA Meeting: Tuesday, November 21 at 8:00 p.m. in Room 203 of the SUB.

HOMOSEXUALITY: A LIE?

Part I
by Marcel Lebrun

Since the first issue of the Brunswickan (September 15, 1989), there have been numerous articles promoting the acceptance of gay life. The author of "In the Pink" has been encouraging those who practice homosexuality to "come out of the closet" and has dealt with several issues such as: "gay bashing" and "the rights of homosexuals as human beings".

The purpose of this series of articles is to reveal the lies of homosexuality and to offer an alternative perspective exposing and explaining what homosexuality really is (other than its obvious physical appearance) and the reason why people practice it.

As with all arguments and opinion, any facts brought forth must have a basis on which they are stated. This basis is a set of presuppositions or assumptions on which all further arguments depend. This means that any conclusion drawn in one's argument, no matter how logical it may seem, is only as valid as the foundation on which it is based. More simply, one's conclusion can not be proven accurate if it is drawn from incorrect assumptions.

Therefore, in order to examine the validity of the arguments enforced by "In The Pink", an examination of its presuppositions is necessary.

One of "In the Pink"'s presuppositions is: Homosexuality is not a choice. This assumption is implied in the September 22 article where the author stated: "I Knew that I was gay before I was thirteen" and "I knew that nothing was going to change". He had no apparent choice in the matter.

This assumption is obviously invalid because this gentleman chose to yield his will to "feelings that he knew were different". He stated that: "I was sixteen and began to reach the acceptance stage...". He began to "accept" these "feelings". Accepting is a decision of the will. One can accept or refuse, it is a choice.

The author even contradicts this assumption himself in a subsequent article entitled "visibility" (October 27, 1989) where he simply declares: "I want to be gay."

The author also gives us no basis for his moral standards. Firstly, in the article entitled: "Gay and Lesbian Pride" (November 3, 1989), he states: "Racism, anti-semitism, sexism, and heterosexism are social ills which we must all work to cure...". In his first article, entitled "Gay Bashing", he refers today bashing as a "social evil". The author here is making moral judgments, in the first case, by saying that some action must be taken, and in the next, he defines something as being evil. However, he does not give a basis for these moral judgments. It can be seen throughout his articles that there is an underlying assumption made by the author, that no basis exists for moral absolutes. Clearly, none is given.

From this, it is obvious that the author, in his arguments, depends on assumptions that are not immediately clear, nor are they always correct. Therefore, the author's conclusions can not be assumed correct.

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LEGALEASE

COPYRIGHT

As university students, we hear a great deal about copyright issues such as plagiarism. As well, we are familiar with the practices of copying music tapes and computer programs. Although these are common practices, people are often unaware of the legal implications involved with such activities. This article will attempt to set out the law as it stands with regard to these issues.

HOW IS COPYRIGHT DEFINED?

Copyright is defined as the protection by law of the works of authors and artists giving them the exclusive right to publish their works and to determine who may so publish. Therefore, the owner of the work is the only person who may copy the work or permit another to do so. The owner can transfer these rights (give them away or sell them) to another, thus making the other person the new owner of the work. The author may give away these rights, but will always retain the right of authorship.

There is no copyright in ideas or information. It is only the expression of the idea that is protected.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF WORKS THAT ARE SUBJECT TO COPYRIGHT:

1. WRITTEN WORKS:

This includes books and any articles that may be published in magazines, newspapers, and journals.

2. TAPES:

Although it is common practice to copy a friend's latest music tape, or video cassette, to do so is a violation of copyright law.

3. PHOTOGRAPHS

4. WORKS OF ART:

Such as paintings, sculptures, etc.

5. COMPUTER PROGRAMS:

It is permissible to copy a computer program only if you own the original program and have it in your possession. The copied program may not be used by anyone but the owner of the original. If, for some reason, you are no longer entitled to own the original, you must also destroy the copy.

6. PLAYS:

If you are planning to produce a play that was written by someone else, you must obtain permission to do so. This is usually done through the payment of royalties.

IS PLAGIARISM THE SAME THING AS COPYRIGHT VIOLATION?

Whereas copyright protects the expression of certain ideas, plagiarism protects those ideas themselves. Plagiarism is an academic offence rather than an infringement of copyright.

Students are permitted by copyright legislation to reproduce reasonable parts of a piece of work done by another in order to do research or to study. Thus, it is permissible to photocopy a chapter of a book, but it is not permissible to copy the whole book.

HOW DOES A PERSON OBTAIN A COPYRIGHT?

Information about copyright can be obtained by contacting Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

A relatively simple way of establishing your ownership of a piece of work is to send a copy of it to yourself through registered mail. The receipt you will receive from Canada Post is proof of the existence of copyright on that date.

WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR AN INFRINGEMENT OF COPYRIGHT?

Infringement of copyright is not a criminal offence and so does not carry a set punishment. However, if the owner of the piece of work that has been copied decides to sue, the punishment can be severe, in the form of a large fine, or even a jail-term. As well, the court may award the owner of the copied work any proceeds that have been gained by the infringement of copyright.

Note: This legal column is written for information purposes only. It is not intended to be a replacement for Professional Legal Advice.

* Practise the three R's of conservation: reduce, reuse and recycle

* One pop bottle recycled saves enough energy to light 100 wall light bulbs for FOUR hours

* A 3 foot newspaper pile recycled saves one tree

* Looking for a good cause? Join the Student Environmental Society (SES). You can make a difference!

* Recyclable paper makes up 70% of office waste

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Derik F
BBA II

Tina Jo
BA I

