

# SPECTRUM

## Finding a Voice: *Tristis Baird examines the complexities of representation in lesbian-gay discourse.*

I called this column The Black Triangle for several reasons.

First, I wanted everyone to know that I am not an added feature to the gay column called "Positively Pink".

Still, I found Adrian Park's choice of title to be appropriate (I'll let him explain it fully) and I wanted one that had the same roots, because we are part of the same community. Aren't we?

While the Nazis were committing genocide they rounded up all the gay men they could catch, marking them with a pink triangle instead of the Star of David the jews were given.

Lesbians didn't get their own insignia, but they were sent to the same fate - under the mark of the black triangle worn by social dissidents and "others" the government wanted dead.

The idea that gay men have to take what was used to condemn them and turn it around works for Lesbians too. We use it to empower ourselves.

When we first conceived this column, Adrian, myself, and our friends felt it was important to have both lesbian and gay male writers rather than one person who wrote on gay issues generically. Our reasoning was fairly simple: being gay is not the sole part of our everyday experience.

Even when it does occupy our minds, women and men have far different goals and methods.

Lesbians especially, need a voice of their own. Gay men speak about gay issues from a man's perspective, and oppression takes on different forms for them. The men have a problem because they stand out. Most (though far from all) of the violence is done to the queens - because they're obvious to straights. Lesbians have a problem because they are invisible, (like all women are). If someone thinks "gay" they think male. A point to illustrate this which is fairly recent is the study of gay male brains, compared to the brains of apparently straight men, and women's brains. The media went nuts with this new "proof" of biological homosexuality.

Wonderful. Except, of course, that it proves nothing of the sort. Among other flaws it leaves lesbians out altogether (not much of a surprise given that experiments down through history have centred around men, either treating women as an extension of the males, or as abnormal males in the model).

Lesbians' problems and achievements would disappear in a "gay" forum. Even with the best intentions the men can only speak for themselves. Most of us are not satisfied to live our lives in the category labelled "other". Again, "other" is often the

### The Black Triangle

place society sticks women of all sorts into. Lesbians who are feminist really have two wars to fight at once (lesbians of color, three . . . physically challenged, four . . . the list goes on). For each of us, there is a different set of priorities and a different circle of support. We are aware of, and do appreciate the support we get from our gay brothers, but we

must stand apart as women on many issues. Men can't even grasp some others.

Even if homophobia was eradicated, if gay people were given

all the rights of straights, lesbians would still be oppressed if women were still oppressed. And of course they would be. A gay revolution would not end misogyny.

Then again, if women got out from under patriarchal domination would lesbians be free? Probably not. I've met plenty of homophobic feminists.

Where we do stand together as

gay people is in our determination not to be victims of the straight society we live in. We want to express our joys, and hear each other's joy without having to hunt down some secret, scared underground. This space is for that purpose. We share it gladly, because there are plenty of issues and events that are of interest to us all.

I'm not really sure that makes us a community. Here in Fredericton it may not. I haven't seen much of a communal spirit around here. But I don't think there always has to be one, either. The gay community is, in many cities, a sub-culture of oppressed. It's a reaction to being lumped together in the first

place, rather than an effort to create a society.

A big chunk of Fredericton's population is transient. A lot of gays will only be here for a few years. The native gays aren't prone to open expression, and seem to enjoy associating only with the small pockets of people they know. Maybe a community isn't important.

Speech is. Somewhere out there a gay person thinks they are all alone in the world, or that gay events only happen in other cities. This column is for them perhaps more than anybody else: to let them know there are gays here. If they're lesbian, they are going to see that some of us are lesbians, too.

## In search of a room of one's own

### The Wimmin's Room

I have just finished reading Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* in my "own" room. Although the student Women's Committee and women down through the ages have written wonderful things at their kitchen tables, I for one must confess that I hate kitchens and all the paraphernalia that goes along with it. (Did you know that paraphernalia actually means "articles of personal property given to a married woman by her husband and regarded in law as her possessions"? I didn't either until I looked it up to see how to spell it!) Anyway, as much as I admire Virginia Woolf I didn't need her to tell me that in order to write I must have a "room with a lock on the door and five hundred a year." Well, I have found a room with a lock and have accumulated at least five hundred pounds (of laundry this month alone) so I should be able to write. Right? On second

thought, don't answer that.

If I write in the bedroom, I fall asleep. If I write in the livingroom, I watch TV, and if I try to write in the dining room I spend most of my time

scraping jam and peanut butter off the table. I've tried writing in the storage closet but the long neglected ironing board keeps falling down and hitting me over the head. What's a women to do? In my apartment there is only one place left. You guessed it, the bathroom. To be more exact, the bathtub. Like Michele Landsberg in *Women and Children First*, I too discovered the relative safety of the porcelain palace early on in my career as young mother while being besieged by three invading youngsters. I have learned to write quickly though but even yet the one "still at home" is digging around in the junk drawer for some object with which to pick the lock. Okay, so you've figured out by now I'm not a "young" woman if two-thirds of my family are old enough to fly the coup. I do not mind having most of the child-raising behind mind but I do have one regret. My bathtub did

not grow with me. Now when I submerge my greying head under the warm water to escape the din of Mario Brothers (he has momentarily given up his

attack), it is then and only then that I wish I were young again, or at least small enough to stretch out full length in the soothing liquid. Now when I sink beneath

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9:00	LOW IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING	LOW IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING	LOW IMPACT	11:00	BODY-SCULPTING MIX	BODY-SCULPTING MIX
10:00	EASY DOES IT		EASY DOES IT		EASY DOES IT			
12:30	BODY-SCULPTING	COMBO IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING	COMBO IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING			
1:30	COMBO IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING	COMBO IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING				
4:00		COMBO IMPACT	COMBO IMPACT	COMBO IMPACT				
4:45	COMBO IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING	COMBO IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING	COMBO IMPACT			
5:30	BODY-SCULPTING MIX	COMBO IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING MIX	COMBO IMPACT	BODY-SCULPTING MIX			
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