

Gertrude Stein John Addington Symonds Tchaikovsky Alan M. Turing Rudolph Valentino Andy Warhol Walt Whitman Oscar Wilde Tennessee Williams Virginia Woolf Armistead Maupin

**BASHING BACK**

**A** TWELVE-YEAR-OLD BOY screams out "homo-bitch" to a woman walking down the street; A group of teenagers yell anti-lesbian remarks and throw a bottle at two women on a street; A man writes a letter to the *Gazette* denouncing the appearance of a lesbian graphic in its back pages; Attempts are made to silence the *Gazette* for publishing a Gay male safer sex guide; A woman questions the input of lesbians in feminist theory; Death threats are phoned into a lesbian art show; Posters advertising Gay and Lesbian Association at Dalhousie's (GLAD) meetings and vents are defaced and torn down; The Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) Handbook has omitted GLAD from its list of student societies for the past two years — even after guarantees last year that we would be included in the most recent edition. What is the basic thread connecting all of these separate events which have occurred in this city over the past year? Simple — **Queer Bashing** — the knee-jerk reaction by "phobes" to silence the visibility of Lesbian and Gay male existence.

Although queer bashing is usually used to describe physical violence towards Lesbians and Gay men, I believe that it includes any covert or overt reaction to Queer visibility. Whether it is in the form of the fist, the mouth, or the pen, the goal is still the same — to ignore, silence, or render invisible our existence while at the same time reasserting heterosexual domination.

Even though "queer bashing" (in its many forms) has been increasing over the past few years Lesbi-

ans and Gay men have been fighting back. We are **Bashing Back** — not only in the sense of physical defence but also in the sense of making our existence known, challenging heterosexual domination and claiming our fair share in this society. Fair means a lot more than one graphic in the back pages and a once a year supplement. It means, at the very least, ten per cent of the content of every issue of this newspaper devoted to Gay and Lesbian concerns. It also means having the DSU respond to our needs by publicly informing Lesbian and gay students that they can get same-sex spousal coverage under the Student Health Plan.

We are Bashing Back in a variety of ways including the Pink Panthers — a Lesbian and Gay self-defence group, graffiti (anywhere and everywhere), t-shirts, buttons, music, films, art shows, this supplement, pride marches, GLAD, bringing up Lesbian and Gay issues in classrooms, research papers and public legal cases which challenge laws that support heterosexual relationships while exploiting Lesbian and Gay men. Bashing Back means being an "in your face" dyke/fag/lesbian/gay/queer and letting the hets know that we're here, we're queer and we're not going back. It means not letting Hets get away with silencing us and exploiting us.

We will dress how we want, say what we want, dance with whom we want, write what we want and love whom we please — and maybe, just maybe, the phobes will realize that Hets are not the only beings in the world. QUEER WORLD, RISE UP, BASH BACK.

Dyke-At-Large

**Canadian poet: An interview**

**T**HE FOLLOWING IS AN interview with Daphne Marlatt, a lesbian writer who works out of Salt Spring Island in BC. She was in the Maritimes recently publicizing her new book *Salvage* (Red Deer College Press). The interview, by Elizabeth van Berkel, will be aired on CKDU.

**EV:** Tell me a bit about your new book.

**DM:** I revised poems I wrote for my earlier collection *Steveston*. As I re-read them over the years and read some feminist work, I saw there were ideas buried in the original that hadn't been developed and that were quite different from the idea developed originally. And quite different from what the work was actually "about." So I began working with these sub-texts — one form of salvaging.

The second part is a novella — called *Territory and Company* — partly composed of pieces excised from my first novel, *Ana Historic*, particularly the dream sequences. And I added stuff from my journal.

**Would you call this work particularly female?**

Well, yes, in terms of how women think about their experience. Sometimes I think women do that more than men. Women keep journals; men don't. There's a kind of sifting through, of trying to come to terms with difficult experiences, and that certainly has a lot to do with all the material.

And as a poet interested in language, I use a lot of language play. Multiple meanings.

**You once said that you are a "subject subject to change." You don't marginalize even any of your own experiences, do you?**

Yes, I definitely move away from linear thought and expression. Phyllis Webb called me "planar..." [laughter]. And there is the sense that it operates on a horizontal level. That an experience can be mined for a multiplicity of aspects rather than be categorized and put in a corner and tied up away from the rest of my life.

It seems sometimes that my life is a series of passageways. That's the title of the second section in fact — "Passageways."

**Is it true that the way your writing's changed parallels your coming out as a lesbian?**

"Coming out" is certainly the theme of the novella. It's coming to realize myself as a lesbian subject. There are a number of love poems to women. It's also about the passage of moving from being a heterosexual woman whose relations were predominantly with men, to being a woman whose relationships with women became increasingly more important, and then coming out as a lesbian.

And then there's identification with marginalized people, particularly street people, people who have in a sense dropped out of the whole capitalist system.



*I didn't mean to suggest either that writing as a lesbian is a new enterprise for you. What is it you've learned that it is to write as a lesbian?*

Well, as a lesbian your whole worldview changes. You no longer buy into the system of patriarchal thought, where the values that men have generated out of their experiences are considered the most important. You realize there's a whole other culture that has to do with different values, attributions of meaning. So that comes into play too. And because I'm a writer and deal with language, I participate in the dominant culture; because that's where my language is from. But I'm constantly working to subvert, alter the meanings of it to present a woman-centered perspective.

There's also a completely different erotic as a lesbian. I started working with it in *Steveston* even before I realized it. But it certainly has to do with something different from the usual climax in the conventional literary form. It is much more circular; it repeats and delays,

is much more associative.

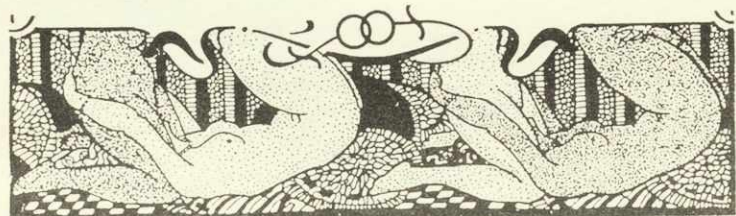
The final poem, "Spring Passage," is the first poem I wrote living on Salt Spring Island with Betsy [Warland]. It realizes the tradition we have — the length of it — reaching right back to Sappho. I include some lines from Sappho too.

*What's at the heart of this tradition? Is it language and love?*

Women and men think differently, Carol Gilligan says. Women think contextually — in a web. Women tend to take under consideration more variables. They don't think of an absolute. I'm interested in the proposition, because I think more contextually.

That's really the way we are going to save our planet. Not just in terms of each other as human beings. That's really the project of feminism: to see ourselves not just in relation to people but to everything around — to the landscape.

And I realize that's a big project. It means undoing the ways we've come to think, been trained to think.



**Erotically Yours**

loving the evening,  
loving the time spent talking, and  
loving when we join together, closer  
as we begin our lovemaking.

loving the gentle places my fingers find,  
loving the draw of your body to mine,  
loving the curve I love with my tongue,  
I suck your soft skin.

loving the hardness of your hipbones,  
loving and emitting quiet moans,  
loving hands stroke your beautiful breasts, nipples:  
the geology you taught me to love.

loving and I feel you start,  
loving me as your legs part,  
loving my hand slides tentatively down, is  
swallowed by your wet intensity.

loving the hot folds inside, and  
loving, light-headed as we swell and writhe, in  
loving you I have become you;  
as you come, then so do I.

loving the quiet, the eye of the storm,  
loving lying by your still shudd'ring form,  
loving that which as women we share,  
I turn to convey a kiss.

loving the mouth that is ours combined,  
loving the youth that search deep through mine,  
loving your voice that tells me, be still,  
now let me make love to you.

B. Bunting

